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**REVIEW OF ACTION TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT SINCE
THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

**FOLLOW-UP OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

Road Safety

Summary

This paper reviews the most important activities undertaken by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in follow-up to the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 60/5 concerning improving global road safety. This paper also reviews the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its seventh session, which was held from 28 February to 2 March 2006, and, in particular, those made by the workshop on national capacity-building in preparation for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week. That workshop was held in Cairo on 20 and 21 December 2006 in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the Global Road Safety Partnership. This paper presents some of the recommendations on follow-up to pertinent General Assembly and ESCWA resolutions.

1. The issue of road safety has begun to attract greater international attention and a greater share of the activities of the United Nations regional commissions, including ESCWA, especially in light of the role assigned to those commissions by United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/5 dated 1 December 2005 concerning improving global road safety. That resolution invited the regional commissions and specialized agencies to continue their current initiatives, and encouraged them to adopt new resolutions on road safety. The resolution also called upon the regional commissions and the World Health Organization (WHO) to employ their available resources to assist in the organization of the Global Road Safety Week and take action to identify sources of funding from interested Governments and the private sector.

2. ESCWA resolution 256 (XXIII) was adopted at a meeting on road safety which the ESCWA ministerial committee held at its twenty-third session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005. In its subsequent resolution 279 (XXIV), ESCWA was requested to play a leading role in advocating the issue of traffic safety in the region.

3. This document aims to present a brief overview of the activities carried out by ESCWA in 2006 in implementation of the recommendations on road safety made at the sixth session of the Committee on Transport. Particular focus is placed on the most important contributions of ESCWA to preparations for the activities of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week. Those activities include addressing member countries on the issue and convening a workshop in cooperation with WHO and the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP). This document also reviews recommendations on this subject and, in particular, the activities which it has been recommended that ESCWA member countries should carry out during the Week.

A. GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

4. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/5 in which the regional commissions and WHO were invited to organize jointly, within their resources as well as with voluntary financial assistance from concerned stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector, the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week. To that end, the Global Organizing Committee was established under the chairmanship of WHO and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), with members including ESCWA and five regional organization committees.

5. It was agreed that the Global Road Safety Week would be held from 23 to 29 April 2007, and would include national, regional and global activities.

6. The World Youth Assembly, which is scheduled to be held in Geneva during the Week and attended by youth from all over the world, is considered one of the most important activities of the Week. A letter has been sent to all the ambassadors at the United Nations in Geneva requesting them to designate a youth nominee, ideally between 18 and 25 years of age. The nominee must excel in English and should also have distinguished himself in road safety-related activities. Preference will be given to nominees with good public speaking, participatory and communication skills. Two nominees, one of whom is the representative of Lebanon, have been designated to prepare a draft resolution to be adopted by the World Youth Assembly in Geneva. The draft resolution will call upon the countries of the world to pay greater attention to road safety and will put forward specific proposals for activities in support of youth road safety efforts.

7. Further international activities for the Week are currently being prepared, including a world day of remembrance for the victims of traffic accidents, an international contest for short films and children's drawings on the issue of road safety, a music festival on the opening day, a special exhibition of road safety equipment and field visits.

8. A web page for the Week has already been established, and is available at: <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/en/>.

9. It has been agreed that the slogan of the Week shall be "Road Safety is NO Accident".

10. In preparation for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, ESCWA addressed member countries on 29 May 2006, urging them to form national committees charged with preparing activities for the Week and informing ESCWA of those activities.

B. WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK, CAIRO, 20-21 DECEMBER 2006

11. The Workshop was convened in Cairo on 20 and 21 December 2006. It was attended by representatives of 13 countries from the ESCWA region and a number of representatives from the private sector and national agencies. There were a total of 56 participants, 12 of whom were women. Through lectures and pamphlets distributed to participants, the Workshop aimed to strengthen the capacities of participants to refer to and implement the guide on activities to be carried out during the Week in April 2007, and to familiarize them with the guide to forming national committees for road safety. A further aim of the Workshop was to agree on joint activities for implementation by member countries during the Week.

12. The Workshop on National Capacity-Building in Preparation for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week made the following recommendations:

Recommendation No. 1

- The pamphlet prepared by the United Nations Road Safety Team should be used in preparing local activities for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week. Such activities should include one minute of silence in all participating countries for the victims of road accidents.
- Prominent figures should be designated as Week leaders in their field, including statesmen, athletes and religious figures. The guidelines issued by the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA) should be consulted in order to persuade them to participate.
- Each country should designate a young person to take part in the World Youth Assembly, scheduled to be held in Geneva during the Week.

Recommendation No. 2

- Emphasis should be put on the role of the media in publicizing and promoting the activities of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, and the importance of the media in highlighting the gravity of the road safety issue.
- ESCWA and the regional office of WHO should be notified of local activities, given that they represent the two contact points for the organization and promotion of such activities.

Recommendation No. 3

- Recommendations in the Global Road Safety Partnership paper on managing road safety should be implemented, and items thereof which countries are currently applying should be reviewed.
- A specific timetable and programme of work for implementation of those recommendations must be devised.
- Reference should be made to relevant successful experiences in the region, including those of the Supreme Authority for the City of Riyadh, the Jordan Traffic Institute and the Bahrain Safety Centre.

- Advantage should be taken of recent publications on good driving practices, including:
 - The WHO good practice guide on helmets;
 - Seat belts (FIA and GRSP);
 - Alcohol (GRSP);
 - Management/lead agency (World Bank);
 - Data systems (World Bank); and
 - Speed management (GRSP).

