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Strategic Partners Segment:

Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety

Activities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

Note by the Secretariat of the Special Envoy for Road Safety*

Summary

Every year, approximately 1.19 million lives are tragically lost due to road traffic crashes, while between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, often leading to disabilities. Shockingly, road crashes rank as the eighth leading cause of death worldwide, with young people aged 5 to 29 being the most affected. The vast majority of these fatalities occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), exacerbating the economic toll. Road traffic injuries result in substantial economic losses for individuals, families, and nations, accounting for 3–5 per cent of a country's GDP and pushing millions into poverty.

Addressing this urgent issue, the United Nations has taken significant actions, appointing Mr. Jean Todt as the Special Envoy for Road Safety in April 2015, with the mandate extended by Secretary-General António Guterres. The Sustainable Development Goals also include specific targets on road safety, aiming to halve global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes and providing access to safe transport systems for all by 2030.

In response to the pressing road safety agenda, United Nations Member States adopted the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Improving Global Road Safety on 31 August 2020, setting a new target to halve road deaths and injuries by 2030. This resolution calls for further support to the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), an extension of the Special Envoy's function, and reaffirmation of the value of United Nations legal instruments on road safety. It urges WHO and the United Nations Regional Commissions to develop a plan for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety and calls on United Nations Member States to invest in road safety at all levels.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



On 21 July 2021, the resolution A/RES/75/308 was adopted, defining the scope and modalities of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety (HLM). The HLM, held on 30 June-1 July 2022, brought together public and private sector officials committed to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, aiming to achieve the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals targets.

On 3 June 2024, the General Assembly urged accelerated action to reduce deaths and injuries from traffic accidents worldwide by implementing the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, and adopted the resolution “Improving global road safety” (document A/78/L.78), by which it urged Member States and relevant actors to accelerate and scale up efforts to implement the Global Plan, making road safety a political priority and ensuring its relevance in the broader sustainable development agenda.

The resolution welcomed the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety, with secretariat support from the Economic Commission for Europe, in effectively mobilizing sustained high-level commitment to road safety by advocating adherence to and raising awareness of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety, sharing good practices, including through participation in global and regional conferences, and advocating for increased funds for global road safety.

This document from the Special Envoy contains the activities which contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate, as implemented between January and October 2024.

The Committee is invited **to take note** of this document and **to express its support** for the continuation of the important work and momentum built so far by the Special Envoy to improve road safety.

I. Background

1. The severe impact of road traffic crashes on the well-being of all people and the huge economic consequences for societies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries prompted the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint on 29 April 2015, Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety, with the Secretariat hosted by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).
2. In response to the worrying situation of road safety on the development agenda, specific goals on road safety were included in the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. Target 3.6 calls for halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes, and target 11.2 aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.
3. In August 2020, United Nations Member States recommitted themselves to urgent action for road safety by adopting the latest General Assembly resolution on Improving Global Road Safety (A/RES/74/299). The resolution calls for a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety and sets a new target to halve the number of road deaths and injuries by 2030. Among key calls for action are a request for further support for the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), a request to the United Nations Secretary-General to consider extending the Special Envoy for Road Safety function through 2030 and a reaffirmation of the value of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety. It also asks WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for the Second Decade of Action. Most importantly, it invites Member States to invest in road safety at all levels, including by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for institutional and infrastructural improvements for road safety.
4. In July 2021, United Nations Member States adopted resolution A/RES/75/308 on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety (HLM). The objective of the HLM is to address gaps and challenges, mobilize political leadership, promote multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and assess the progress made with the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals.

5. In December 2021, a high-level preparatory meeting, convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), was held and focused on international and domestic financing for road safety.

6. In June and July of 2022, the HLM 2030 Horizon for Road Safety: Securing a Decade of Action and Delivery, was convened by the President of UNGA. HLM brought together officials of the public and private sectors who committed to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety and adopted the new political declaration to ensure that the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals targets are met.

7. On 3 June 2024, the General Assembly urged accelerated action to reduce deaths and injuries from traffic accidents worldwide by implementing the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. Acting without a vote, the 193-member organ adopted the resolution “Improving global road safety” (document A/78/L.78), by which it urged Member States and relevant actors to accelerate and scale up efforts to implement the Global Plan, making road safety a political priority and ensuring its relevance in the broader sustainable development agenda. The resolution welcomed the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety, with secretariat support from the Economic Commission for Europe, in effectively mobilizing sustained high-level commitment to road safety by advocating adherence to and raising awareness of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety, sharing good practices, including through participation in global and regional conferences, and advocating for increased funds for global road safety.

8. To date, the Special Envoy has visited nearly 100 United Nations Member States, where he held bilateral meetings with 38 Heads of States and more than 280 Ministers.

