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Strategic questions of a horizontal and cross-sectoral policy or regulatory nature:

Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety

Activities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

Note by the Secretariat of the Special Envoy for Road Safety

Summary

Every year, approximately 1.3 million lives are tragically lost due to road traffic crashes, while between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, often leading to disabilities. Shockingly, road crashes rank as the eighth leading cause of death worldwide, with young people aged 5 to 29 being the most affected. The vast majority of these fatalities occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), exacerbating the economic toll. Road traffic injuries result in substantial economic losses for individuals, families, and nations, accounting for 3–5 per cent of a country's GDP and pushing millions into poverty, contributing to a staggering €1.85 trillion burden on the global economy annually.

Addressing this urgent issue, the United Nations has taken significant actions, appointing Mr. Jean Todt as the Special Envoy for Road Safety in April 2015, with the mandate extended by Secretary-General António Guterres. The Sustainable Development Goals also include specific targets on road safety, aiming to halve global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes and providing access to safe transport systems for all by 2030.

In response to the pressing road safety agenda, United Nations Member States adopted the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Improving Global Road Safety on 31 August 2020, setting a new target to halve road deaths and injuries by 2030. This resolution calls for further support to the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), an extension of the Special Envoy's function, and reaffirmation of the value of United Nations legal instruments on road safety. It urges WHO and the United Nations Regional Commissions to develop a plan for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety and calls on United Nations Member States to invest in road safety at all levels.

On 21 July 2021, the resolution A/RES/75/308 was adopted, defining the scope and modalities of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety (HLM). The HLM, held on 30 June-1 July 2022, brought together public and private sector officials committed to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, aiming to achieve the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals targets.

This document from the Special Envoy contains the activities which contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate, as implemented between January and October 2023.

The Committee is invited **to take note** of this document and **to express its support** for the continuation of the important work and momentum built so far by the Special Envoy to improve road safety.

I. Background

1. The severe impact of road traffic crashes on the well-being of all people and the huge economic consequences for societies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries prompted the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint on 29 April 2015, Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety, with the Secretariat hosted by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).
2. In response to the worrying situation of road safety on the development agenda, specific goals on road safety were included in the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. Target 3.6 calls for halving of the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes, and target 11.2 aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.
3. In August 2020, United Nations Member States recommitted themselves to urgent action for road safety by adopting the latest General Assembly resolution on Improving Global Road Safety (A/RES/74/299). The resolution calls for a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety and sets a new target to halve the number of road deaths and injuries by 2030. Among key calls for action are a request for further support for the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), a request to the United Nations Secretary-General to consider extending the Special Envoy for Road Safety function through 2030 and a reaffirmation of the value of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety. It also asks WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for the Second Decade of Action. Most importantly, it invites Member States to invest in road safety at all levels, including by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for institutional and infrastructural improvements for road safety.
4. In July 2021, United Nations Member States adopted resolution A/RES/75/308 on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety (HLM). The objective is to address gaps and challenges, mobilize political leadership, promote multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and assess the progress made with the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals.
5. In December 2021, a high-level preparatory meeting, convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), was held and focused on international and domestic financing for road safety.
6. In June and July of 2022, the HLM 2030 Horizon for Road Safety: Securing a Decade of Action and Delivery, was convened by the President of UNGA. HLM brought together officials of the public and private sectors who committed to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety and adopted the new political declaration to ensure that the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals targets are met.
7. To date, the Special Envoy has visited 95 United Nations Member States, where he held bilateral meetings with 33 Heads of States and more than 250 Ministers.

8. This report of the Special Envoy contains the activities that contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate (see the annex), implemented since the Special Envoy's previous report (ECE/TRANS/2023/27).

II. Summary and Highlights of the Activities Implemented by the Special Envoy

A. Promoting Global Partnerships to Support the Design and Implementation of Strategies and Activities to Improve Road Safety

9. Promoting global partnerships to enhance road safety has remained a top priority for the Special Envoy, and in concrete terms, was addressed by the Special Envoy through more than 300 meetings, consultations, and participation in various awareness-raising initiatives, such as the following.

