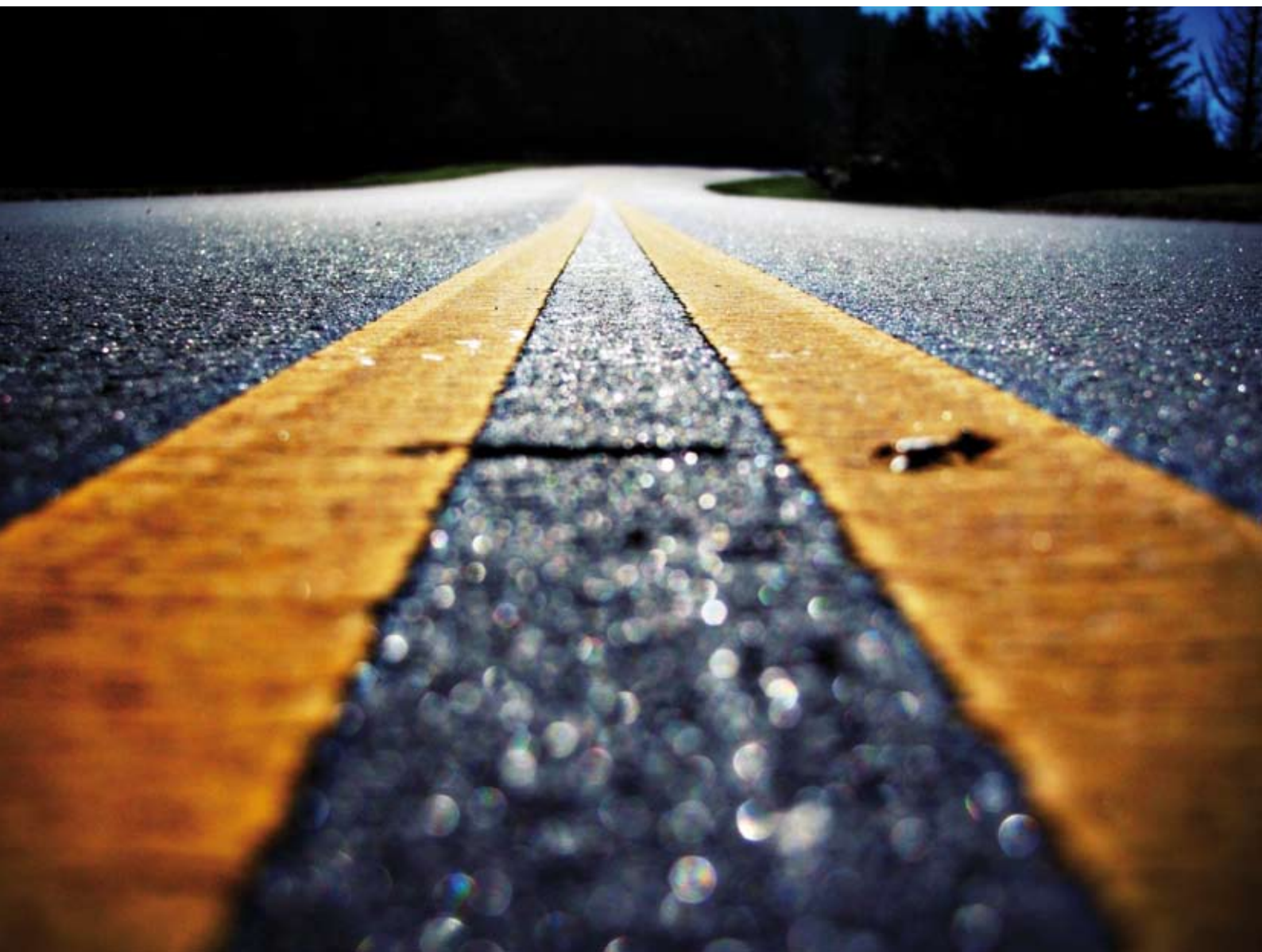

Road Safety

Call for action

October 2009



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



01/ CALL FOR ACTION

“

...the road safety situation will continue to deteriorate in low- and middle-income countries unless there are energetic coordinated responses.

