

# Make Walking Safe

## The second United Nations Global Road Safety Week in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

6–12 May 2013

### Introduction

The second UN Global Road Safety Week, 6–12 May 2013, was requested by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 in resolution A/66/L.43 on improving global road safety. It is a milestone event organized within the framework of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 and provides an opportunity to highlight the important information presented in the recent Global status report on road safety 2013.

Road safety cannot be improved without improving the safety of pedestrians. The second UN Global Road Safety Week, which is dedicated to pedestrian safety, aims to emphasize the urgent need to improve pedestrian safety worldwide, generate action on required measures to do so and contribute to achieving the overall goal of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020: saving 5 million lives.

The second UN Global Road Safety Week 2013 is a unique opportunity to further road safety at all levels, through renewed commitment and efforts, in order to help save the thousands of lives that are still being lost on our roads every year.

### Messages of the second UN Global Road Safety Week

- Road traffic crashes claim 1.24 million lives across the world every year. Half of these deaths are among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, i.e. “vulnerable road users.” In 2010, it is estimated that more than 270 000 pedestrians were killed on roads worldwide.
- Pedestrians account for 22% of global road deaths and 28% of road deaths in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region annually.
- The toll of injuries, disabilities and deaths related to pedestrian collisions is unacceptably high. Pedestrian-related collisions, like other road traffic crashes, are both predictable and preventable.
- Effective interventions exist to improve pedestrian safety. These interventions need to be implemented using a comprehensive approach that focuses on engineering, enforcement and education.
- Adopting and enforcing legislation related to major risk factors has been shown to lead to reductions in road traffic injuries.
- Guaranteeing the safety of pedestrians will help to encourage walking, which can also improve overall health.

### Major risk factors for pedestrians

- **Driver behaviour** Speeding, drinking and driving, distracted driving and failing to abide by traffic regulations, road signs and signals pose major threats to pedestrians.
- **Pedestrian behaviour** Pedestrians put themselves at higher risk by distracted walking, walking under conditions of reduced visibility and failing to abide by traffic regulations, road signs and signals.
- **Road design** Features such as sidewalks, raised crosswalks, raised medians and adequate roadway lighting help to reduce the vulnerability of pedestrians.
- **Land-use planning** Distances between people’s homes, workplaces, schools, shops and other facilities are an important factor in the amount of time spent on the roads.
- **Vehicle design** Factors such as crash-protective vehicle fronts and emergency braking systems can reduce the severity of injuries to pedestrians involved in collisions.
- **Trauma care** Good hospital care and quick transportation to hospitals are vital for saving the lives of all victims of road traffic crashes.



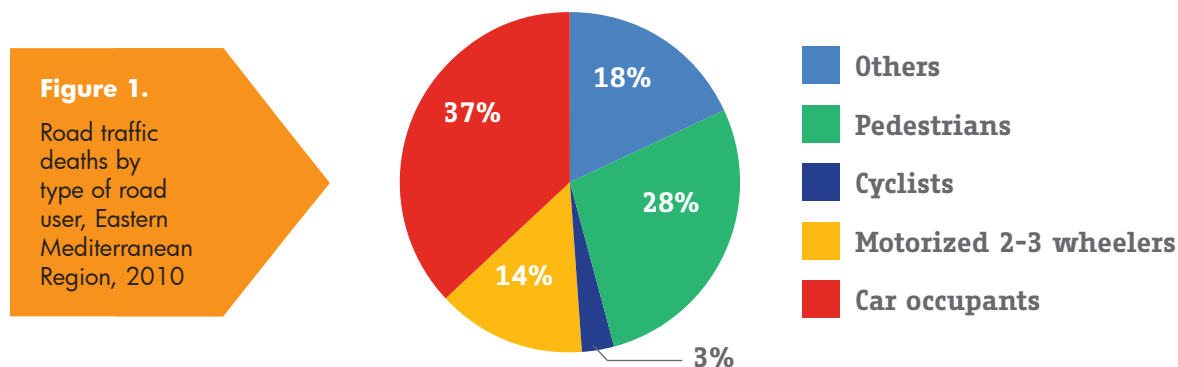
World Health  
Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean



## The problem

The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region accounts for 10% of all road traffic fatalities worldwide. Vulnerable road users account for nearly half (45%) of these deaths. In 2010, pedestrian deaths accounted for 28% of regional road traffic deaths (Figure 1). The Eastern Mediterranean ranks second among WHO regions in the proportion of pedestrians deaths out of all road traffic deaths (28%), after the WHO African Region (38%). Despite the availability of some data, there are many challenges with regard to data quality and reliability, and underreporting is widespread.



## Road safety legislation in the Region and its enforcement

- **Speed** The vast majority of countries have national speed laws, but these laws are comprehensive<sup>1</sup> in only two countries. Enforcement is as low as 16%.
- **Drink-driving** Only 37% of countries have estimates of the proportion of annual traffic deaths attributable to alcohol. Fewer than two-thirds of countries have drink-drive laws based on blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Of these, 37% stipulate BAC limits of 0.05 g/dl or less. This makes more specific assessment of the issue difficult. Poor enforcement levels are reported (21%).
- **Use of mobile phones while driving** 89% of countries have national legislation prohibiting the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving, and 21% of countries prohibit the use of both hand-held and hands-free mobile phones

## Policies to encourage walking and cycling or separate vulnerable road users

- Only 21% of the countries have national or subnational policies to encourage walking and cycling.
- Only 26% of countries have national or subnational policies to separate vulnerable road users from other types of road users in the street<sup>2</sup>.

## Safer infrastructure, road design and vehicles

- Just over half of countries regularly inspect the safety of all their roads, and only a quarter have independent road safety audits.
- 53% of countries have vehicle standards that require anti-lock braking systems in new imported cars.

## Post-crash care

- Trauma care needs improvement. 74% of countries have one national emergency access number and emergency medicine training is not provided to all doctors and nurses.

<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive speed law with setting urban speed limits of  $\leq 50$  km/h and the ability of local authorities to reduce speed limits where appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Road safety in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: facts from the Global status report on road safety 2013. Cairo, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2013