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agenda item 9)

**CONSIDERATION OF THE POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE WORK ON A UNITED NATIONS
LONG-TERM STRATEGY ON ROAD SAFETY**

Transmitted by the secretariat of the World Bank
Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)

Note: At the thirty-second session of the Working Party, a representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) informed the Working Party about the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), a new World Bank initiative launched on 1 February 1999. The secretariat of GRSP is based at IFRC headquarters in Geneva.

The Working Party invited the GRSP secretariat to submit a paper on GRSP which could be considered at the Working Party's thirty-third session.

The information received from GRSP is reproduced below.

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GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

“Road safety is an issue of immense human proportions, it’s an issue of economic proportions, it’s an issue of social proportions and it’s also an issue of equity. Road safety is an issue that very much affects poor people.”

James D. Wolfensohn
President, The World Bank Group

The **Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)** is an informal partnership of private sector, civil society, government, and bi-/multi-lateral development organizations who share the premise that road safety conditions in the world, especially in developing countries, can be improved by working in partnership.

GRSP MISSION

To reduce deaths, injuries, disabilities and associated social costs of road traffic crashes through partnerships which promote collaboration and coordination of road safety activities among GRSP partners for the benefit of the most vulnerable.

SCOPE OF THE ROAD SAFETY PROBLEM

1,171,000 people killed ^{1/}

10 million people injured, many with long term disabilities

Losses of 1-3% of GDP (US\$ 500 billion)

These startling statistics are the global **annual** result of the worldwide problem of road accidents: a problem disproportionately borne by developing countries.

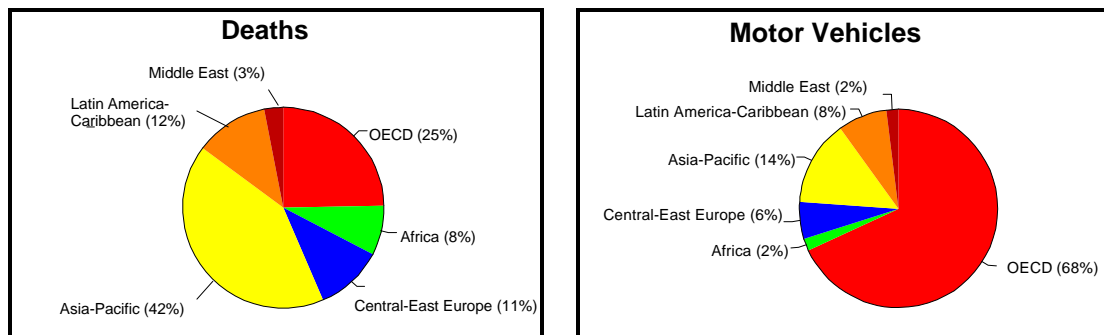
The situation in developed countries has been stabilizing or improving during that past 30 years, as a combination of road safety awareness campaigns, education and training, safer vehicles, seatbelt use, improved enforcement add to safer journeys, despite rising vehicle numbers.

But road safety in developing world is rapidly deteriorating. The situation is made worse by a rapid increase in motorization and continuing lack of investment in safety, an investment which can save lives, increase productivity, and contribute to overall economic development. The escalating road safety problem is a social, health and economic disaster for developing and transition countries.

^{1/} *World Health Report 1999: Making a Difference.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1999, Table 2, p. 102 and Table 4, p. 110. Previous estimates of 700,000 death per year have been revised in light of this latest study. Definitive data is still needed and could highlight even larger numbers of deaths, injuries and disabilities. GRSP is in the process of commissioning research to consolidate/reconcile different estimates and to account for under reporting.

Growing Awareness

As the figures 1 & 2 shockingly demonstrate, the vast majority (75%) of road accident death occur in developing world, though these countries account for only 32% of the number of vehicles.



In the **Asia/Pacific** region alone, over **2 million** people died and around **17 million** were injured or disabled in road accidents in the last 10 years.

In the **Latin America and the Caribbean** (LAC) region recent studies estimate that around **1 million** people have died and around **10 million** have been injured or disabled in road accidents during the last 10 years.

Although the numbers are smaller, similar upward trends and alarming statistics can be found in Central and East Europe, the Middle East, Africa and in other parts of the developing world.

