



World Health
Organization



ROAD SAFETY
IS NO ACCIDENT

Road Safety Is No Accident

The WHO newsletter on road safety

November 2003

Newsletter 1:

World Health Day 2004

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ROAD SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT:

Road safety is a result of deliberate efforts on the part of many sectors of society - government and non-government alike - once these sectors have acknowledged it to be an important and valuable public good, and have developed policies and programmes to support and maintain it.

This newsletter represents the first edition of news on the World Health Organization's (WHO) work in road safety, and focuses specifically on World Health Day 2004 (WHD). This and subsequent issues will share information and encourage activities to achieve the aims of what will be a major global milestone in road safety.

WHAT IS WHD?

WHD is an annual WHO event marking the establishment of the Organization. Celebrated on 7 April, WHD is a key WHO advocacy tool for engaging the general public in discussion and debate, and calling for action on important health issues. While WHO provides overall coordination, the success of WHD depends largely on contributions by partners such as governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, the media, the private sector and the general public.

WHD 2004: ROAD SAFETY

In response to a growing concern about road traffic injuries, the WHO Director-General has, for the first time in the history of WHO, devoted a WHD specifically to Road Safety. Each year road traffic injuries take the lives of 1.2 million men, women and children around the world, and seriously injure millions more.

The death toll is highest and still growing in low and middle-income countries, where pedestrians, motorcyclists, cyclists and passengers are especially vulnerable. In addition to human suffering, estimated costs of road traffic injuries are between 1% and 2% of GNP per annum in these countries. This represents a loss of approximately US\$ 65 billion every year; almost twice the total development assistance received worldwide by developing countries.



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Yet road traffic injuries can be prevented. Addressing issues such as speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol; promoting the use of helmets, seat belts and other restraints; ensuring that people walking and cycling are more easily visible: improving the design of roads and vehicles; enforcing road safety regulations; and improving emergency response services has demonstrated that the needless deaths and disabilities caused by road traffic collisions can be prevented.

SLOGAN AND LOGO FOR WHD



The WHD 2004 slogan “**Road Safety Is No Accident**” is an emphatic message that road safety is a result of deliberate efforts on the part of many sectors. In the absence of strong political will, road safety will not become a reality.

The WHD 2004 logo and slogan are freely available to partners world-wide wishing to develop materials to support the events they will host on WHD 2004. To download the logo and slogan, visit:

www.who.int/world-health-day/2004.

COLLABORATION FOR WHD

In pursuit of strong global partnerships for WHD 2004, WHO hosted two meetings at its Geneva headquarters during the month of September 2003.

18-19 September 2003: **WHO Consultation to Develop Areas of Collaboration with Road Traffic Injury Advocacy Organizations.** The meeting convened representatives of 12 NGOs from Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the USA. Although the primary function of these NGOs is to strengthen services for victims of road traffic crashes, they are also powerful advocates for road safety. In the absence of an official international forum for such NGOs to come together, it was an important first opportunity to share information and experiences and discuss ways of collaborating among themselves and with WHO.

The consultation identified key areas for joint activities in data collection and research, including the development of standards for evidence gathering and greater sharing of scientific literature; in services for victims, including the preparation of international guidelines on service provision and the issuing of a joint appeal to relevant ministries to address the needs of victims; and advocacy, including the participation of advocacy-oriented NGOs in scientific meetings and urging governments to support upcoming resolutions on road safety. The NGOs made a commitment to plan and participate fully in events on WHD 2004. A meeting to review the progress of their collaboration will be held during the 7th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, scheduled to take place in Vienna, Austria, on 6-9 June 2004. For more information on this meeting, kindly contact Dr Meleckidzedek Khayesi, khayesim@who.int.

23-24 September 2003: **First Meeting of the Advisory Committee Members to WHD 2004.** This meeting was held in order to develop broad strategic directions for WHD 2004. The meeting convened representatives of 23 leading institutions.



Photo: ©WHO, P. VIROT

“This is the first gathering of many of the most influential players in the road safety field, from victim associations, foundations, the automobile industry, and ministries of transport and health. Combining such diverse expertise in road safety and taking action will help to reverse the unnecessary death toll on the world’s roads.”

