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Less chaos and carnage on the road: the case for improving Africa's road safety

Addis Ababa, 16 June 2015 (ECA) - At 24.1 deaths per 100.000 road users compared to Europe's 10.3, Africa has the world's highest fatality rates on its roads. African states will therefore meet in Addis Ababa on 9 and 10 July 2015 at the Third African Road Safety Conference to discuss progress, challenges and the extent to which they are implementing the African Road Safety Action Plan.

The African Road Safety Action Plan ^[1] focuses on general and very specific road safety issues such as understanding of road safety institutional arrangements, road safety management and related activities, achievements, opportunities, and challenges in African countries. Baseline data is collected and performance in implementing the Action Plan is then assessed. The Plan also allows for sharing of best practices.

Road traffic injuries are reported to be the eighth leading cause of death globally, with an impact similar to that caused by many communicable diseases, such as malaria. Africa stands at 9 % of world total road accident deaths.

Road traffic injuries are estimated to cost low and middle-income countries between 1–2 % of their gross national product. Weak road safety reduces opportunities and affects growth. It thwarts social and economic development of economically productive people since 77% of road deaths are of those under 44 years of age. Road deaths are also the leading cause of death for young people aged 15–29 years.

During this mid-term review conference, the different panels will discuss road safety management including infrastructure, road user behaviour, involvement of private sector in road safety and the economics of road safety. The participants will also discuss the implications of road safety for the Sustainable Development Goals, and how to integrate road safety targets under these goals.

African government ministries, National Road Safety Authorities and Councils, African sub-regional and regional organisations, international organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academic and research institutions, and the private sector will attend the conference. The conference expects to adopt recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan. It also expects to draft recommendations on Africa's effective participation at the global review of the Decade to be held in Brazil in November 2015.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is organising the conference in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Transport Policy Programme (SSATP), the Global Road Safety Facility of the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Road Federation (IRF).

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[1] <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2014/wp1/ECE-TRANS-PRESENTATION-2014-7e.pdf>

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