”

“

Cost-effective solutions do exist

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is increasingly concerned about the rapid escalation of the global road safety crisis, which now kills 3,000 people every day. Road crash injury is a major but neglected global public health issue. Urgent action is now required to reverse the growing mortality rate that affects mainly young people.

We know that the road safety situation will continue to deteriorate in low- and middle-income countries unless there are energetic coordinated responses. The situation is improving on the roads of developed countries but there is no room for complacency; efforts must be maintained to continue this positive trend.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are already active and committed in the field of road safety; they mobilize decision-makers, create awareness among young people and the wider public and provide courses in first aid. These activities are part of the Red Cross Red Crescent mandate to alleviate human suffering, particularly that of the most vulnerable people – who make up the largest proportion of global road crash victims.

The basic challenge of road safety is the need to change the behaviour of road users, to ensure that roadways are a shared public space rather than an area given over to potential violence.

Cost-effective solutions do exist and we have a collective responsibility to apply them everywhere in order to save lives.

What happens on the roads concerns us all. We must act without delay to prevent today's deadly trend from worsening. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are ready to do more - and to do better, together with governments, the private sector, civil society, communities and international organizations.

The choice is ours, collectively and individually, right now.

02/ THE SCALE OF THE ROAD SAFETY CRISIS

An estimated 1.3 million people are killed in road crashes worldwide each year and as many as 50 million are injured. For every death, 20-30 people are disabled, many permanently.

Road crash fatality numbers are comparable to the number of global deaths caused by tuberculosis or malaria. Road traffic injuries are the



Road traffic injuries are the leading worldwide cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29.



leading worldwide cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29, and the second most common cause of death for those aged 5 to 14.

If significant preventive actions are not taken, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that by 2020 road trauma will rank as the sixth biggest cause of death.

Due to coordinated intersectoral approaches in developed countries, the situation is improving. However, projections indicate that unless there is a new strong political commitment to prevention and risk reduction, the crash death rate in low- and middle-income countries will double by 2020, reaching more than 2 million people per year.

Road crash injuries impose substantial economic burdens on developing nations, estimated between 1 and 3 per cent of gross national product. Often the costs exceed the international development assistance received each year. As a result, there is a direct link between road safety improvement and poverty reduction.

03/ GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF THE ROAD SAFETY CRISIS

The 2004 World Health Day theme was road safety. Since then the United Nations General Assembly has unanimously adopted four resolutions on road traffic injury prevention.

These resolutions called for the further implementation of the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* (see box 1). It urges governments, the civil society and the private sector to implement specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes, minimize injuries and their consequences and evaluate the impact of these actions.

In June 2009, WHO launched the *Global status report on road safety* which reaffirms that road traffic injury is a major global health and development problem. It confirms the relevance of implementing the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*.

The United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (<http://www.who.int/roadsafety/en/>) was established in October 2004 under the WHO's coordination. It includes the United Nations agencies and some 50 organizations active in the field of road safety, including the IFRC and the Global Road Safety Partnership (see box 2).

This Collaboration meets twice a year to compare initiatives and pool activities. It has published a number of good practice manuals about the major risk and contributory factors to road safety issues (seat belt and child restraint, helmet, drinking and driving, speed management).

BOX 1

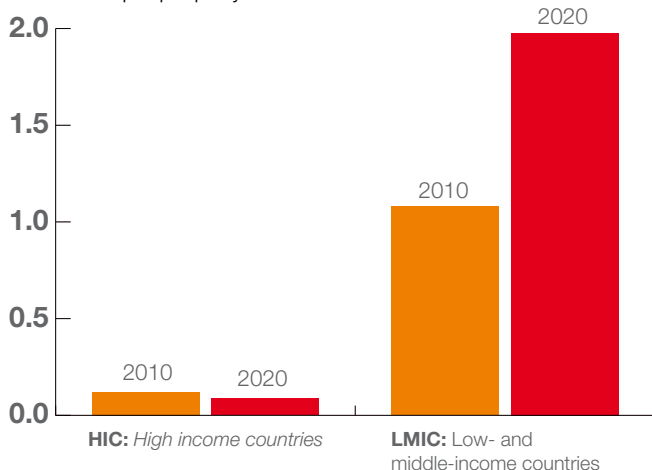
World report on road traffic injury prevention's recommendations