Dr LEE Jong-wook, WHO Director-General

Participants provided guidance on events being planned for WHD 2004 and on the key messages, slogan/logo and other materials to be disseminated in support of these events. The group recommended that the global event, which will take place in Paris, France, should be advocacy-oriented, involving prominent political figures; national ministers of health, transport and education; road safety experts; celebrities and others able to provide personal testimonies. They suggested the event focus equally on disseminating messages about the magnitude of the problem and the many possibilities that exist for prevention.

The Advisory Committee members suggested that it would be important to identify mechanisms for maintaining the momentum generated by WHD 2004. They advised that a campaign should be part of a comprehensive long-term strategy to prevent road traffic injuries, and that this could be developed collaboratively with the members of the Advisory Committee, WHO and additional partners. They also noted that early efforts should focus on countries most seriously affected by road traffic injuries.

With regard to the events they will host in their respective countries on WHD 2004, the members of the Advisory Committee decided to encourage their governments to support World Health Assembly and UN General Assembly resolutions on road safety; to request national media to provide coverage of road safety issues in the months leading up to WHD 2004; to identify celebrities to champion road safety; and to collaborate with WHO Regional and Country Offices. Several members also plan to launch major policy and programme initiatives on 7 April 2004 to prevent road traffic injuries. For more information, kindly refer to the press release issued in relation to the meeting:

www.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2003/pr68 or contact Ms Laura Sminkey, sminkeyl@who.int.

WHD EVENTS

While the global launch of WHD will take place in Paris, France, many other regional and national events will take place concurrently around the world. Hundreds of groups will host events related to road safety. Some plans for activities include:

- ◆ *Launching of a new legislation;*
- ◆ *Conferences and seminars;*
- ◆ *National charity sports event for road safety;*
- ◆ *Radio or television talk-shows;*
- ◆ *Street demonstrations and fairs;*
- ◆ *Walks, marathons or similar events;*
- ◆ *Photographic or other types of art exhibitions.*

At the Paris launch on 7 April 2004, WHO and the World Bank will launch the ***World report on road traffic injury prevention***. The report documents what is currently known about road traffic injuries globally, their impact on public health, the factors which place people at risk of such injuries, and the solutions to prevent them. The report draws on contributions from nearly 100 road traffic injury prevention experts, representing many sectors and countries. The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* should be accessible through the WHD website in April 2004.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Although road traffic injuries have been among the top global causes of death for many years, it was only recently that the issue became a significant topic of discussion in the UN General Assembly. With leadership from Ambassador Fuad Al-Hinai, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman in New York, a number of countries from both the North and the South have seized the opportunity of WHD 2004 to address the global road safety crisis in the world's major political forum.

The first step was Resolution 57/309, passed by the UN General Assembly on 22 May 2003. The Resolution welcomed WHO's decision to designate "Road Safety" as the theme of WHD 2004, called for further discussions in the months ahead and requested the UN Secretary-General to submit a report on the issue to the UN General Assembly. On the release of this report in August 2003, Mr. Annan declared that, "Improving road safety requires strong political will on the part of governments. Countries should aim to ensure that sufficient resources are available, commensurate with the size of the road safety problem in their country".

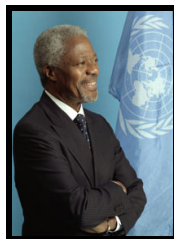


Photo: ©UN website

Mr Kofi Annan
UN Secretary-General

The Secretary-General's report builds on the knowledge of many global and regional UN agencies and summarizes current knowledge on the magnitude of the problem, the risk factors and prevention strategies. The report also makes several recommendations on what can be done by governments, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. The Secretary-General's report may be found at www.who.int/world-health/day/2004/infomaterials/en/un_en.pdf. The release of the report and initiatives of several governments led to a second Resolution A/RES/58/9 on 5 November 2003. In this Resolution, the UN General Assembly agreed to hold a plenary meeting on 14 April 2004 in connection with WHD and to launch the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. The Resolution requests that the plenary focus on increasing high-level government awareness of the magnitude of the road traffic injury problem, and that it include the participation of Governments, the President of the UN

General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General, the Director-General of WHO, the President of the World Bank, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. In conjunction with this plenary, the Resolution also requests that the UN Department of Public Information organize a meeting of experts, relevant NGOs, members of civil society, the private sector and other interested parties, including the media, to raise awareness and exchange information on best practices in road safety. This high-level discussion will be an excellent opportunity to reinforce the messages of WHD 2004 and initiate implementation of the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*.

