

IMPLEMENTATING THE AFRICAN ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to highlight the implementation progress of African Road Safety Action Plan in Africa after the 2015 Mid-term Review. According to the Review, there has been considerable progress in the implementation of the Action Plan, though to a varying degree across countries and pillars. The Review noted that most of countries in African region are at risk of not achieving the set objectives unless road safety measures and actions are accelerated. The Action Plan is in alignment with the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020. Similarly, road safety data management was identified as a major handbrake in addressing challenging areas of the Action Plan during the Review. The subsequent adoption of the roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan; and a mandate from African Ministers of Transport for United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and African Union Commission (AUC) in partnership with the African Transport Policy Programme (SSATP) to develop a minimum set of Road Safety Indicators for all African countries carry great promise and impetus in addressing road safety issues on the continent.

In response to above stated mandates, UNECA in collaboration with SSATP are conducting a study on the minimum set of Road Safety Indicators for all African countries. Likewise, UNECA in collaboration with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Secretariat of Secretary General's Special Envoy on Road Safety are in the process of conducting Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPRs) in Cameroon and Uganda.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, nearly 1.3 million people are killed and up to 50 million people are injured on the world's roads. Half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Road traffic deaths are also the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29, and road traffic injuries are the eighth leading cause of death globally. Beyond human suffering, road traffic deaths and injuries impose significant economic and financial losses to societies, disproportionately affecting low and middle income countries where 90 percent of fatalities occur. Although having the lowest level of motorization in the world, the African region suffers from the highest estimated road traffic fatality rate at 26.6 per 100,000 population according to 2013 WHO data (1).

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed a Decade of Action for Road Safety ("Decade"). The goal of the Decade (2011-2020) is to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic deaths around the world. Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals include a mandate to decrease road traffic deaths by 50 percent by 2020 (SDG 3.6). Additionally, on 15 April 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution (A/RES/70/260) on Improving Global Road Safety, which further encourages member states to take stronger measures to achieve Sustainable Development Goals targets 3.6 and 11.2. Given that only three years remain until the end of the Decade of Action for road safety and to achieve SDG 3.6, it is imperative that the global community moreso African member countries take concerted action to improve road

safety. The Decade reached its mid-term review in 2015 with relatively little observed change in the number of global annual road traffic deaths. In Africa, the mid-term review on the status of implementation of Africa Road Safety Action Plan, (2)- which is essentially aligned to the UN Decade- established that progress had been made in the implementation of the plan though to a varying degree across African countries and pillars. The review also observed that many African countries are risk of not achieving set targets if they continue with present pace of implementation.

Similarly, road safety data management was identified as a major handbrake in addressing challenging areas of the Action Plan during the Mid- Term Review. The subsequent adoption of the roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan; and a mandate in March 2017, Lome, Togo from African Ministers of Transport for Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and African Union Commission (AUC) in partnership with the African Transport Policy Programme (SSATP) to develop a minimum set of Road Safety Indicators for all African countries. Likewise, and in collaboration with Office of Special Envoy on Road Safety (OSERS), ECA is carrying out Road Safety Performance Reviews in Uganda and Cameroon. All the efforts developing after the mid-term review carry great promise and impetus in addressing road safety issues on the continent.

On the basis of the mandates stated above, the report will provide key findings of both the study on the minimum road safety indicators and the RSPRs, with the view to highlighting progress in the implementation of the Decade of Action in Africa, particularly after its mid-term review. The paper will show how the minimum set of indicators will help focus attention on the impact of road safety interventions as well as how the RSPRs could help close the gap in the implementation of the Decade.

2. MINIMUM SET OF ROAD SAFETY

It is generally acknowledged that road safety policy should be priority led and evidence based. To this end, data should be the cornerstone of all road safety activities as it is essential for the diagnosis of the road crash problems, correctly identifying risk factors and priority areas, and to formulate strategy, set targets and monitor performance for road safety efforts. Data-led diagnosis and management of the leading road traffic injury problems enables appropriate action and resource allocation. Without this, there will be no significant, sustainable reductions in exposure to crash risk or in the severity of crashes. Unfortunately for many African countries, data management is an ongoing issue where for instance only 18 countries are using the standard international definition of fatality as occurring within 30 days of the crash, (3). The African mid-term review report on the implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan 2011-2020 confirmed that data management continues to be a major challenge in most African countries.