Launched in April 2004 by the World Bank and the WHO, the report's main recommendations are:

- Identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road traffic safety effort.
- Assess the problem, policies and institutional settings relating to road traffic injury and the capacity for road traffic injury prevention.
- Prepare a national road safety strategy and plan of action.
- Allocate financial and human resources to address the problem.
- Implement specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes, minimize injuries and their consequences and evaluate the impact of these actions (including measures to reduce excessive and inappropriate speed; to reduce drink-driving; to increase the use of motorcycle helmets, seat-belts and child restraints; and to incorporate safety features in land-use and transport planning).
- Support the development of national capacity and international cooperation.

Road crash mortality projection 2020

in million of people per year



BOX 2

Birth of the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)



GLOBAL
ROAD SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP

The IFRC was one of the first international organizations to raise the alarm about the dramatic toll of traffic deaths and injuries at a global level in its 1998 *World Disasters Report*. A whole chapter was devoted to road crashes and their tragic consequences on people and livelihoods.

The IFRC, the World Bank and the British government's Department for International Development (DfID), decided to create the GRSP in 1999.

The partnership brings together governments, United Nations and inter-governmental agencies, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society to address road safety issues, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where more than 90% of road fatalities occur.

The GRSP supports National Societies in reinforcing existing services and resources or identifying new ways to become more involved in road safety activities.

The IFRC secretariat in Geneva hosts the GRSP. The partnership is operational in 20 countries on every continent. <http://www.grsproadsafety.org>



04/ IFRC ROAD SAFETY COMMITMENTS



Improving road safety to save lives and build safer communities is included in IFRC long term strategy. ”

The IFRC has identified building a ‘culture of risk reduction and prevention’ as one of its underlying priorities in all its activities. Improving road safety to save lives and build safer communities is part of that policy and is included in IFRC long term strategy.

The IFRC has prioritized the reduction of disastrous road safety statistics for young people. Red Cross and Red Crescent youth have identified road safety as one of today’s key humanitarian challenges in their *June 2009 Solferino Declaration* (see box 3).

At a global level, the IFRC is advocating for the adoption of simple solutions to avoid or significantly decrease road crashes and their tragic human, social and economic consequences.

These include:

- design and implementation of national road safety policies
- adequate and stable financing for road safety measures
- better road systems with particular regard to vulnerable road users
- public awareness on the major risk factors
- community-based risk reduction activities
- more first aid training in schools and for new and professional drivers
- better hospital care for road victims
- support to disabled people
- closer partnerships with governments, the private sector and civil society

All these measures are described in a practical guide on road safety, co-published with the GRSP (see box 4).

The IFRC has produced a *personal road safety commitment card*, for use by National Society governance leaders, staff and volunteers, partners in road safety and the general public. It lists ten road safety commitments, which the cardholder promises to respect and implement. It is a way to protect staff and volunteers in their daily life and to encourage them to set a good example.



The Red Cross Red Crescent 2010-2020 youth commitment

In June 2009, at the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth Meeting, young people representing all National Societies discussed today's principal humanitarian challenges. They drafted a declaration addressed to the international community, calling for action on today's most pressing challenges and including concrete suggestions. Road safety was identified as a key challenge. Red Cross and Red Crescent youth made a ten-year commitment to improving road safety in their Solferino Declaration.

“ We the youth of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement commit ourselves to address road safety as a humanitarian challenge, by encouraging young people to act responsibly. ”

“ We call on the governments of the world and on the international community to include first aid and road safety in national education curricula, and allocate appropriate financial and logistical resources. ”

Practical guide on road safety

In 2007, the IFRC and the GRSP produced the *Practical guide on road safety*. It summarizes the extent, causes and impact of road crashes worldwide and details simple preventive measures and practical recommendations to National Societies, individuals or organizations willing to improve the situation in their country. The guide, in six languages, is the road safety reference tool of the IFRC road safety programme.

Available on: <http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/health/road-safety-en.pdf>



05/ NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES IN ACTION

In response to the growing number of road crash-related injuries, National Societies have worked increasingly during the past decade with governments and other partners to reduce the number of road crashes and their tragic consequences.