9. As per the ECE Evaluation Policy, the Office of the Special Envoy underwent its 2020-2024 activities’ evaluation, following the first one which was related to the efforts implemented between 2015 and 2019. The resulting report will summarize the findings, conclusions as well as recommendations, and will be published at the end of 2024 or early 2025.

10. This report of the Special Envoy contains the activities that contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate (see the annex), implemented since the Special Envoy’s previous report (ECE/TRANS/2024/26).

II. Summary and Highlights of the Activities Implemented by the Special Envoy

A. Promoting Global Partnerships to Support the Design and Implementation of Strategies and Activities to Improve Road Safety

11. Promoting global partnerships to enhance road safety has remained a top priority for the Special Envoy, and in concrete terms, was addressed by the Special Envoy through more than 300 meetings, consultations, and participation in various awareness-raising initiatives, such as the following.

1. Financing for Road Safety

12. The Special Envoy has been fundraising for the UNRSF. Serving as an Advisory Board member, he tirelessly worked to elevate the visibility of the UNRSF during various activities, meetings, missions, and events for the Group of Friends for Road Safety, a high-level network of over 100 senior leaders from various backgrounds including governments, United Nations organisations, diplomatic, celebrity and sports world communities. Moreover, the Special Envoy met with some private sector representatives, including the Executive Director of PVBLIC Foundation; the Senior Vice President of Salesforce; and Senior Management of Autoliv. These efforts underscore the Special Envoy's commitment to securing vital resources for road safety initiatives, demonstrating the importance of collaborative partnerships in driving meaningful change on the world's roads.

13. On 26 February 2024, the Special Envoy delivered remarks at the UNRSF press conference in the context of the Geneva International Motor Show.

14. On 27 February 2024, the Special Envoy participated in the UNRSF virtual Open Day.

15. On 23 May 2024, the Special Envoy supported the UNRSF 2023 Annual Report Launch. The report highlighted the significance of local efforts and their far-reaching effects in enhancing road safety worldwide.

16. On 2 September 2024, the Special Envoy contributed to the UNRSF and Social Security Organization (SOCISO) Conference Safer Journey, Sustainable Future on ASIA Road Safety (CARS) 2024 through a video message.

17. On 27 June 2024, the Special Envoy attended the Ninth UNRSF Advisory Board Meeting.

2. Global Group of Friends of Road Safety

18. Since 2019, the Special Envoy has been instrumental in fostering road safety initiatives within the United Nations and diplomatic community through the creation of the Group of Friends for Road Safety, also known as the Friends of Road Safety Network. Initially established in Geneva, alongside the European Union delegation, the network expanded to New York City, Washington DC in the United States of America Bangkok, Thailand and Brussels, Belgium. In 2022, a global Friends of the Special Envoy Network was formed, building upon the diplomatic hubs. The network of Friends for Road Safety consists of 116 Members (with their 90 Advisors), which include heads of Private Sector Companies, International Organizations, along with Representatives of Member States and Cities, United Nations Leaders, and celebrities.

19. The Friends of Road Safety Network aims to drive increased engagement and collaboration for road safety in their respective nations, companies, and institutions, including at the local level. They will be supported by road safety champions, including global celebrities, to amplify their message and advocate for safer roads worldwide.

20. On 24 April 2024, the Special Envoy chaired the Second Group of Advisors Meeting in the context of the Friends of the Special Envoy for Road Safety, in Geneva. The session aimed at seeking the Advisors' advice in further developing the Engagement Plan for the Members of the Friends of the Special Envoy for Road Safety, following the First Meeting held on 9 October 2023. Considerations for potential activities and initiatives were made under the following categories: communications, advocacy and awareness, United Nations Global Campaign for Road Safety; Safe and Affordable Helmets Campaign; collaboration for inclusivity, youth and gender equality initiatives; and resource mobilisation. Nearly 45 participants attended the Second Advisors Meeting.

21. On 3 December 2024, the Third Group of Advisors Meeting will take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. During this meeting, the strategy of the Safe and Affordable Helmets Initiative, and Youth, Gender Equality and Inclusivity action plan, that were developed after rounds of consultations with Advisors and road safety experts. The aim of the meeting is for Advisors to discuss these presentations towards agreement on next steps. The discussions held on its margins further strengthened the collective efforts and leveraged the interests to advance the global road safety targets.

3. Eighth United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety

22. Following the seven previous United Nations-wide meetings hosted by the Special Envoy, the Special Envoy will hold the Eighth Partnership Meeting for Road Safety on 3 December 2024. The annual partnership meeting aims to increase greater strategic coordination efforts on road safety by the United Nations and will be attended by high-level representatives from the United Nations organizations and departments.

