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## **In bid to curb traffic deaths, UN proclaims decade of action for road safety**



Half of road fatalities each year are pedestrians, bicyclists, and people on motorcycles

2 March 2010 – The United Nations General Assembly today proclaimed the period from 2011 to 2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety to spur national and global efforts to halt or reverse the increasing trend in road traffic deaths and injuries around the world.

In the resolution adopted today, the 192-member body also requested the World Health Organization (**WHO**), in cooperation with other partners, to prepare a plan of action to guide efforts during the Decade, which was called for during the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow last year.

“This Decade is long overdue,” Dr. Etienne Krug, Director of WHO’s Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, told reporters in New York ahead of the Assembly’s action.

Some 1.3 million people die every year around the world from road traffic crashes, but half of those people are pedestrians, bicyclists, people on motorcycles, or what Dr. Krug called “vulnerable road users – people who very often are not even able to afford a car but are the victims of car crashes.”

In addition to the death toll, between 20 and 50 million people sustain non-fatal injuries every year from road traffic accidents, and road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among young people aged between 15 and 44.

According to the **Global Status Report on Road Safety**, released last June, road traffic injuries remain an important public health problem, particularly for low-income and middle-income countries.

The first broad assessment of the road safety situation in 178 countries also showed that significantly more action is needed to make the world's roads safer.

Dr. Krug noted that the report also found that only 15 per cent of countries have the right legislation in place to address some of the key risk factors, which include drunk driving, excessive speed and the non-use of seatbelts and motorcycle helmets.

He was confident that the Decade "is not just going to be words on paper," but will be a catalyst to bring together the energy of national and international actors to increase action in road safety management, as well as improving road infrastructure, vehicle safety, the behaviour of road users, and trauma care.

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