

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Combating road deaths moves up on global policy agenda

At annual summit of transport ministers, International Transport Forum presents contributions to UN Decade of Action for Road Safety

More than **1.3 million people die in road accidents** each year. If nothing is done, this already chilling figure risks to rise to 1.9 million deaths per year. Around 90 per cent of road fatalities occur in emerging and developing countries. Here, the mixture of population growth and higher numbers of vehicles due to rising incomes are proving a deadly combination, as infrastructure and regulatory environment have difficulty keeping pace.

By contrast, in OECD countries the number of road fatalities has fallen dramatically over the past decade, in some cases by 50 per cent. The latest data for Sweden, one of the leaders in road safety, shows 2.8 road deaths per 100 000 inhabitants, a figure thought unattainable only a few years back. But even in the developed world far too many still fall victim to traffic: more than 100 000 men, women and children die on the roads of OECD countries – around 300 every day.

To combat the continuing carnage on the world's roads, the United Nations have proclaimed 2011 to 2020 the **Decade of Action for Road Safety**. May 2011 marks the global launch of this ambitious global initiative. In the ten years up to 2020, governments, international organisations, civil society groups and transport industry will intensify their collaboration to stabilise and then cut road fatalities by promoting road safety measures at all levels.

The International Transport Forum is part of this effort. Its work focuses on overcoming the disconnect between the advances seen in some countries and the worsening situation in others, by **facilitating knowledge transfer**, encouraging best practices and benchmarking:

- ▶ Through **IRTAD**, the International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group, the International Transport Forum provides comparative data and policy advice that help countries to calibrate their road safety policies and achieve demonstrable progress. (more on IRTAD at [www.internationaltransportforum.org/irtad](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/irtad))
- ▶ The International Transport Forum's report "**Towards Zero. Ambitious Road Safety Targets and the Safe System Approach**" (2008) called for adoption of a Safe System Approach in all countries, with a long term vision of no deaths and serious injuries on the road, backed by tough but realistic operational targets. (Download the summary at [www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/safety/targets/08TargetsSummary.pdf](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/safety/targets/08TargetsSummary.pdf)).

- ▶ Other recent work on **cycling safety** and on **pedestrians**, provide analysis and policy suggestions that can help avoid unnecessary deaths. (for more on cycling safety, see: [www.internationaltransportforum.org/Proceedings/Cycling2011](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/Proceedings/Cycling2011)).

"We are pleased to contribute to this important and necessary UN initiative", said **Jack Short**, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum, at a joint press conference with the World Health Organisation during the International Transport Forum's 2011 summit in Leipzig, Germany.

"We have a five decade-long track record in developing and introducing effective road safety policies, and will bring our experience in this field to the table during the Decade of Action. Our political recommendations provide a solid base for action and, if implemented around the world, would save hundreds of thousands of lives. Our research is at the cutting edge, identifying the next generation of policies to save lives. The way forward is knowledge transfer, exchange of best practice and benchmarking based on clear targets."

Added **Véronique Feypell-de la Beaumelle**, the International Transport Forum's road safety co-ordinator: "We must create more and better ways for countries to learn from each other. The toolbox exists and can be adapted for countries that face growing populations with more cars on the one hand and an infrastructure and regulatory framework that is not adapted to rapidly growing traffic volumes."

For more information on the International Transport Forum's work on road safety, please visit [www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/safety/safety.html](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/safety/safety.html).

**Contact:**

Michael Kloth

Head of Communications

T +33 (0)6 27 21 47 41

E [michael.kloth@oecd.org](mailto:michael.kloth@oecd.org)