Principal National Society road safety activities:

- Advocate the prioritization of road safety on governments' political agendas.
- Develop an internal road safety culture for their staff and volunteers.
- Implement public awareness campaigns on safe road use.
- Promote road safety education for students and safe routes to school.
- Provide first aid courses for new and professional drivers and the general public.



National Societies are particularly well placed to implement and advocate for improved road safety measures.



National Societies are particularly well placed to implement and advocate for improved road safety measures. As auxiliaries to the public authorities in humanitarian matters, they can influence governments to improve road conditions and emergency health services, and to pass and enforce effective traffic laws.

In addition, the 100 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers worldwide work at the heart of communities and are in direct contact with the general public. They can be extremely effective in educating and informing people about safe behaviour on the roads, not only when driving but also when using the roads as pedestrians or cyclists.

Youth make up more than half of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and are particularly persuasive when they work as peer educators with other young people (see box 5).

National Societies are recognized globally as leaders in first aid. They deliver first aid courses to the general public and to targeted people, strengthening communities' capacities to be prepared and respond to road crashes.

In addition to first aid activities, around one third of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies are actively involved in road safety prevention activities.

before



after



**1,557 LIVES SAVED
IN 2008**

BOX 5

Viet Nam – a success story

Đội mũ bảo hiểm không cản trở tầm nhìn
lời chỉ cần quay đầu là nhìn được. Không hề phức tạp!



**Hãy bảo vệ bạn!
Hãy bảo vệ cuộc sống!**

Khi đi môtô, xe máy thậm chí với tốc độ thấp nếu không đội mũ bảo hiểm gặp tai nạn, bạn có nguy cơ tử vong gấp 10 lần hoặc bị chấn thương sọ não dẫn đến tàn tật suốt đời.



In 2005, the Vietnamese Red Cross launched a massive public awareness campaign in Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh City about the risk of driving a motorcycle without a helmet. Some 200,000 posters were put up in the streets, radio spots were broadcast and the campaign was widely covered by the press. It lasted six months and city dwellers testified that it was impossible not to have heard about it.

Many partners including the French Red Cross, the private sector and local authorities supported the initiative. In 2006, together with the GRSP, the National Traffic Safety Committee and the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation, the Vietnamese and French Red Cross Societies helped design a national action plan which led to the creation and enforcement of a new helmet law.

In 2007, 12,800 people died on Vietnamese roads. In contrast during 2008, 1,557 lives were saved following the many initiatives aimed at increasing helmet usage and compliance with the new helmet law, including the Red Cross awareness campaign.

BOX 6

Practical recommendations for Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers

Volunteers can help community members improve road safety by:

- encouraging family and community members to follow the ten commitments of the Personal road safety commitment card;
- setting a good example when driving on the road;
- integrating road safety into Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes;
- working with local authorities to organize public awareness campaigns;
- encouraging local authorities to improve safety measures in dangerous locations and introduce safe road crossing places, particularly around schools;
- promoting and delivering first aid training to individuals who are most likely to be the first at a crash scene, such as professional and public transport drivers, policemen, ambulance and first aid post staff;
- encouraging local authorities to enforce road safety laws such as speed limits, wearing a seat-belt and a helmet, not driving with excess alcohol or drug intake;
- talking to young people in schools about the ten road safety commitments.

BOX 7

Road safety facts and figures

- Every year, road crashes kill approximately 1.3 million people and injure between 20 and 50 million more.
- These numbers are comparable to the casualties of major pandemics such as tuberculosis or malaria, and in low- and middle-income countries, they continue to rise.
- Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death worldwide among people aged 15 to 29, and the second cause of death for those aged 5 to 14.
- Over 90% of the world's road fatalities occur in low- and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world's registered vehicles.
- Almost half of those who die in road traffic crashes are vulnerable road users - pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.
- If significant action is not taken, the WHO predicts that road traffic injuries will rise to become the sixth leading cause of death worldwide by 2020.

Source : Global Status report on Road Safety, WHO - http://www.euro.who.int/violenceinjury/injuries/20080229_1

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Road Safety – *call for action*

For more information on the IFRC road safety programme, please contact:

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



**Our world is in a mess.
It's time to make your move.
ourworld-yourmove.org**