

Open Letter to the United Nations

Every six seconds someone is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads.

Today the United Nations General Assembly has a rare opportunity to address one of the most serious and yet overlooked issues of our time, the appalling toll of death and injury in road crashes.

More than 3000 people are dying every day. Ten million people are estimated to have already lost their lives on the roads in this first decade of the 21st Century.

Ninety per cent of these casualties occur in developing countries, where measures to improve road safety are failing to keep pace with rapid motorisation. Those most affected by road crashes are the most vulnerable: the poor; the young, particularly children; pedestrians and novice drivers. Road crashes are already the leading cause of death worldwide for young people over the age of ten.

Poor road safety has a serious impact on many other areas of development. Road crashes impose a high economic cost and a serious burden on health resources. Communities can be devastated by the loss of a teacher, a leader, or a child.

The developing countries most affected desperately need home grown expertise and champions for road safety, and the domestic political commitment to fund and support road safety measures. There is much that the international community could do to foster this effort, by raising the profile of road traffic injuries, sharing knowledge of injury prevention and including road safety in their programmes to promote global development.

To catalyse this effort, and to raise political support for action on road deaths, the Make Roads Safe campaign is calling for a first ever United Nations Ministerial Conference on Global Road Safety.

Today the UN General Assembly will debate this proposal.

We urge all UN member governments to support the call for a UN Conference on Global Road Safety.

Every six seconds there is another reason why we must act. The time for action is now.

Jimmy Carter, Former U.S. President; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Oscar Arias Sánchez, President of Costa Rica; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Sonia Gandhi, President, Indian National Congress

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland; Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, Chairman, Commission for Global Road Safety

Norman Mineta, U.S. Secretary of Transportation 2001-2006

Max Mosley, President, Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

Professor Claes Tingvall, Director of Traffic Safety, Swedish Road Administration

Peter Adamson, Senior Adviser, Unicef

Professor Susan P. Baker, Founding Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research & Policy

Linda C. Degutis, President, American Public Health Association (APHA)

Stephen Lewis, Former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS

Kevin Watkins, Former Director, UN Human Development Report

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The Campaign for Global Road Safety

www.makeroadssafe.org