1. Financing for Road Safety

10. The Special Envoy has been fundraising for the UNRSF. Serving as an Advisory Board member, he tirelessly worked to elevate the visibility of the UNRSF during various activities, meetings, missions, and events for the Friends of the Special Envoy Network. The dedicated efforts yielded positive results, with the Kingdom of Qatar pledging to become a donor to the UNRSF on 21 February 2023. Additionally, on 15 March 2023, the Special Envoy held a virtual meeting with H.E. Mr. Stefan Schnorr, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport of Germany, to formalize the contribution of 1 million USD from the German Government to the UNRSF. These achievements underscore the Special Envoy's commitment to securing vital resources for road safety initiatives, demonstrating the importance of collaborative partnerships in driving meaningful change on the world's roads.

11. On 1 December 2022, the Special Envoy took on the role of Interim Chair for the seventh session of the UNRSF Advisory Board. The session centred on critical topics, including enhancing the visibility and raising awareness of global road safety as a priority for international development assistance. The discussions also revolved around resource mobilization and the necessity of sustainable financing to enable the UNRSF in fulfilling its mandate for 2030.

12. On 3 March 2023, the Special Envoy contributed to the UNRSF Platforms for Engagement Virtual Open Day. Through his remarks, the Special Envoy praised the encouraging achievements of the UNRSF, with 36 projects implemented in 46 countries during its first five years.

13. On 25 May 2023, the Special Envoy delivered opening remarks at the launch of the UNRSF 2022 report on road safety, titled Local Actions, Global Impacts, during the International Transport Forum held in Leipzig, Germany. The report highlighted the significance of local efforts and their far-reaching effects in enhancing road safety worldwide.

14. On 22 June 2023, the Special Envoy delivered remarks during the UNRSF Advisory Board's eighth session, focusing on the agenda item Reflections by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety. The Special Envoy stressed the urgent need for a global UNRSF to provide governments with access to proven road safety interventions that can save lives.

2. Global Friends of the Special Envoy for Road Safety Network

15. Since 2019, the Special Envoy has been instrumental in fostering road safety initiatives within the United Nations and diplomatic community through the creation of the Friends of Road Safety Network. Initially established in Geneva, alongside the European Union delegation, the network expanded to New York City, Washington DC, Bangkok, and Brussels. In 2022, a global Friends of the Special Envoy Network was formed, building upon the diplomatic hubs. The network of Friends for Road Safety consists of 93 Members, which

include heads of Private Sector Companies, International Organizations, along with Representatives of Member States and Cities, United Nations Leaders, and celebrities.

16. The Friends of Road Safety Network aims to drive increased engagement and collaboration for road safety in their respective nations, companies, and institutions, including at the local level. They will be supported by road safety champions, including global celebrities, to amplify their message and advocate for safer roads worldwide.

17. During the United Nations Seventh Global Road Safety Week in May 2023, the Special Envoy urged all Friends to participate in a call-to-action for #RethinkMobility, emphasizing the need to prioritize sustainable transport options like walking, cycling, and public transport. The campaign generated impressive engagement, with 475 tweets using the #FriendofRoadSafety hashtag and a potential reach of approximately 34 million viewers.

18. The participants of the Friends will promote increased engagement and stronger cooperation for road safety in their nations, companies and institutions, including at the local level, as well as among diplomats and representatives of civil society. The Friends will also be supported by road safety champions in public spheres with celebrities from all over the world. The Friends will join forces to stress the importance of reducing deaths and serious injuries on the roads everywhere.

19. Local hubs will contribute to a worldwide Friends group that draws together expertise to advance global targets. Such hubs, led by the diplomatic community, currently include Geneva, New York City, Washington D.C., Brussels and Bangkok, as mentioned above.

20. On 22 June 2023, the Special Envoy delivered opening remarks at a reception hosted by H.E. Mr. Vincenzo Grassi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva, under the theme Safe mobility and Agenda 2030. The Special Envoy expressed gratitude to all participants, including distinguished representatives like H.E. Mr. Maurizio Massari, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations in New York, H.E. Ms. Suphatra Srimaitreephithak, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations in Geneva, and H.E. Ms. Lotte Knudsen, Permanent Observer of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva. During this gathering, the Special Envoy emphasized the critical importance of unity and collaboration in our ongoing fight for safer mobility. The occasion served as a reminder of the shared responsibility to work together towards achieving safer roads and mobility for all, in line with Agenda 2030's goals.

