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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Transport and Logistics  
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Cairo, 10–11 January 2024



Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Round-table discussion: financing road safety**

**Summary**

The present document is submitted by the secretariat of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as a background paper to enrich the round-table discussion held as part of the proceedings of the twenty-fourth session of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics on the theme of financing road safety.

Representatives of member States are invited to actively participate in the round-table discussion. The Committee on Transport and Logistics is invited to review the present document and comment thereon.

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## Introduction

1. Each year, 1.35 million people lose their lives and an estimated 50 million persons are injured in road crashes worldwide. Road crashes are considered the leading cause of death in the 5–29 years age group. Around 93 per cent of these fatalities occur in low-income and middle-income countries, thus increasing by their high cost the development burden of these countries, averaging \$1.7 trillion per year, or about 6 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP), according to the World Bank estimates.<sup>1</sup>

2. Recognizing the importance of the issue of road crashes, Governments worldwide unanimously declared, through General Assembly resolution [74/299](#) of 2 September 2020, a second decade of action for road safety, 2021–2030, aimed at decreasing the number of fatalities and injuries by at least 50 per cent during this period.<sup>2</sup> The five United Nations regional commissions collaborated with the World Health Organization to prepare the [Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030](#) as a frame of reference to inspire national and local governments and other stakeholders who can influence road safety issues (such as civil society, academia, the private sector, donors, and community and youth leaders), as they develop action plans and national and local goals for the Decade of Action.

3. General Assembly resolution [74/299](#) invites Member States to further invest in road safety at all levels, including by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for institutional and infrastructural improvements for road safety.

4. The Global Plan for the Decade of Action emphasizes the primary responsibility of Governments to ensure the safety of citizens and to give political priority to road safety, acknowledged as a valuable public good. The Global Plan also underscores the political will to do this, as reflected in the level of financing, across sectors, allocated to road safety-related objectives at the national level.

5. The [consultation paper for the establishment of the United Nations Road Safety Fund](#) estimates that an additional \$260 billion of programme financing is required to achieve road safety targets 3.6 and 11.2 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in low-income and middle-income countries over the coming decade. This covers additional investments in a stand-alone targeted road safety improvement programme, plus additional investment in enforcement and media campaigns targeting unsafe road user behaviours. While the consultation document acknowledges the magnitude of the challenge that this additional financing poses to the budgets of low-income and middle-income countries, it stresses the urgent need for international donor collaboration to provide grants amounting to \$770 million annually to stimulate and strengthen national capabilities in this regard, and assist in mobilizing sustainable national resources to improve road safety.

6. Within the framework of preparations for the United Nations High-level Meeting on road safety (New York, 30 June–1 July 2022), the President of the United Nations General Assembly organized an ad hoc meeting at the United Nations Headquarters on 3 December 2021 to address financing road safety. The discussions highlighted potential sources for domestic revenue to advance road safety, such as fuel taxes, insurance for vehicles, vehicle customs, registration licenses, and speeding tickets. At the international level, options include private sector resources, philanthropic activities, donations, green bonds, and debt-for-nature swaps.<sup>3</sup>

7. In this context, and within the activities of the project funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund on “Enhancing evidence-based interventions to improve road safety in the Arab region by increasing the effectiveness and reliability of data collection, processing and analysis”, ESCWA is organizing, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, and in collaboration with the World Bank, a round-table discussion on

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank Blogs, [Private investment in road safety can save lives](#), 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Global Allian of NGOs for Road Safety, [UN Resolution on Improving Global Road Safety](#).

<sup>3</sup> SDG Knowledge Hub, [UNGA event highlights potential sources of financing for road safety](#), 2022.

financing road safety. This discussion will be part of the proceeding of the twenty-fourth session of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics, which will be held in Cairo on 10 and 11 January 2024, with the participation of senior representatives of transport ministries in Arab countries, concerned with planning and managing safe and sustainable land transport.

### **I. Objectives of the round-table discussion**

8. The round-table discussion aims to undertake the following:
- Demonstrate complementarity in the roles of funding traffic safety between international development organizations and national bodies concerned with developing safe and sustainable land transport.
  - Exchange experiences and lessons about the practices of Arab countries in managing the financing of road safety.
  - Help to uncover national opportunities to provide sustainable financing for road safety.
  - Present best practices for financing road safety at the global and regional levels.

### **II. Participants**

9. Participants at the round-table discussion will include the following:
- Experts from ESCWA, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank.
  - Senior representatives of transport ministries in Arab countries, concerned with planning and managing safe and sustainable land transport.

### **III. Expected output**

10. The round-table discussion will contribute to the preparation of guidelines for sustainable financing of road safety in Arab countries, to be prepared in collaboration between ESCWA and the Islamic Development Bank.

### **IV. Date and venue**

11. The round-table discussion will be held as part of the proceedings of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics in Cairo on the afternoon of 10 January and the morning of 11 January 2024, at a location to be determined later.

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