A HEALTH PROBLEM

The 1998 World Disaster Report of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) identifies road accidents as a major and growing health disaster affecting the developing world and the Red Cross/Red Crescent is appealing for action. Road accidents are “a worsening global disaster destroying lives and livelihoods, hampering development and leaving millions in greater vulnerability.”^{2/}

The World Health Organization (WHO) research indicates that for 3 to 35 year olds worldwide, road accidents are now already the leading cause of death and the leading cause of disablement when compared to other accidents and diseases.

Recent studies into the Global Burden of Disease undertaken by Harvard University for WHO and World Bank indicate that among adults aged 15-44 world wide, road traffic accidents were the leading cause of death for men and the 5th most important cause of death for women.^{3/} The study also projects

^{2/} World Disasters Report 1998. Geneva, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p. 20.

^{3/} The Global Burden of Disease: A comprehensive assessment of mortality and disability from disease, injuries, and risk factors in 1990 and projected to 2020. Edited by Christopher JL Murray and Alan D. Lopez. Cambridge, The Harvard School of Public Health on behalf of the World Health Organization and the World Bank, 1996, Table 3.13, p. 182.

that by the year 2020, road accidents will be the 3rd leading burden on health worldwide exceeded only by heart disease and major depression.^{4/}

AN ECONOMIC PROBLEM

At the national level, road accidents can result in annual losses of between 1-3% of gross domestic product (GDP). In some developing countries, the cost of road accidents has been calculated to be even higher (e.g., Thailand is 3.2% of GDP). The World Bank Group has estimated that road accidents now cost the global economy about **US\$ 500 billion per year**. The absolute minimum cost for developing countries is approximately US\$ 100 billion per year. This amounts to more than the annual total combined development aid and loans these countries receive from bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations and therefore inhibits their economic and social development.

If the present trends continue and the number of road accidents continues to rise, by the year 2020 ministries of health in developing countries will be spending 25% of their annual budgets on treatment of road accident casualties alone.

Research has also shown that the number of working years lost as a result of road accidents is higher than is lost from other causes of premature death. Around 70% of the “years of life lost” to road accidents are “working” years, hence the loss of the most economically active and productive years. Victims tend to be children or young adults in their 30s with young families. The loss of a primary breadwinner can be economically and socially devastating for families and communities—perpetuating, or even increasing poverty.

THE MOST VULNERABLE

Like many disasters, road accidents affect particular groups, such as the poor and the young, and leave many of the more vulnerable victims in their wake. Pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and passengers of public service vehicles make up the largest groups of accident victims in developing countries. Focusing the actions on them can minimize the growing global fatality toll and the related impact on communities.

Children

Children constitute a significant proportion of those killed, injured and disabled in road accidents in the developing world. The most recent research undertaken^{5/} indicates that children under the age of 15 account for approximately 15% of the total road accident deaths, injuries and disabilities in developing countries as compared to only 6% of deaths in the developed world. These figures translate into approximately 163,000 children killed and over 1,500,000 children injured or disabled each year. This estimate will undoubtedly rise within the context of the projections made by the Global Burden of Disease for the year 2020. **Will the world community refuse to act in the face of a projected 280,000 children killed per year in road accidents by the year 2020?**

Further research is required to identify the circumstances related to child involvement in road accidents, but the following list indicates that in developing countries between 20-30% of pedestrians killed in road accidents are children. This is especially significant in urban areas.

^{4/} *Global Burden of Disease*, Figure 7.12, p. 375, Tables 7.9-7.11, pp. 375-81.

^{5/} C. Ghee, et al., 1997 (*unpublished*).

Pedestrians

Far more of the victims of road accidents are pedestrians in the developing world. In Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East more than 40% of road accident deaths are pedestrians compared to only 10-20 % in OECD countries. In the urban areas of developing countries, pedestrians can account for 60-70% of road accident deaths, injuries and disabilities. A lack of road safety education, inadequate pedestrian facilities and insufficient political concern for pedestrians are amongst the reasons cited for this situation.

A GROWING PROBLEM - Increased Motorization

Many developing countries are already experiencing annual growth rates in motorized vehicle fleets of 16 or 18 percent (China—18%, India—17%, Malaysia—15%, Vietnam—18%). This implies a doubling of vehicle fleets in 5 years and a trebling in 8 years. The effect is not only increased congestion, but also more severe safety problems for such countries.