21. On 9 October 2023, the first meeting with more than 20 Friends' respective Advisors took place at Palais des Nations in Geneva. The discussions held on its margins further strengthened the collective efforts and leveraged the interests to advance the global road safety targets.

3. Seventh United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety

22. Following the six previous United Nations-wide meetings hosted by the Special Envoy, the Special Envoy will hold the Seventh Partnership Meeting for Road Safety on 13 December 2023. The annual partnership meetings aim to increase greater strategic coordination efforts on road safety by the United Nations and will be attended by high-level representatives from the United Nations organizations and departments.

23. The main topics to be covered during the meeting will include the results of the 2023 Global Status Report on Road Safety and planning for the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (Marrakech, Morocco – 18–19 February 2025), road safety linkages to gender, cities, and youth, as well as regional trends and initiatives, financing for road safety and the United Nations internal road safety strategy.

B. Advocating with Governments, Civil Society and the Private Sector for the Promotion of Road Safety, Particularly in Countries with a High Rate of Road Fatalities and Injuries

1. National level Advocacy with Governments and Other Stakeholders to Increase Attention on Road Safety

24. In 2023, the Special Envoy travelled to 28 countries, eight of which were ECE member States. The Special Envoy meets with high-level government officials in mostly low- and middle-income countries with poor road safety records to raise visibility, prioritization and investment in road safety. Since 2015, the Special Envoy has held meetings with government representatives and relevant stakeholders in 95 countries: 22 countries in Asia/Eurasia/Oceania, 17 countries in Africa, 9 countries in the Middle-East, 26 countries in Europe and North America, and 21 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean. These discussions focused on the status of the road safety situation in each country and encouraged accession to and implementation of the United Nations road safety conventions. The Special Envoy continues to keep the United Nations road safety conventions, the importance of strong governance and the need to build complete national road safety systems on the agenda of his bilateral meetings and on messages in his speeches at conferences.

2. Global Awareness Campaign on Road Safety

25. On 20 September 2023, the Special Envoy launch the UN Global Road Safety Campaign in partnership with JC Decaux in Brussels, Belgium. On the occasion, the Special Envoy was joined by ambassadors, Ms. Michelle Yeoh, actress and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and Ms. Julie Gayet, Actress, Ms. Adina Vălean, European Commissioner for Transport, Mr. Jean-Charles Decaux, Co-CEO of JC Decaux. Over the next two years, it will unfold across 80 countries and 1,000 cities on billboards, bus shelters and bikeshares, with a strong presence on social media platforms. Its theme Make a Safety Statement represents a resounding call to action, amplifying the #streetsforlife global message of the New Decade of Action for Road Safety, with the bold objective of halving the number of road-related victims by 2030.

3. Kofi Annan Road Safety Award for Africa

26. On 25–26 September 2023, the Second Annual Kofi Annan Road Safety Award was hosted in Marrakech, Morocco. It took place take place under the aegis of the Government of Morocco, the ECA, the Secretariat of the Special Envoy and the Kofi Annan Foundation, with the primary objective of motivating key stakeholders to develop and implement innovative and outstanding ideas and initiatives to save lives on Africa's roads. The Special Envoy attended it along with dignitaries, high-level political leaders, senior road safety officials and experts from the host country, the Kingdom of Morocco and representatives from various organizations and agencies.

27. On the above occasion, the Special Envoy delivered opening remarks at the Ceremony and congratulated all the winners listed below:

- Cameroon, Communication (Private sector, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Accademia) Award;
- Ethiopia, Public transportation/Modal shift Award;
- Ivory Coast, Innovation Award;
- Kingdom of Eswatini, Road Safety Management Award;
- Kingdom of Morocco, Road Safety Honor Award;
- Republic of Benin, Data Management Award;
- Republic of Rwanda, Safer Vehicles Award.

