

Statement to diplomatic corps in New York on margins of the supporting event on road safety

Ms. Nneka Henry, Head of UNRSF

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Excellencies, thank you so much for this opportunity to share information on the work of the UN Road Safety Fund and why it is important that you consider joining this global partnership to end the global road safety crisis.

The UN Road Safety Fund was launched in 2018 as mandated by the UN General Assembly and it serves as the UN focal point for financing road safety projects in low- and middle-income countries. After putting in place the secretariat, steering committee, advisory board and UN financial controls, the Fund finally began financing projects at the end of 2019. We all know what happened a few short months later in March 2020.....

Notwithstanding COVID-19, the Fund mobilized USD \$18 million dollars for its first phase 2018-2021 and is currently supporting 30 countries in the 5 UN regions.

All of the Fund's projects apply a "systems approach" and target critical aspects of national road safety systems which can be improved with small grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Concretely, that means that we are developing national capacity to manufacture and certify motorcycle helmets that meet UN safety standards (in Rwanda) – it means we are improving national driver's licence systems (in Lao PDR) – it means we are establishing and implementing international safety standards for the importation and exportation of used vehicles to West Africa (for the 15 ECOWAS member states) – it means we are strengthening the national capacity for effective emergency medical services for victims of road crashes (for example in Azerbaijan and in Uganda) – and it also means that we are developing and supporting implementation of safe walking and cycling lanes in urban settings (in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Mozambique and Rwanda).

And although only a small secretariat of 3 professional staff, we actively recognize donor support to the Fund. We continue to expand our donor recognition toolbox, which currently includes speaking engagements at key events, website visibility, social media posts, targeted campaigns, and publications. We are also finalizing "proud donor" marketing materials for digital and physical applications to be used directly by donors.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the fact is that

Wherever you happen to call home today, it is very likely to make front page news if one person is fatally harmed because of a road traffic collision.

A big reason behind that is because you expect your local and national government to apply UN and international safety standards to how it designs roads, places road traffic signage, imposes vehicle safety standards, enforces road traffic laws and provides emergency post-crash care. In low- and middle-income countries, citizens like you and me, also expect the same from their elected officials. Unfortunately, in many cases, the required road safety expertise and focus on safety as a core value is woefully lacking.

The result. More than 1 million of the 1.3 million annual road traffic fatalities occur in these low- and middle-income countries.

The UN Road Safety Fund is part of the response. The road safety expertise that exists in the UN system is truly unique and proven to be effective. Through our 25 projects in 30 countries [the UN Road Safety Fund is making a difference](#). But, given the massive scale of the problem, we must all do more. Stronger emphasis on reducing road crashes would be particularly important in Africa where poor road use is proving to be the leading cause of death for young people aged 5 to 29 years old as well as a source of soaring public health and economic costs.

That is why we need you to join our efforts to improve road safety in the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety.

To make that possible, the UN Road Safety Fund now has an [individual giving platform](#) for everyday citizens and small business owners to contribute direct one-off or recurring cash donations from \$1 to \$50,000. We also continue to encourage governments and companies to make meaningful unique or multi-year contributions through traditional bank transfers. On 30 June 2022, all major contributions will be announced at the UN Road Safety Fund Pledging Conference taking place during the UN High-Level Meeting on Improving Road Safety at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Information on how and why you should contribute to the UN Road Safety Fund is available in the [UN Road Safety Fund First Replenishment Document](#).

In these uncertain times, the chance to help save a life should never be in question. [Every 24 seconds](#), someone dies from a road traffic crash.

The time to support global road safety is now. If not now, when?