

Cairo/Geneva, 14 March 2013 - Launched today by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global status report on road safety 2013: supporting a decade of action describes the road safety situation in participating countries and underlines the gaps in road safety nationally. More importantly it serves as a baseline for monitoring action through the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020.

The report presents information from 182 countries – including 19 countries from the Eastern Mediterranean Region – accounting for almost 99% of the world’s population or 6.8 billion people.

Among other important information, the report shows that only 28 countries, covering 7% of the world’s population, have comprehensive road safety laws on five key risk factors: drinking and driving, speeding, and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat-belts and child restraints. It thus indicates that, among other measures, the pace of legislative change needs to rapidly accelerate if the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 is to meet its target of saving 5 million lives.

The report also documents that from 2007 to 2010, 88 countries reduced the number of deaths on their roads, showing that improvements are possible. However, the number of deaths increased in 87 countries during the same period. Worldwide the total number of road traffic deaths remains unacceptably high at 1.24 million per year.

"Political will is needed at the highest level of government to ensure appropriate road safety legislation and stringent enforcement of laws by which we all need to abide," says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. "If this cannot be ensured, families and communities will continue to grieve, and health systems will continue to bear the brunt of injury and disability due to road traffic crashes."

The report reveals that the Eastern Mediterranean Region is responsible for 10% of the world’s road traffic deaths and has the second highest road traffic fatality rate among WHO regions. Moreover, some countries of the Region are among those with the highest fatality rates in the world. The Region is unusual in having the highest rates of road traffic fatalities among its high-income countries, at 21.7 per 100 000 population. This is more than double the global rate of 8.7 per 100 000 population for high-income countries.

The report also found that globally pedestrians and cyclists constitute 27% of all road deaths. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region 45% of road traffic victims are vulnerable road users (pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists). The majority of these are pedestrians. Yet only a few countries have developed national policies and enabling environments to encourage walking and cycling or to separate vulnerable road users.

Other global highlights of the report include the following:

59% of those who are killed in road traffic crashes are between the ages of 15 and 44 years, and 77% are male.

The risk of dying as a result of a road traffic injury is highest in the WHO African Region at 24.1 per 100 000 population followed by the Eastern Mediterranean Region at 21.3 per 100 000 population and lowest in the WHO European Region at 10.3 per 100 000 population.

59 countries, covering 39% of the world's population, have implemented an urban speed limit of 50 km/h or less and allow local authorities to further reduce these limits.

89 countries, covering 66% of the world's population, have a comprehensive drink-driving law, defined as a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit of 0.05 g/dl or less.

90 countries, covering 77% of the world's population, have motorcycle helmet laws which cover all riders on all roads with all engine types and have a motorcycle helmet standard.

111 countries, covering 69% of the world's population, have comprehensive seat-belt laws covering all occupants.

96 countries, covering 32% of the world's population, have a law requiring child restraints.

The report also highlights that most countries – even some of the best performing in terms of the safety of their roads – indicate that enforcement of these laws is inadequate.

The report is the second in a series analysing the extent to which countries are implementing a number of effective road safety measures. In addition to the five risk factors noted above, it highlights the importance of issues such as vehicle safety standards, road infrastructure inspections, policies on walking and cycling and aspects of pre-hospital care systems. It also indicates whether countries have a national strategy which sets measurable targets to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads.

Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 is a historic opportunity for countries to stop and reverse the trend which – without action – has been predicted to lead to the loss of around 1.9 million lives on the roads each year by 2020. Launched on 11 May 2011 by governments across the world, the Decade of Action seeks to build road safety management capacity in countries, improve the safety of roads and vehicles, enhance the behaviour of all road users and strengthen post-crash care.

For further information contact:

MAC unit

Telephone: 202 22765020/21

E-mail: mac@emro.who.int

VIPD unit

Telephone: 202 22765391

E-mail: vipd@emro.who.int

Saturday 20th of April 2024 06:15:07 AM