28. Moreover, the Special Envoy gave a speech at the side technical workshop Digital Transformations and Innovations for Safer Roads.

29. The regional awards will be given annually throughout the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030).

C. Participation in Global or Regional Conferences and Meetings on Road Safety

30. The Special Envoy participated in in-person and online meetings and conferences in efforts to highlight road safety, comprising events where road safety may not have been previously covered. These include:

- PEP Partnership on Active Mobility Conference
- Albanian General Directorate of Road Transport Services International event for safer streets
- International Parliamentarians Congress of Pakistan first Road Safety Conference for Parliamentarians
- WHO and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Land Transport and Accessibility of Senegal Regional Conference on Road mortality
- Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety Eighth Global Meeting of NGOs Advocating for Road Safety and Road Victims
- Seventieth ECE World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations Anniversary
- Eighty-sixth ECE Inland Transport Committee Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety Session
- International Telecommunication Union-ECE Future Networked Car Event
- Fifth European Start-up Prize for Mobility
- Automobile Club of Italy Festival on Sustainable Mobility
- Salon Innovations et Sports Mécaniques
- ECOSOC Youth Forum Ministerial Roundtable
- 2023 International Transport Forum Summit
- International Association of Public Transport Global Public Transport Summit
- University of Brescia Fourth Conference on Road Safety
- International Road Federation Eleventh Caribbean Regional Conference
- European Commission High-Level Group on Road Safety Meeting
- ECE 1998 Agreement Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations
- International Chamber of Commerce 2023 World Chambers Competition Gala and Award Ceremony
- Vision Zero Conference
- UNESCO Seventh Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport International Conference (MINEPS VII)
- WHO National Road Safety Agencies Heads Second Meeting
- Special Envoy Secretariat UN Road Safety Agencies Retreat
- Thai Technical Delegation Meeting
- Fifth Philippine Engineering Summit
- Sanofi Brazil-UN Driven to Safety and Sustainability: Sanofi's Road Responsibility pledge Signing
- ROADPOL Safety Days

- Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy Ministers Meeting
- International Telecommunication Union-ECE Future Networked Car Spin-off
- International Association Chief Police-ECE Memorandum of Understanding Signing
- Putra University Children Safety on the Road: Public Health Vaccines Inaugural Public Lecture
- Government of the People's Republic of China Global Sustainable Transport Forum
- PIARC World Road Congress
- International Labour Organization Safe Driving Training Course
- Sanofi India-UN “A Partnership for Road Safety” pledge Signing
- Asia-Pacific Urban Forum 8
- European Association for Accident Research and Analysis Meeting
- iRAP Innovation Workshop
- Government of Malaysia Fifteen High-Level Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum
- Seventh Future Investment Initiative
- World Cities Day 2023 Financing sustainable urban future for all

D. Advocating for Accession to, and a More Effective Implementation of the United Nations Road Safety Legal Instruments

31. This objective has been addressed at meetings of the Special Envoy with governments, representatives of international organizations and United Nations system organizations, as well as civil society representatives in countries he visited in his capacity as the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, as highlighted above. For this purpose, the Special Envoy’s Secretariat, hosted by the ECE Office of the Executive Secretary, prepares a briefing for each mission with the road safety profile of the country, the main road safety legal instruments, specially designed and customized policy messages, and other details relevant for the meetings of the Special Envoy with the officials.

1. Promotion of the United Nations Road Safety Conventions

32. The Special Envoy promotes seven of the 59 United Nations transport-related legal instruments that specifically focus on improving road safety, using materials that have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. Information about the legal instruments is distributed and used at meetings worldwide. As a result of the Special Envoy’s advocacy, 50 contracting parties to the seven legal instruments are new since his appointment. The following countries becoming contracting parties in 2023:

- January 2023 – Maldives: 1968 Convention on Road Traffic; and 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals. The Special Envoy had meetings with Government officials of Maldives since his appointment.
- April 2023 – Andorra: 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be Fitted and/or be Used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these United Nations Regulations. The Special Envoy travelled to and had meetings with Government officials of Andorra since his appointment.
- May 2023 – Türkiye: 1971 European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals; and 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals. The Special Envoy travelled to and had meetings with Government officials of Türkiye since his appointment.