Recommendation No. 4

- WHO manuals should be applied.
- Pertinent resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly should be implemented, especially resolution 60/5.
- The private sector, national associations and the Office of the League of Arab States (LAS) for Traffic Safety in Tunisia should participate in all road safety-related activities.
- Interested parties should coordinate in convening seminars and training workshops in order to prevent duplication of efforts and improve performance.
- The health sector in each country should assume a leading role in awareness-raising and road accident prevention programmes.

Recommendation No. 5

- Emphasis should be placed on the need to exchange expertise and successful experiences in the field of road safety.
- A detailed analysis of the role and working methods of national road safety committees should be carried out.
- The supreme authority of those committees should be affirmed in order to assure their success and the continuity of their work.
- A current benchmark for the traffic situation should be established against which the efficacy of programmes aimed at improving it may be measured; ESCWA should be responsible for following up on that issue.
- Seminars on specific aspects of road safety should continue to be held.

C. ESCWA REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY

13. ESCWA prepared a study reviewing the status of road safety in a number of ESCWA member countries. Because of insufficient funds to cover all member countries at the same stage, a selection was made for the first stage of the study which included Jordan, Lebanon and the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The first part of the study appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/6. Consultants in Egypt and Iraq were commissioned to prepare a national report on road safety in those countries, while an ESCWA expert conducted a mission to the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen in order to prepare the sections relevant to those countries. To date, no consultant has been commissioned to cover the section on Palestine. The second part of the study should be completed by the third quarter of 2007.

D. The UNITED NATIONS ROAD SAFETY COLLABORATION

14. The United Nations Road Safety Collaboration was established after the United Nations General Assembly adopted several important resolutions on road safety, including, in particular, resolution 58/289, which was adopted in April 2004. That resolution invited WHO, working in close cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, to act as a coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system, with the aim of studying the steps which international organizations can carry out in implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

15. To date, the collaboration has held five meetings: the first at WHO headquarters in Geneva on 1 October 2004; the second at ECE headquarters on 16 and 17 March 2005; the third in London on 14 and 15 October 2005; the fourth in May 2006 at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok; and the fifth at WHO headquarters in October 2006. Preparations are currently underway for the sixth meeting, to be held in Oman from 26 to 28 February 2007. That meeting will concentrate on preparations for the events of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

16. ESCWA actively participated in all the meetings mentioned above. ESCWA also participated with the regional office of WHO in creating periodic reports on road safety-related activities being prepared in the ESCWA region, and in providing data on road accidents in the countries of the region. ESCWA was also selected to participate in the committee charged with preparing the manual on good practices for road design for the improvement of traffic safety.

E. PARTICIPATION IN THE TECHNICAL MISSION OF THE FRENCH EXPERT ON ROAD SAFETY AND PROPOSAL OF A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE CURRENT ROAD SAFETY SITUATION IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

17. At the request of the Ministry of Transport of the Syrian Arab Republic, ESCWA participated in providing technical assistance to the mission of the French expert on road safety from 8 to 13 July 2006. In the same period, ESCWA was also involved in proposing a strategy for improving the current road safety situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. ESCWA further participated in discussions and seminars convened by the French expert, and in establishing a new strategy and plan of action designed to improve levels of road safety in the Syrian Arab Republic. ESCWA prepared for the Ministry of Transport of the Syrian Arab Republic the authoritative terms for evaluating the road safety situation in that country.

F. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ESCWA AND THE YAZA GROUP FOR PUBLIC SAFETY (LEBANON) FOR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ROAD SAFETY

18. Given the responsibility of ESCWA and its leading role in the United Nations organization in achieving development in the Western Asian region through the promotion of regional cooperation as a means of stimulating economic, social and technical development and stimulating interest in public safety; pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/5 on road safety, which calls upon the regional commissions to continue their road safety initiatives, and also calls upon the regional commissions and WHO to participate in the organization of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, seeking the assistance of such other parties as civil society and the private sector; given the expertise and energy of the Yaza Group for Public Safety, which specializes in public safety in general and traffic safety in particular; a memorandum of understanding has been signed by ESCWA and the Yaza Group for Public Safety (Lebanon) for cooperation in the field of road safety and for the preparing of activities for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Given the proximity of the date for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, and given the need for ESCWA member countries to participate in related activities and programmes with the rest of the

world, particularly because road safety is a critical problem in ESCWA member countries, with traffic accidents claiming between 1 and 2 per cent of gross national product, the following recommendations are made:

(a) All ESCWA member countries should participate in the international events which will be held in Geneva during the Week, and in the other aforementioned activities; it is also recommended that all member countries accelerate nomination of their youth representatives who will actively participate in the World Youth Assembly in Geneva from 23 to 25 April 2007, within the parameters of nomination mentioned above;

(b) Each country should inform ESCWA at the earliest time possible of proposed activities for the Week in order to enable ESCWA to promote those on its web site dedicated to the Week, thereby informing everyone of the proposed activities and allowing them to take advantage thereof. In that regard, it is recommended that each country should focus on and raise awareness of one activity, which may, for example, include the following:

- (i) Establishing a national strategy to reduce the number of road accident-related deaths by a set proportion within a given time frame;
- (ii) Organizing a national campaign to encourage such good driving practices as seat belt use, and the passing of the necessary legislation to ensure that those practices are continually enforced;
- (iii) Preparing a national plan to deal with black spots on the national road network and establishing a set time frame for that task;
- (iv) Releasing an electronic educational programme on traffic safety topics aimed at school children;
- (v) Awarding prizes to any party which undertakes pioneering work aimed at improving road safety.

(c) The enforcement, follow-up and implementation of matters relating to the recommendations of the Workshop on National Capacity-Building should be affirmed.

(d) At the end of the Week, every country should prepare a report on and evaluation of the most important activities, and setting out the reasons for their success or shortcomings.