Despite recent progress towards understanding the broad patterns of road crashes in Africa, as well as the overall implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan, the precise magnitude of injury-related mortality and disability is not known on the continent. The existing data with the police, hospitals, insurance, and legal sectors is not harmonized and needs major revamping. Thus, a major step towards achieving the Decade Plan of Action is to provide better and more reliable and sustained data on crashes, the factors responsible for the different types of crashes and the magnitude of the resultant death and injury. This data could then be used to inform policy-makers about the scope and the severity of the problem and, in turn, to argue for greater attention, allocation of more resources and for prevention efforts. Relevant road safety

data need to be collected daily and for these data to be useful in informing road safety practice, it must be properly coded, processed and analysed in a computerized database system. In recognition of paucity of road safety data in many African Countries and in response to the request by the African Ministers of Transport, Energy and Tourism, SSATP, AUC and ECA are carrying out a study on minimum road safety indicators to give practical guidance on establishing road safety data systems in African that can produce timely, reliable data on road traffic injuries that can be used to inform road safety management.

The ongoing study is proposing a maximum of 5 indicators on each of six pillars of the Action Plan addressing issues relating to the methodological aspects on how to collect the data, coding and processing of data with aim of feeding into proposed Africa Road Safety Observatory, (4). The overarching objective of this study is to improve road safety management at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in Africa by harmonising road crash data collection, analysis and reporting by countries on the continent. The adoption of common road safety indicators and harmonisation of road crash data will ensure comparability of data among and between countries on the continent and the rest of the world with the goal to adopt common definitions and data collection methods for the selected indicators.

In essence, the Report is identifying inconsistencies in the definitions of road safety indicators by African countries and propose definitions for adoption by countries on the continent, identify and highlight the main features of ongoing efforts at the regional and sub-regional levels (RECs and other sub-regional organisations) to monitor road safety performance in Africa and continuing efforts at the sub-regional level to harmonise road safety indicators. Based on existing national, sub-regional and international indicators, the study will propose a minimum set of road safety indicators for data collection, analysis and reporting by all African countries, accompanied by the methodological steps on how collect the data for the minimum set of indicators, and finally the study will showcase and provide a platform for sharing of experiences by stakeholders on the ongoing efforts and good practices in modernising road safety data management systems.

To date, consultations are ongoing among African countries to agree on the definitions of the road safety indicators, data collection, coding and storage. The proposed minimum set of indicators will serve as a powerful tool which would make it possible to identify and quantify road safety problems throughout Africa, evaluate the efficiency of road safety measures, determine the relevance of community actions and facilitate the exchange of experience in this field. It is also acknowledged that more variables and values maybe be necessary to better describe and analyse the road accident phenomenon than is provided in the minimum set of indicators. The flexibility of the set makes it possible for countries to add more variables should their management systems require it.

A proposed set of road safety indicators was sent to 30 countries with the request to indicate which of them they regard as minimum indicators to be included in a system in order to obtain meaningful information to be used internally (nationally) and to be provided externally (regionally or internationally) to make valid comparisons, (3). The set of indicators can be implemented on a voluntary basis in the national crash collection systems of the African countries. Thus, progressively, more and more common road crash data from the various countries will be available in a uniform format. In that way, the present disaggregate collection of data on road safety, will gradually contain more and more compatible and comparable data, allowing for more reliable analyses and comparisons.