As if the existing problems were not bad enough, the developing countries face a growing problem ahead. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate why the problem needs urgent attention.

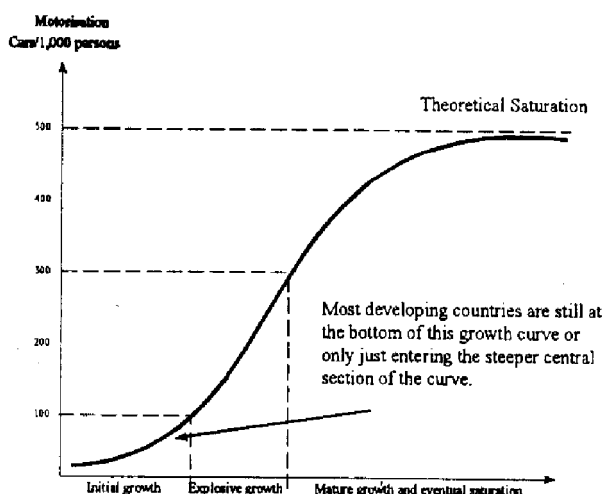


Figure 2

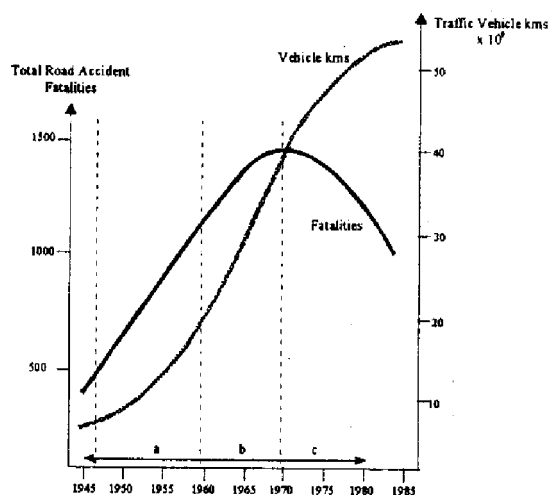


Figure 3

Figure 2 shows that most developing countries are just entering the high growth phase of the motorization curve. This S-curve is based on the experience of the OECD countries where cars are the dominant mode of private transport. The motorcycle, on account of its affordability and efficiency, has increased importance as a primary mode of transport in most developing countries. Compared to passenger cars, the risk of being injured severely or fatally is higher for motorcyclists involved in road accidents.

Figure 3 demonstrates that in the early years of motorization road accident deaths tend to run broadly in parallel with growth in vehicles and level of usage. Priorities for countries at that stage tend to be related to developing road networks and linking major centers of economic activity. Little attention is paid to addressing road safety needs. As road accidents increase dramatically, road safety awareness, advocacy and action begins to rise. As shown in the sample country shown in figure 3, this happened in most OECD countries around the early 1970's. Since then, significant effort and investment have been made to improve road safety. Over the following decades, significant reductions have been achieved in many OECD countries and such reductions are continuing on account of society's investment and commitment to road safety.

It is important to note that most developing countries are just entering the “explosive” phase of motorization growth (a situation which is accelerated by the rapid growth in motorcycle usage). It is projected that the number of road accident related deaths, injuries and disabilities will substantially increase in line with growth in vehicle fleets. During the next 10 years alone, at least 6 million persons will be killed and over 60 millions will be injured or disabled as a result of road accidents in developing countries **unless urgent action is taken**.

CALL TO ACTION

Learning from the experience of developed countries, developing countries can begin to implement effective strategies and avoid the millions of deaths, injuries, disabilities that will otherwise occur over the next decades. Road safety is an investment in life, health and economic development.

The **Global Road Safety Partnership** aims to assist developing and transition countries promote road safety through collaborating and coordination activities with partners from the private sector, civil society, government and bi-/multi-lateral development institutions.

Over seventy organizations met at the World Bank in February 1999 to identify ways in which they can work together to improve road safety globally. The outcome of that meeting is a global coalition known as the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)^{6/} whose members recognize the serious and escalating problem facing the world community and who are making a commitment to take action.

