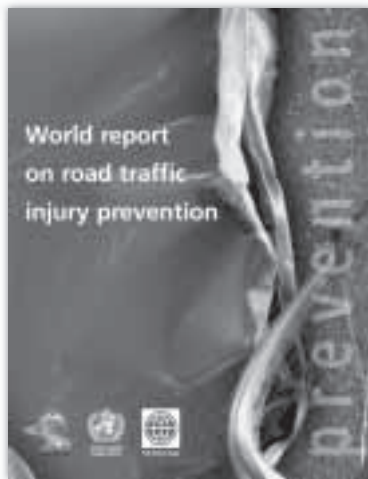




# WORLD REPORT ON ROAD TRAFFIC INJURY PREVENTION

## *Developing and disseminating the World report on road traffic injury prevention*

The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* was developed during a two-year period by WHO and the World Bank with support from more than 100 professionals from the sectors of health, transport, education, engineering and law enforcement. An editorial committee coordinated this process, with input from five technical committees of road safety experts, one technical committee per chapter of the report. An advisory committee provided overall guidance to the development of the report, particularly on sensitive issues. WHO hosted four regional consultations in order to confer with regional road safety experts on chapter outlines, to solicit additional data and information, and to identify ways to collaborate on organizing regional launches of the report.



On World Health Day 2004, the full report was available in English and French, and summaries were available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian. Since then the report, or its summary, have been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.

Through its standard dissemination channels, WHO has issued more than 12 000 copies of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* in English and French since World Health Day 2004. The report was freely distributed to ministers of health, ministers of transport, staff from WHO regional and country offices, representatives of permanent missions, members of the WHO Executive Board, and officials of

selected nongovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies. In developing countries, the report was also sent to libraries of faculties of medicine and public health, and important health-related institutes. Several major journals, such as the *British Medical Journal* and the *Lancet* and journals specialized in injury prevention also received the report. In the hands of those who are in a position to make a difference, the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* is clearly a valuable guide to researching, preventing and advocating for road traffic injury prevention around the world.

## Regional and country launches of the World report on road traffic injury prevention

Events surrounding regional and national launches of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* have varied greatly. Some launches have been ceremonial, involving officials from the highest levels of government, civil society and the private sector. Others have consisted of in-

depth policy discussions with those most involved in road safety on a day-to-day basis. Whatever their format, it is hoped that the launches will provide a renewed impetus to identifying a way forward for countries in terms of improving their road safety record. On and since World Health Day 2004, regional and national launches of the report are known to have taken place in the follow-

ing countries: Brazil, Cameroon, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Fiji, Honduras, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Peru, Puerto Rico, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Uganda, and the United States.

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As new language versions of the report were published, events were hosted to mark the launch of these reports, bringing together many of the key players in road safety. For example on 11 October 2004 in Beijing, China, the Chinese version of the report was launched during an event hosted by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Security, the World Bank, and WHO, during which the report was officially handed over to the Chinese authorities. During a meeting following the launch, participants from China and abroad discussed ways for the country to implement the recommendations of the report in the coming years. On 28 February 2005, the Russian version of the report was launched in Moscow, the Russian Federation, where officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Transport, formally received the report from World Bank and WHO officials. They were encouraged to see road safety not in isolation, but as part and parcel of a sustainable transport system and the wellbeing of society in general. On 4 March 2005, the launch of the Spanish version of the report took place in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, during a ceremony chaired by the Minister of Health, the Minister of Transportation and Housing, and officials from the Ministry of Security and law enforcement. Issues addressed included a national plan for road safety and improvement of care and services for victims of road traffic injuries. Future launches of the report are being planned in other countries, and it is hoped that these too will provide an opportunity to bring key players together to share ideas and experiences about ways to improve road safety.

## *Other regional and national road safety reports*

The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* encourages countries and regions to develop and publish their own local reports on road traffic injury prevention to raise awareness and call for action. To date, the following reports have come to our attention.