In a separate and related collaborative initiative by the researchers of the European Commission funded Safer Africa programme, a short questionnaire to establish basic road safety data collection set and methodology, information concerning the existing national collection systems, as well as the identification of the needs for road safety data was sent to 20 African countries, (4). The questionnaire was meant to collect basic information about the national crash information procedures and systems in selected African countries; Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe. Below is box on their findings;

BOX 1: SaferAfrica Survey Results

The survey revealed the following interesting facts about road safety data management in the 20 countries that participated in the survey:

- The majority (75-85%) of the countries indicated that they do have a road safety lead agency, they have a National strategy for road safety and they have national medium term quantitative targets.
- The targets are, however, not defined using a rational process on known key problems and potentially efficient measures.
- The targets are only based on fatalities and not injuries.
- 50% have not defined road safety performance indicators.
- 50% do not have sustainable systems in place to collect and manage data on crashes, fatalities and injuries although 65% indicated that they have a central organisation in charge of data systems for road safety.
- In general crash databases are not linked to other databases such as those of hospitals.
- 55% of the countries do not have a reporting procedure to monitor road safety interventions carried out although 65% indicated that they do benchmarking.

The responses indicate that there is a gap between the capturing of comprehensive road safety data and the planning of strategies, defining of road safety performance indicators and the monitoring of performance.

Data collected from SaferAfrica website, (5).

The ongoing study and SaferAfrica report have both shown that road crash data collected in African countries varies by nature of the difference in own national collection and the type and quality of data which necessitates the development and provision of a harmonized (standardized) minimum set of indicators within a structure bearing in mind maximum flexibilities to add on indicators to fulfil individual countries' needs. This initiative fits very well under Pillar 1 of UN Decade. As already stated, road safety analysis based on quality data is crucial as it helps decision makers to create strategies for road traffic safety improvements. If such data is gathered and available in many African countries, it is possible to calculate the cost of investments into road safety and compare them against the costs of road accidents to derive cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness calculations and develop well-structured mitigation approaches to save lives and possibly advocate for Road Safety Champions in Africa. Fortunately, and in realization of essentiality of quality road crash data, some African countries have starting developing road safety data systems, see box 2 below.

BOX 2: African Road Crash Data Collection Practices

- **Nigeria:** The Nigerian Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) experience on compiling road safety data and establishing a crash data system is commendable. Following a series of reforms introduced particularly on crash data management, FRSC is a good example of a lead agency in Africa and it is recommended that other African countries learn from the Nigerian experience. Figures from the FRSC show that road traffic crashes have been reduced by half. The Nigerian FRSC has good practices concerning both organization; funding, functions and daily operation of the more than 30,000 regular and special marshals under the FRSC's command. The FRSC has considerable resources, short lines of communication with the presidency, and dedicated staff. Furthermore, the FRSC undertakes key functions within all Five Pillars of road safety, first of all within Pillar no. 3, 4 and 5 (safer vehicles, road users and emergency response). The FRSC has also taken the lead in overall management in Pillar 1, even though this is not its main function as well as taking the initiative to prepare a National Road Safety Strategy and suggested the creation of an overall coordinating entity - The National Road Safety Advisory Council – with the mandate to supervise and hold all stakeholders responsible for their contribution. The Corps have road side clinics serving major transport corridors within the country, ambulances located around the country to limit response time in the event of accident and uninterrupted toll-free line with easily remembered numbers (e.g. 115 or 211) nationwide for smooth means of communication in case of accident. The integrity of the Federal Corps has earned them a lot of respect and acceptability with Nigerian population, (6).
- **Ghana:** Ghanaian's National Road Safety Commission (NRSC), presents the experience of an organization which is a cross-ministerial commission under Ministry of Transport. The NRSC Secretariat therefore has coordination and promotion across ministries as one of its main functions. This was followed by a brief history of the National Road Safety Strategy I, II and III, covering the periods 2000-2005, 2006-2011, and 2012-2020. Ghana thus also has outstanding experience with strategic planning and challenges encountered during the implementation of NRSS I and II. Independent evaluations were carried out after each strategy to learn from experience, and the findings were subsequently used to improve the approach in the next strategy. The NRSC have experiences in the areas of data collection, crash data systems, as well as a focus on the ranking of fatalities by road users' type and class. In Ghana, the Building and Road Research Institute (BRRI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) maintains the road traffic crash database with information on road traffic crashes and casualties from 1991 to 2015. The existing road traffic crash/casualty data are managed using the off-the-shelf-software microcomputer crash analysis package (iMAAP) developed by TRL, UK, (7).
- **South Africa:** Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) commenced its operations in April 2005 with the objective of pooling powers and resources to eliminate the fragmentation of responsibilities for all aspects of road traffic management across the various levels of government in South Africa. RTMC provides a co-operative and coordinated strategic planning, regulation, facilitation and law enforcement in respect of road traffic matters by the national, provincial and local spheres of government. It has developed together with Ministry of Transport South Africa's National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) 2016 – 2030, (8).

3. ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Building on the experiences of Albania and Georgia Road Safety Performance Review (RSPRs), ECA in collaboration with UNECE and the Secretariat of Secretary General's Special Envoy on Road Safety are in the process of conducting Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPRs) in Cameroon and Uganda as part of ongoing mission to improve road safety in Africa. The current project will support the implementation of the Roadmap, which outlines actions to be taken to overcome core road safety challenges on the continent including: funding, creating or strengthening Lead Road Safety Agencies, data collection, analysis and reporting, development of national Road Safety strategies and, technical control of vehicles.

The RSPRs aim at assisting countries to strengthen national road safety management system capacities, help Governments to identify most critical road safety aspects and priority needs by preparing and implementing Reviews. On the basis of priority needs identified in the review reports, capacity building seminars with examples of good road safety practices will be held. Furthermore, the project aims at helping countries raise public awareness on road safety issues and advocate for ambitious road safety targets and specific measures to meet them. It is envisioned that RSPRs can be replicated in other African countries. One of the most important elements in preparing the Reviews is identifying gaps in national legal and regulatory frameworks and compliance with the United Nations road safety legal instruments (UN Road Safety Conventions). Existing research has established that even when a country is a contracting party, it does not immediately apply the conventions to their fullest possible extent hence the need for the reviews to enhance their capacities to efficiently implement UN legal instruments and getting the most out of their application in each country context.

Following preparatory and fact-finding missions to Uganda and Cameroon, Uganda choose to focus its review in the following priority areas; lead road safety/coordinating agency; Infrastructure for protection of vulnerable road users in urban areas (quality of existing standards); Drivers Training, Testing and Enforcement of traffic rules; National Post Crash Care Response Coordination System; and Coordinated Road Crash Database after consultations with the majority of stakeholders, (9). For Cameroon, the review will prioritize the following; institutional management coordinated by lead agency); the creation of a rather reliable accident data base; influencing drivers behaviour (+ other key areas) and the use of ICT, mobile and internet applications on hand held devices of drivers and passengers, as a data source for traffic and road safety, and even for tracking accidents and authors of infractions, (10).

The development of the Cameroon and Uganda RSPRs are ongoing. It is envisaged that validation workshops for the reviews will be conducted in October 2017 and capacity building initiatives will be undertaken thereafter. The experiences of the two countries are expected to be replicated in other African countries in their efforts to save lives.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As region, Africa is facing a rapidly growing number of vehicles, road users, increased trade corridors and urbanization coupled with staggering global and regional road traffic fatalities and injuries which calls for critical need to actively promote road safety everywhere in the continent. Indeed, the same should be applied to the whole world. The process of preparing the road safety reviews and of improving road safety on the African continent and certainly in the world goes on and it is continuous function requiring sustained multi-stakeholders and multi-pronged approaches. More action needs to still be undertaken to meet the goal of the Decade of Action for

Road Safety (2011-2020) and the sustainable development goals to reduce deaths, in particular with regard to protecting vulnerable road users, enacting and enforcing good road safety governance and addressing vehicle and infrastructure safety and compilation of reliable and quality road safety data.

This paper has showcased some of the key initiatives- the study on the minimum road safety indicators and the RSPRs-undertaken in Africa, with the view to highlight progress in the implementation of the Decade of Action in Africa, particularly after its mid-term review. The paper also showed how the minimum set of indicators will help focus attention on the impact of road safety interventions as well as how the RSPRs would help to close the gap in the implementation of the Decade.

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