The stage is set for a coordinated global effort to improve road safety conditions in the world. A draft Global Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan has been developed with the assistance of 55 leading safety experts from around the world.^{7/}

BUILDING THE GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The GRSP is comprised of a **Consultative Group** (*the Partners*), a **Steering Committee** designated by the Consultative Group (an interim Steering Committee comprised of individuals from the private sector, public sector and civil society will be established by the World Bank Group), and a **Secretariat** with administrative, fiscal, media/promotional/advocacy and technical components.

Consultative Group

The **GRSP Consultative Group** is the total membership of the Global Road Safety Partnership which will meet at least annually to set overall direction to the GRSP and whose members will be expected to participate in GRSP activities and projects in support of the GRSP objective.

^{6/} The **Global Road Safety Partnership** operates under the framework of the **Business Partners for Development** (BPD) program initiated by the World Bank Group with the active participation of partners from private sector, civil society, government and bi-/multi-lateral international organizations, and with the World Bank Group as an equal partner. BPD is organized into four focus areas: natural resource industries, water and sanitation, youth development and road safety. It is an informal global network that aims to benchmark good practice and produce solid evidence of the positive impact of partnerships—both the developmental impact and the business benefits. BPD intends to demonstrate that these partnerships for development provide win-win situations for business, communities and government, can be more widely used throughout the world, and can be scaled up to national and regional levels.

^{7/} The draft Global Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan are available from the GRSP Secretariat and are currently being updated following a period of consultation with interested parties.

Currently, over 70 organizations have taken an active role in establishing the GRSP. There are many more organizations for whom road safety is directly linked to core business values. **We invite the collaboration of all stakeholders—whether from private sector, government, or community organizations, from all industries, from all regions—to become members of the GRSP and to contribute to improving road safety conditions throughout the world. Each GRSP member is expected to bring resources to the table, such as financial, human, network, dissemination, expertise, etc.**

Membership will be determined by the GRSP Steering Committee according to the following criteria:

Criteria for GRSP Membership

- Organizational commitment at senior level management;
- Recognized as a “socially responsible” organization/company;
- Readiness to involve multiple parts of organization/company in the GRSP activities where appropriate (operations, marketing, advertising, public relations, human resources, philanthropy, etc.);
- Commitment to the GRSP objectives and willingness to participate in GRSP activities;
- Willing to put institutional and financial resources into GRSP.

Steering Committee

The GRSP Steering Committee serves as the executive body of the GRSP. It is drawn from the Consultative Group and for the first year has been appointed to broadly reflect the composition of the GRSP membership. In future years, a nominated Steering Committee will be ratified by the Consultative Group at the GRSP annual meeting.

Secretariat

The GRSP Secretariat will execute on behalf of the Steering Committee general operating and administration of the GRSP, including administrative, fiscal, media/advocacy, and technical activities. It is needed to coordinate GRSP activities, to provide technical and partnership advice and to be the hub for GRSP communications. It will be assisted as needed by consultants and technical working groups.

The Secretariat is currently hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.^{8/}

Financial Support of GRSP

Financial support is needed for both GRSP endorsed focus projects as well as for the central running expenses of a small GRSP secretariat and GRSP activities. The International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies is administering the GRSP Trust Fund at its headquarters in Geneva.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF GRSP

*The GRSP aims to facilitate, support, promote GRSP partners' activities in road safety which contribute to the GRSP objective of improving safety through **focus projects**.*

^{8/} See Annex Two for contact information.

Focus project activities will vary, but the GRSP will undertake projects which benefit from the synergies released through partnerships in which the cooperation and collaboration of the private sector, civil society, and government is sought. GRSP focus projects will be used as the basis for “learning what works”, for a systematic development of good practice by “doing” road safety in partnership, and development of local capacity.

Goal of Focus Projects

GRSP projects should be innovative in their approach to safety or in their partnership dimensions. They should be outstanding examples, effective, likely to succeed, influential (replicable, scaleable, contribute to knowledge base on road safety). Although not a grant maker, GRSP acts as a lever for identifying funding sources and potential partners across the three sectors (business, civil society, government). Projects need to fit within the GRSP Strategy and Action Plan and contribute to the GRSP objectives.

Sectors for Attention

Because road safety improvement requires a multi-disciplinary approach, activities need to be undertaken in all sectors affecting road safety and these can be conveniently grouped into 6 major themes. Across all these themes it is necessary to consider how best to engage and encourage the key players who could be involved in the partnership.