➤ *Preventing road traffic injury: a public health perspective for Europe* was launched by the **WHO Regional Office for Europe** on World Health Day 2004. The publication aims to raise awareness among the public and enhance commitment among policy-makers to take immediate action towards preventing road traffic injuries. In the WHO European Region, such injuries kill about 127 000 people and injure about 2.4

million every year. The publication builds on and complements the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*, analysing in depth the burden of disease from road traffic injury in the European Region, framing the issue in the context of sustainable mobility, presenting a comprehensive systems approach to road safety based on successful experiences developed by some Member States in the region, and highlighting opportunities for the health sector to play a broader role. The publication calls for a multisectoral and evidence-based approach to preventing road traffic injuries, with public health playing an important role. It emphasizes the importance of strong political commitment at all levels of government and makes recommendations for action. *Preventing road traffic injury: a public health perspective for Europe* is available in English and in Russian, and a summary document is also available in English, Russian and Swedish and may be downloaded in PDF from the WHO European Regional office web site.

- The Australian Transport Safety Bureau produced the document *Road safety in Australia: a publication commemorating World Health Day 2004*. The document, which brings together some of the work of the Bureau and information from other related bodies, addresses such key topics as the fatal five behavioural factors including speed and fatigue; vehicles and vulnerable groups; and risky areas.



We must work together so that roads and memories cease to be haunted by ever widening circles of red.

Rochelle Sobel, President, Association for Safe International Road Travel,  
Quote in message to *Road safety in Australia: a publication commemorating World Health Day 2004*

Australia's national highway network stretches 18 500 km through mountain ranges, deserts, flood plains and each of our capital cities. In many parts, for long distances, it is a testing highway requiring intense concentration and great care by drivers. Like the motto for World Health Day, this also is a universal message: motorists everywhere must take responsibility for driving safely within their own capabilities and according to the prevailing road conditions.

Ian Campbell, Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads of Australia, Message to *Road safety in Australia: a publication commemorating World Health Day 2004*



› In April 2004 the **Indian** Institute of Technology in New Delhi issued *The road ahead: traffic injuries and fatalities in India*. This national report presents the numbers, patterns and costs of road traffic injuries in India. It also reviews the international knowledge base and existing interventions, such as legislation and enforcement, education and campaigns, driver licensing and education systems, vehicle safety features, and pre-hospital care. The report examines road safety policies for India and offers short-term and long-term road safety strategies. Short-term strategies underline the importance of the role of education, information and publicity in road safety, and examine specific strategies for intervention.



› Spurred on by World Health Day 2004, the **South African Automobile Society** published a report highlighting the three major risk factors in the country: speeding; drink-driving; and the non-use of seatbelts. The report presents data and case studies on each of the three risk factors and proposes short-term and long-term actions to improve road safety in the country.

› The **United Kingdom's** road safety strategy entitled "*Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone*" guides the nation's efforts in this area through the year 2010 and dictates ambitious targets with regard to



reducing road traffic deaths and injuries. To coincide with World Health Day 2004, the Government released a progress review "*Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone: The first three year review*". According to the report, progress has been very good. In 2002 the overall number of people killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads was 17% lower than the 1994–1998 average. Even better progress is being made on child casualties. The number of children killed or seriously injured has reduced by 33% compared with the 1994–1998 average. The report notes that there is still a long way to go, and the report identifies a number of new measures or actions in this regard. This report may be downloaded from the UK Department for Transport web site.

The review has highlighted both notable successes and areas in which we could do more. We see both of these as equally providing opportunities to improve further upon the good start that has been made. But we are particularly concerned that the number of fatalities on our roads each year has not continued to fall since 1998. It is understood that this is a problem across Europe. But every life lost is one too many.

David Jamieson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport;  
Nicol Stephen, Minister for Transport, Scottish Executive;  
Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport, Welsh Assembly Government,  
Foreword to "*Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone: The first three year review*"

## Main messages of the World report on road traffic injury prevention

Launched on 7 April 2004, the WHO/World Bank *World report on road traffic injury prevention* presents a comprehensive overview of what is known about road traffic injuries – whom they affect, the factors that place people at risk of crashes and injuries, and what can be done to prevent injuries. The main messages of this the first report on the topic are:

- Road traffic injuries are a major global public health and development problem, leading to the deaths of some 1.2 million people per year and the injury of as many as 50 million more. They rank as the 11th leading cause of death and account for 2.1% of all deaths globally.
- Road traffic injuries disproportionately affect people from low-income and middle-income countries, especially young males and other vulnerable groups of road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and passengers of public transport. Around 90% of road traffic fatalities occur in low-income and middle-income countries.
- Without appropriate action, the problem will only worsen. In fact, road traffic injuries are predicted to become the third largest contributor to the global burden of disease by 2020.