23. The main topics to be covered during the meeting will include the opportunities of maximising linkages with the broader Sustainable Development Goals agenda; the regional and international initiatives; and the planning for the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (Marrakech, Morocco, 18–19 February 2025).

B. Advocating with Governments, Civil Society and the Private Sector for the Promotion of Road Safety, Particularly in Countries with a High Rate of Road Fatalities and Injuries

1. National level Advocacy with Governments and Other Stakeholders to Increase Attention on Road Safety

24. In 2024, the Special Envoy travelled to 28 countries, six of which were ECE member States. The Special Envoy meets with high-level government officials in mostly low- and middle-income countries with poor road safety records to raise visibility, prioritization and investment in road safety. Since 2015, the Special Envoy has held meetings with government representatives and relevant stakeholders in 97 countries: 22 countries in Asia/Eurasia/Oceania, 18 countries in Africa, 9 countries in the Middle-East, 27 countries in Europe and North America, and 21 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean. These discussions focused on the status of the road safety situation in each country and encouraged accession to and implementation of the United Nations road safety conventions. The Special Envoy continues to keep the United Nations road safety conventions, the importance of strong governance and the need to build complete national road safety systems on the agenda of his bilateral meetings and on messages in his speeches at conferences.

2. Global Awareness Campaign on Road Safety

25. The Special Envoy has kept expanding and launching the United Nations Global Road Safety Campaign in partnership with JCDcaux and Saatchi & Saatchi (Publicis Group) and supported by 16 global celebrities and national Olympic gold champions. Specifically, during the year, it was displayed in 40 countries and launch events took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chile, Côte D'Ivoire, Italy, Mongolia, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates.

26. The campaign, to be implemented in 80 countries by the end of 2025, is screened on billboards, bus shelters and bikeshares, with a strong presence on social media platforms. Its theme Make a Safety Statement represents a resounding call to action, amplifying the message of the New Decade of Action for Road Safety, with the objective of halving the number of road-related victims by 2030.

3. Kofi Annan Road Safety Award for Africa

27. The Third Kofi Annan Road Safety Award could not take place during 2024 due to officials' conflicting schedules. Planning among the proposed host Government (Eswatini), ECA, Office of the Special Envoy and the Kofi Annan Foundation, is ongoing for the event to happen in 2025. Such regional awards will be given throughout the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030) to Governments and stakeholders that have been showing a strong determination and motivation in developing and implementing innovative and outstanding ideas and initiatives to save lives on Africa's roads.

C. Participation in Global or Regional Conferences and Meetings on Road Safety

28. The Special Envoy participated in in-person and online meetings and conferences in efforts to highlight road safety, comprising events where road safety may not have been previously covered. These include:

- Misk Youth Majlis on the margins of the 2024 World Economic Forum;
- Eighty-sixth Session of the ECE Inland Transport Committee;
- One Earth Summit;
- ECE-ITU Future Networked Car Symposium;
- National Helmet Wearing Coalition Meeting;

- Croisements festival;
- S&P Global Mobility Council Meeting;
- First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Transport;
- Second UNDSS roundtable on road safety;
- New Jersey Sanofi road safety pledge event;
- New York City Department of Transportation Equity Summit;
- Global NCAP World Congress;
- Second Meeting of the High-Level Consultative Committee for the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Road Safety;
- Eighth ECE International Public Privat Partnership Forum;
- Fourth UNDSS-Asian Innovation Investment Bank Annual Security Symposium Innovative and Tech-enabled Security Risk Management Panel;
- Autoliv-UNRSF Strengthening Motorcycle Safety Globally Roundtable;
- UNDESA High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Implementing the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport side event;
- Quito Conversation on Road Safety with the United Nations Special Envoy;
- Roundtable with the United Nations Global Compact in Peru;
- Young World Summit 2024;
- United Nations Regional Commission New York Office panel discussion;
- Mission of Italy Sport made in Italy: a tool for growth event;
- Advancing the Global Road Safety Agenda towards 2030 event at the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;
- Eight Future Investment Initiative;
- 2024 Africa Road Safety Seminar organized by the Global Road Safety Partnership, International Road Assessment Programme, UNECA, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Kenya Red Cross;
- International Road Federation World Congress;
- 8th Session of the Committee on Transport;
- Special event: Improving Motorized Two-Wheeler Safety: Saving Lives of Vulnerable Road Users;
- Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, Turkmenistan.

D. Advocating for Accession to, and a More Effective Implementation of the United Nations Road Safety Legal Instruments

29. This objective has been addressed at meetings of the Special Envoy with governments, representatives of international organizations and United Nations system organizations, as well as civil society representatives in countries he visited in his capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, as highlighted above. For this purpose, the Special Envoy's Secretariat, hosted by the ECE Office of the Executive Secretary, prepares a briefing for each mission with the road safety profile of the country, the main road safety legal instruments, specially designed and customized policy messages, and other details relevant for the meetings of the Special Envoy with the officials.

