

**Moscow, Paris, 19 November 2009**

## **“Make reducing road casualties a priority”**

### **International Transport Forum Calls Countries to Action and Urges them to Improve Road Safety by Applying More Comprehensive Safe Systems.**

In welcoming the United Nations decade of action on Road Safety, the International Transport Forum (ITF) called countries to action and urged them to dramatically improve road safety by applying a more comprehensive approach to road safety. “Road-related deaths are one of global transport’s most pressing problems,” Jack Short, the ITF Secretary General, said today at an international conference on road safety held in Moscow. “National policies need to make reducing road casualties a priority.”

The First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, requested by the UN General Assembly and hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation, represents a historic opportunity to make progress on tackling a leading cause of death and disability. As many as 1 000 government ministers, representatives of UN agencies, officials from civil society organizations, leaders of private companies, and many other road safety experts are participating in the event.

The solution to dramatically reducing the number of road-related fatalities, which now stands at about 1 300 000 deaths a year world-wide, is to learn from best-performing countries, whose fatality rates are five or more times better than those poorly performing countries. “Our goal must be clear: to make road travel as safe for all passengers as rail and air transport,” Mr. Short said.

At the occasion of the Moscow conference, the ITF also released a summary of Transport Ministers’ recommendations on road safety, made over the last 40 years (available online at: [www.internationaltransportforum.org/Pub/pdf/09CDsr/index.pdf](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/Pub/pdf/09CDsr/index.pdf)). Mr. Short said that these decisions underline the changing approach to road safety in the best performing countries, as these have moved from a narrow range of specific interventions to a more comprehensive approach, the “safe system approach is the way forward for all countries” Mr. Short said, urging all countries to adopt a safe system approach now. The immediate focus should be on rapidly developing countries, where vehicle use and ownership is increasing quickly. International exchange of experience and good practice needs to be strengthened, though countries also need to analyse their own circumstances carefully to see where interventions will be most effective.

# PRESS RELEASE



Many countries have set ambitious targets, and most ITF member states have agreed to a 50% reduction in fatalities by 2012. Though generally encouraging, progress towards meeting these targets is uneven, and in the longer term these targets are still not ambitious enough. Even if all countries would achieve the present level of best performing countries by 2050, the world would still face half a million road deaths a year at that time. Therefore, we must go further by innovating and thus reducing the high price we pay for our mobility.

Countries are invited to join the International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group (IRTAD), the ITFs' global network for exchanging analysis and data on the issue. IRTAD's new Annual Report will be available shortly on the ITF website.

*The International Transport Forum is the leading global platform and meeting place for transport, logistics and mobility. It attracts key figures from government and politics, business and industry, research and civil society, coming together to discuss a transport topic of worldwide strategic importance. The involvement of more than 50 Ministers of Transport offers many direct links to policy-making and business at both national and international levels.*

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