



Dr Dauod Altaf, WHO Officer-in-Charge, delivers a speech at the event Kabul 8 May 2017 – The national Road Safety Week was launched today at an event in Kabul to draw public attention to the urgency of decreasing fatalities and injuries on Afghanistan’s roads resulting from speeding and reckless driving. The event was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Interior’s Traffic Department, WHO and national media outlets.

According to registered Ministry of Public Health data, 369 Afghans lost their lives in traffic accidents in the past 9 months while 25 654 sustained injuries as a result of road accidents. WHO estimates that more than 4700 Afghans die in road traffic accidents every year.

Low-income countries such as Afghanistan have fatality rates more than double those in high-income countries: 90% of road traffic deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, yet these countries have just over 50% of the world’s vehicles.

This year’s road safety campaign focuses on slowing down to save lives and make roads safer for all. Speed contributes to up to half of all fatal traffic crashes in low- and middle-income countries.

“We must step up our efforts and increase public awareness around road safety to decrease the unacceptably high fatality rates due to road accidents,” said H.E. Dr Ahmad Jan Naeem, Deputy Minister of Public Health. “The newly-adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set an ambitious target for road safety: halving the global number of deaths and injuries from

road traffic crashes by 2020. The Ministry of Public Health is committed to reaching this target to save lives on Afghanistan's roads. We call on traffic authorities and all drivers to play their part in making our roads safer."

Afghanistan has a national speed limit law but it is not strongly enforced. There are currently no laws regulating the use of seatbelts or the use of mobile phones when driving and it is not compulsory for motorcyclists to wear helmets.

Road traffic crashes are a leading cause of death among all age groups and the number one cause of death among those aged 15–29 years all over the world. One in three road traffic deaths occur because of speeding.

"Too many Afghans lose their lives or get badly injured on the roads every year. We can all make our roads safer by adopting a few simple habits: slow down your speed, wear your seatbelt, make sure other passengers are wearing a seatbelt, and don't talk or text on the phone while driving," said Dr Dauod Altaf, Officer-in-Charge at WHO Afghanistan. "Speed is at the core of the road traffic injury problem which is why it is crucial we all play our part in slowing down to save lives."

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