1. Promotion of the United Nations Road Safety Conventions

30. The Special Envoy promotes seven of the 59 United Nations transport-related legal instruments that specifically focus on improving road safety, using materials that have been

translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. Information about the legal instruments is distributed and used at meetings worldwide. As a result of the Special Envoy's advocacy, 55 contracting parties to the seven legal instruments are new since his appointment. The following countries becoming contracting parties in 2024:

- August 2024: El Salvador, 1968 Convention on Road Traffic;
- September 2024: Albania, 1998 Agreement concerning the establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles;
- September 2024: Andorra, 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals;
- September 2024: Andorra, 1968 Convention on Road Traffic.

2. Capacity-Building Support

31. In mid-May 2024, during the mission to South Africa, the Special Envoy delivered a speech at the Bosman Taxi Rank Activation; attended the Pass Out Parade of the 21st Century Cadre of Traffic Trainees; and the visit at Dr. Mathole Motshekga Primary School.

32. At the end of May 2024, while in Kigali, Rwanda, the Special Envoy shared a keynote at the Helmets Initiative event planned by the Ministry of Infrastructure towards distributing Safe, Affordable and homologated helmets in the country. This falls in the context of the Safe and Affordable Helmets initiative launched by the Special Envoy with the aim to deploy motorcycle helmets that meet the United Nations safety standards while remaining comfortable in hot and humid climates and priced below \$20.

III. Conclusion

33. Over the past year, the Special Envoy achieved significant progress in deepening engagement and increasing visibility for road safety among various stakeholders. Through a mix of global, regional, and national initiatives, both in-person and virtual, the Special Envoy successfully advanced the cause of road safety, garnering support from governments, the private sector, the United Nations system, and civil society. The Special Envoy's in-country missions played a pivotal role in elevating the prominence of global road safety and the importance of United Nations road safety legal instruments. These visits inspired stronger actions from governments, the private sector, international organizations, and civil society in the quest for improved road safety. Furthermore, during these missions, the Special Envoy advocated for more determined actions from partners and Member States following the outcomes of the historic High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety, which took place in New York in June-July 2022, and encouraging participation at the highest level in the Forth Ministerial Conference for Road Safety in Marrakech, Morocco on 18–19 February 2025.

34. Looking ahead, the Special Envoy has outlined key calls for action. These include continued promotion of the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action as a basis for necessary interventions, further expanding the United Nations – JCDcaux global road safety awareness campaign #MakeASafetyStatement and strengthening the Friends of the Special Envoy Network. Scheduled travels to the diverse regions in the coming months demonstrate the Special Envoy's commitment to engaging globally to further implement road safety initiatives.

35. The Special Envoy's efforts during the reporting period have been instrumental in strengthening partnerships and increasing visibility towards a safer and more sustainable road environment at all levels, including for the Sustainable Transport Agenda.

Annex

Priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety (Extract from the Terms of Reference)

1. Promoting a global partnership to support the design and implementation of strategies and activities to improve road safety

The Special Envoy will support the attainment of the overall goal of the Decade, by leveraging his or her professional expertise and experience. In this regard, the Special Envoy is expected to develop a global partnership with a particular emphasis on raising levels of political commitment. The Special Envoy will work with key funding partners – including governments, financial institutions and the private and non-governmental sectors – to secure adequate resources to implement the global partnership strategy.

2. Advocating with governments, civil society and the private sector for the promotion of road safety, particularly in countries with high level of road fatalities and injuries

- The Special Envoy will advocate for road safety, identifying achievements and challenges at the global, regional and national levels, as appropriate. He or she will highlight the challenges and needs for technical and/or other assistance which may be required, particularly by low- and middle-income countries, to improve road safety.

3. Participating in global and regional conferences and meetings on road safety

The Special Envoy will participate in global and regional conferences on road safety, including the second high-level global conference on road safety to be held in November 2015 in Brasilia, Brazil. On specific request and case-by-case consideration by the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy may represent the Secretary-General in relevant meetings.

4. Advocating the accession to, and more effective implementation of, United Nations road safety legal instruments

The Special Envoy will raise the visibility and awareness of the United Nations road safety legal instruments, including the Conventions on Road Traffic, and Road Signs and Signals, and the 1958, 1997 and 1998 Vehicle Regulations Agreements as well as other related instruments including driving times and rest periods for professional drivers and the transport of dangerous goods. The Special Envoy will also promote the accession to and the improved implementation of these legal instruments by contracting parties.