- The costs of road traffic injuries are enormous. It is estimated that in low-income and middle-income countries road traffic injuries cost US\$ 65 billion per year, which exceeds the total amount received by these countries in development assistance.
- Road traffic injuries can be prevented, and their consequences can be alleviated. Many countries have achieved sharp reductions in the number of crashes and injuries by: creating and enforcing laws governing speed limits, alcohol impairment, and the use of seat-belts, child restraints and crash helmets; making vehicles more protective for occupants, pedestrians and cyclists; and formulating and implementing transport and land-use policies that encourage safety.
- The health sector has a key role to play among other sectors in promoting and facilitating road safety. In particular, its role should include: collecting data in order to demonstrate the health, social and economic impact of road traffic injuries; monitoring and evaluating road safety interventions; ensuring appropriate care and rehabilitation for all injured people; and promoting a multisectoral approach to road traffic injury prevention.
- Road safety should be addressed using a systems approach. Improving road safety requires an understanding of the traffic system as a whole, an understanding of the interaction between its elements – vehicles, roads, road-users, and of physical, social and economic environments – and an ability to identify potential interventions.
- Road safety is a collective responsibility; partnerships bridging many sectors of society can promote and facilitate efforts to prevent road traffic injuries. Such partnerships should include people from government, industry, nongovernmental organizations and international agencies, and include health professionals, road engineers, motor vehicle designers and manufacturers, law enforcement officers and community groups.
- Strong political commitment is key to prevention efforts, and governments have a particular role to play in creating enabling environments for road safety. This commitment requires adequately funded road safety policies and programmes which are regularly monitored and evaluated. Increasing citizens' participation in road safety is an important complement to political commitment.

# Recommendations of the World report on road traffic injury prevention

**The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* offers governments the opportunity to assess the current status of road safety in their country, review policies and institutional arrangements and capacity, and take appropriate actions. The following recommendations need to be addressed across a wide range of sectors and disciplines if they are to achieve success in preventing road traffic injuries. These provide guiding principles, and should be adapted to local conditions and capacities in order to be implemented effectively.**

- **Recommendation 1:** Identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road traffic safety effort.
- **Recommendation 2:** Assess the problem, policies and institutional settings relating to road traffic injury and the capacity for road traffic injury prevention in each country.
- **Recommendation 3:** Prepare a national road safety strategy and plan of action.
- **Recommendation 4:** Allocate financial and human resources to address the problem.
- **Recommendation 5:** Implement specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes, minimize injuries and their consequences and evaluate the impact of these actions.
- **Recommendation 6:** Support the development of national capacity and international cooperation.

# Awards for WHO and the World report on road traffic injury prevention

WHO has been formally recognized for its contribution to global road safety by the granting of two prestigious awards. In the United Kingdom on 7 December 2004, WHO and the World Bank received the Premier Award, the highest honour given as part of the annual **Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards**. The Premier Award was granted in recognition of the outstanding contribution of WHO and the World Bank to improving road safety, in particular for the publication of



the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. Announcing the Premier Award winners during the annual awards ceremony, His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent declared: “The authors of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* made us all think and take action

– the fact that worldwide, an estimated 1.2 million people are killed in road crashes each year and as many as 50 million are injured is staggering.”

In the United States, on 16 June 2004, during an event hosted on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, the WHO Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention and its Director, Etienne Krug, were attributed the Leadership in Global Road Safety Award by the **Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT)**. The award is granted annually to individuals and institutions demonstrating leadership in the field globally. During the awards ceremony, ASIRT President, Rochelle Sobel and Congressman Robert Wexler stressed the enormous contributions made by WHO through World Health Day 2004 and related activities. A congressional caucus on international road safety was also launched during this event.