- July 2023 – Viet Nam: 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be Fitted and/or be Used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these United Nations Regulations. The Special Envoy travelled to and had meetings with Government officials of Viet Nam since his appointment.

2. Capacity-Building Support

33. On 7 February 2023, the Special Envoy contributed to the third Workshop on Road Safety and Capacity Building by the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Throughout his message, the Special Envoy stressed as paramount the following actions for the ASEAN countries: strengthening capacity building of road safety stakeholders; applying the UN Road Safety Conventions; enhancing road crash data collection and management systems; and developing greater knowledge on the cost, value, and impact of road safety interventions to help deliver the 12 voluntary targets of the Global Plan.

34. On the margins of the Kofi Annan Road Safety Award Ceremony, on 25 September, the Special Envoy office collaborated with the Government of Morocco, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, World Bank Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for a technical workshop Digital Transformations and Innovations for Safer Roads. The session had four parts during which road safety technical experts elaborated on: Building a digital approach to road safety; Setting the technical, regulatory and financial environment; Experiences across Africa in the use of digitalization for Road Safety; and Experiences across Africa in the management of the Road Safety.

III. Conclusion

35. Over the past year, the Special Envoy achieved significant progress in deepening engagement and increasing visibility for road safety among various stakeholders. Through a mix of global, regional, and national initiatives, both in-person and virtual, the Special Envoy successfully advanced the cause of road safety, garnering support from governments, the private sector, the United Nations system, and civil society. The Special Envoy's in-country missions played a pivotal role in elevating the prominence of global road safety and the importance of UN road safety legal instruments. These visits inspired stronger actions from governments, the private sector, international organizations, and civil society in the quest for improved road safety. Furthermore, during these missions, the Special Envoy advocated for more determined actions from partners and Member States following the outcomes of the historic High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety, which took place in New York in June-July 2022.

36. Looking ahead, the Special Envoy has outlined key calls for action. These include continued promotion of the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action as a basis for necessary interventions, expanding the United Nations – JC Decaux global road safety awareness campaign and strengthening the Friends of the Special Envoy Network. Scheduled travels to the diverse regions in the coming months demonstrate the Special Envoy's commitment to engaging globally to further implement road safety initiatives.

37. The Special Envoy's efforts during the reporting period have been instrumental in strengthening partnerships and increasing visibility towards a safer and more sustainable road environment at all levels.

Annex

Priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety (Extract from the Terms of Reference)

1. Promoting a global partnership to support the design and implementation of strategies and activities to improve road safety

The Special Envoy will support the attainment of the overall goal of the Decade, by leveraging his or her professional expertise and experience. In this regard, the Special Envoy is expected to develop a global partnership with a particular emphasis on raising levels of political commitment. The Special Envoy will work with key funding partners – including governments, financial institutions and the private and non-governmental sectors – to secure adequate resources to implement the global partnership strategy.

2. Advocating with governments, civil society and the private sector for the promotion of road safety, particularly in countries with high level of road fatalities and injuries

The Special Envoy will advocate for road safety, identifying achievements and challenges at the global, regional and national levels, as appropriate. He or she will highlight the challenges and needs for technical and/or other assistance which may be required, particularly by low- and middle-income countries, to improve road safety.

3. Participating in global and regional conferences and meetings on road safety

The Special Envoy will participate in global and regional conferences on road safety, including the second high-level global conference on road safety to be held in November 2015 in Brasilia, Brazil. On specific request and case-by-case consideration by the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy may represent the Secretary-General in relevant meetings.

4. Advocating the accession to, and more effective implementation of, United Nations road safety legal instruments

The Special Envoy will raise the visibility and awareness of the United Nations road safety legal instruments, including the Conventions on Road Traffic, and Road Signs and Signals, and the 1958, 1997 and 1998 Vehicle Regulations Agreements as well as other related instruments including driving times and rest periods for professional drivers and the transport of dangerous goods. The Special Envoy will also promote the accession to and the improved implementation of these legal instruments by contracting parties.