(a) Road environment

- Accident data systems
- Road traffic engineering for accident prevention
- Road traffic engineering for accident reduction

(b) Road user behavior

- Traffic safety education for children
- Traffic law enforcement
- Road safety publicity
- Driver training and testing

(c) Vehicle safety

- Vehicle design
- Vehicle inspection
- Motor insurance
- Motorcycle safety

(d) Special needs of developing countries

- Pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle safety
- Driving under influence of alcohol / drugs
- Speed reduction

(e) Safety management and orchestration

- Funding for road safety activity
- Generating political commitment
- Coordination of road safety
- Traffic safety research

(f) Health education and promotion

- Mobilizing the medical community
- Integration of road safety in health education
- Health activities for road safety
- Emergency response and rescue

Priorities

Priorities for dealing with global safety problems will change as progress is made on addressing existing problems and as new issues arise.

In establishing priorities it is important to:

- Initiate the most urgent improvements;
- Tackle problems where there are known and effective solutions available;
- To develop local institutional capacity building so that they can more effectively implement the wider downstream road safety improvement programs.

Initial Activities

- Raising awareness of the problem amongst key decision makers and opinion formers;
- Establishing momentum for global action by engaging / involving all major stakeholders;
- Consolidation of good practice / experience in road safety for potential transfer to developing world;
- Strengthen capacity / expertise of key individuals and organizations in developing countries and empower and equip them (via provision of training, guidelines, information and access to knowledge and technology) to tackle the problem;
- Implementation of pilot demonstration projects and focus projects to demonstrate the synergy and potential for win-win opportunities amongst communities, private sector, governments, international associations and development institutions.

Target Groups

In the developing world the greatest numbers of deaths and injuries occur to vulnerable road users and these accidents often involve commercial vehicles (trucks, buses and taxis) or low cost means of transport such as walking, non-motorized vehicles (NMVs) (eg. bicycles) and motorcycles. Consequently, initial efforts although primarily aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, expertise and techniques in developing countries, will focus on reducing such deaths and injuries by developing appropriate interventions and safety programs aimed at:

- Pedestrian safety;
- Non-Motorized Vehicles (bicycles, animal / human pulled);
- Motorcycles;
- Commercial vehicle accidents (buses, truck and taxis);
- Child accidents.

PROPOSED UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF ROAD SAFETY

The United Nations has a most important role to play in the promotion of social and economic development of nations. Safe transportation is part of the basis of improved development. Improving road safety is an area in which the United Nations system has a particular positive role to play. By declaring the observance of a Decade of Road Safety, the United Nations can take the lead to give impetus to improved road safety throughout the world, especially in developing countries. Annex One contains a draft text for such a United Nations General Assembly resolution.

Annex 1

Proposed Resolution - Draft

International United Nations Decade of Road Safety

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the critical and positive role that transportation plays for economic development,

Recognizing the growing number of people being killed and injured in road crashes worldwide,

Recognizing the need to address road safety as a rapidly emerging public health issue,

Recognizing the social and economic burden that traffic deaths and injuries pose on societies, especially in developing countries,

Noting that the cost of road crashes exceeds the total of development aid and loans developing countries receive,

Recognizing that the human losses due to road crashes have reached epidemic proportions and without serious action this trend will be impossible to reverse,

Noting also the unity of thought in the international community that a coordinated effort must be made worldwide to help the poorest, who are in general the most vulnerable road users,

Building upon the efforts of the international community to raise awareness to issues of traffic safety to prevent and minimize the occurrence of road crash-related deaths and injuries,

Proclaims the years 2000-2009 as the Decade of Road Safety;

Requests that the observance of the Decade of Road Safety be a special occasion for giving impetus to traffic safety programmes throughout the world;

Invites Governments, the United Nations system, all concerned non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society, the private sector, medical and academic institutions, and the media to highlight and give enhanced recognition to the role of effective measures in the efforts to eradicate traffic-related fatalities and injuries;

Invites the Secretary-General to submit at its next session a report containing a draft programme of action for the effective observance of the Decade, in consultation with all relevant actors, including UN bodies, under an item entitled "First United Nations Decade of Road Safety" and that such be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

Annex 2

GRSP SECRETARIAT CONTACTS

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