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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-sixth session, 17-19 February 2004
agenda item 13(c))

ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY

Follow-up to General Assembly Resolution on the Global Road Safety Crisis

Note by the secretariat

1. On 29 May 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/57/309 on the global road safety crisis. In it, the General Assembly welcomed, *inter alia*, the designation by the World Health Organization of “Safe Roads” as the theme of World Health Day 2004. It further requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the global road safety crisis to the 58th session of the General Assembly.
2. The report of the Secretary-General (A/58/228), with input from the Transport Division and other organizations dealing with road safety issues, was submitted to the 58th session of the General Assembly as requested. On 5 November 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/58/9 on the global road safety crisis, calling, *inter alia*, for a special plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held on 14 April 2004 to increase awareness of the magnitude of the road traffic injury problem at a high level and inviting the Economic and Social Council, working with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and through its regional commissions, to facilitate the exchange of information on best road traffic safety practices and the development of recommendations for road traffic injury control.
3. One of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General is that a coordinating body be designated to facilitate and coordinate these activities at the international level. Several countries and organizations in WP.1 considered that WP.1 should assume this

new role and should become a Global Forum for Road Safety, in a similar way that WP.29 has become a Global Forum. This issue is likely to be debated at the Special Session of the General Assembly on 14 April 2004 in New York.

4. The Committee may wish to discuss this question on the basis of the General Assembly Resolutions which appear below and consider whether it should recommend that WP.1 assume the role of a Global Forum for Road Safety.

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.3/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

58/9. Global road safety crisis

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/309 of 22 May 2003,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on the global road safety crisis,^{1/}

Expressing great concern at the rapid increase, particularly in developing countries, in traffic fatalities and injuries worldwide, which accounted for an estimated 1.26 million deaths in 2000 and which disproportionately affect people in low- and middle-income countries, and also expressing concern at the economic costs of road traffic injuries, which amount to 518 billion dollars per annum worldwide, developing countries bearing 100 billion dollars of the cost,

Convinced that road traffic injuries are a major public health problem requiring concerted multisectoral efforts for effective and sustainable prevention,

Affirming the need for a worldwide effort to raise awareness about the health impact and social and economic costs of injuries caused by road traffic accidents,

Recognizing that effective action requires strong political commitment, in particular at the national but also at the international level,

Recognizing that road traffic injuries are a preventable and treatable problem,

Emphasizing the need for the private sector and relevant non-governmental organizations to participate actively in promoting road traffic safety,

Convinced that road safety requires partnerships, bridging many sectors of society, to promote and facilitate efforts to prevent road traffic injuries,

Convinced also that responsibility for road safety rests at the local, municipal and national levels, and recognizing that many developing countries have limited capacities to address these issues,

Recognizing the importance of further strengthening the efforts of developing countries to build capacities in the field of road safety and of providing financial and technical support for those efforts,

Welcoming the efforts of the relevant United Nations agencies and many other organizations in promoting road traffic safety,

Commending the World Health Organization for its important work, and welcoming the selection of the theme "Road safety" for the observance of World Health Day on 7 April 2004, when the World Health Organization will release its *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*,

^{1/} A/58/228.

1. *Decides* to hold a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 14 April 2004 in connection with World Health Day and the launching of the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention* to increase awareness of the magnitude of the road traffic injury problem at a high level, and invites Governments to participate, as appropriate;

2. *Invites* the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the President of the World Bank, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to address the Assembly;

3. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council, working with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and through its regional commissions, to facilitate the exchange of information on best road traffic safety practices and the development of recommendations for road traffic injury control;

4. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to organize a meeting of experts, the private sector, relevant non-governmental organizations, members of civil society and other interested parties, including the media, on the morning of 15 April 2004, in conjunction with the plenary meeting, to raise awareness and exchange information on best road practices;

5. *Underlines* the need for international cooperation to deal with issues of road safety;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, through an appropriate United Nations body, to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the progress made in improving global road safety and the issues referred to in the present resolution, also taking into consideration the views expressed during the meetings held on 14 and 15 April 2004;

7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled "Global road safety crisis".

th plenary meeting
5 November 2003

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/57/L.77 and Add.1)*]

57/309. Global road safety crisis

The General Assembly,

Noting the rapid increase in road traffic deaths, injuries and disabilities globally,

Recognizing the disproportionate fatality rate in developing countries,

Taking note of the negative impact of road traffic injuries on national and global economies,

Affirming the need for a worldwide effort to raise awareness of the importance of road safety as a public policy issue, especially through education and the dissemination of information,

Convinced that responsibility for road safety rests at the local, municipal and national levels,

Affirming that the road safety crisis has multiple dimensions requiring collaborative efforts at all levels, including through appropriate public health education programmes,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts of the World Health Organization to designate "Safe roads" as the theme of World Health Day 2004, to be observed on 7 April of that year, and to undertake the development of a world report on road traffic injury prevention, to be issued in April 2004;

2. *Encourages* Governments and civil society to raise awareness of the widespread problem of preventable road traffic deaths and injuries, targeting especially the young in educational establishments;

3. *Urges* all Governments to promulgate and to continue to enforce existing traffic laws;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly on the global road safety crisis, through the appropriate United Nations body, taking into consideration the views expressed by Member States and the relevant organs and agencies within the United Nations system, for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

*86th plenary meeting
22 May 2003*