"The European Union believes that saving human lives through an effective road safety policy is a difficult challenge, but also a moral obligation for all member states."

Statement by Ambassador Aldo Mantovani, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations on behalf of the European Union, UN General Assembly



UNECE Fourth Road Safety Week, 5 – 11 April 2004

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Transport Division works actively with member governments, other international organizations and NGOs to reduce the number and gravity of road collisions. Concurrent to WHD events, 5-11 April 2004 will mark the Fourth Road Safety Week in the UNECE Region. The aim will be to combat the aggressive behaviour of drivers by making them aware of the vital importance of keeping calm behind the wheel and treating other drivers with respect. During Road Safety Week member states of the UNECE will organize national campaigns with the slogan "Respect is Safety". The UNECE will also hold an exhibition on the theme of the Fourth Road Safety Week in the Palais des Nations from 5-8 April 2004. For more information, visit: www.unece.org

POSTAGE STAMPS FOR WHD

For the first time since 1972, WHD will be commemorated by a stamp produced by the UN Postal Administration. The stamp will be available at UN offices in Geneva, New York and Vienna, and will be issued in the Swiss franc, the US dollar, and the Euro respectively. There will be six different designs by French artist Michel Granger, each illustrating a different issue related to road safety. To increase country-level visibility of WHD 2004, WHO is advocating that its partners request their governments to issue national stamps on road safety. These could become widely disseminated reminders of the importance of road safety.

RESOURCES FOR WHD

The WHO package of materials, for use in conjunction with WHD 2004, will include a toolkit for organizers, a brochure on road traffic injuries and their prevention, a poster and stickers with the logo and slogan. The package will be available in printed form in December 2003. Regional and country-based organizations wishing to order the package should address their requests to the appropriate WHO office. For contact details, please refer below to WHO focal points for WHD.

The website for WHD www.who.int/world-health-day/2004 will be updated regularly. It will include the contents of the WHO package of materials, audio-visual statements on road safety, and the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* in six languages. The Report may also be ordered by writing to bookorders@who.int. By December 2003, the website will also feature, by country, descriptions of various events being organized by partners around the world, as well as a listing of related conferences planned by organizations in the lead up to WHD.

YOUR PHOTOS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We would like to make a request for photos associated with road traffic injuries and their prevention. We need photos that have an appropriate copyright with permission for WHO to use them free of charge for their advocacy materials. We are specifically looking for photos from around the world, showing roads and road signs; traffic, particularly scenes which show a mix of different types of transport; road users, including different types of drivers, motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians; interventions such as helmets, seat belts and reflectors; and road traffic crashes and emergency response services. Please send your photos to the WHD 2004 Liaison Officer or to traffic@who.int.

LOOKING AHEAD

A number of significant events on road safety are planned for the upcoming months:

On 29-31 March 2004, the **Fourth European Conference on Travel Medicine** will take place in Rome, Italy. Organized by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Travel Medicine, a major focus of the conference will be the prevention of road traffic injuries. www.ectm4.com

On 7 April 2004, **World Health Day 2004** will be celebrated at a global level in Paris, France (see above). www.who.int/world-health-day/2004

On 14 April 2004, a plenary meeting on road traffic injuries will be held at the **UN General Assembly** in New York (see above). www.un.org

On 6-9 June 2004, the **7th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion** will be held in Vienna, Austria. The conference will bring together professionals and organizations involved in injury prevention, control and research, and will feature road safety as one of its major themes. www.safety2004.info

WHD FOCAL POINTS

In order to maximize visibility and impact, WHO encourages organizations planning an international event to contact the WHD 2004 Liaison Officer at WHO Headquarters. Regional and country organizations should contact their respective WHO offices. Contact information for the WHO Regional Offices follows, and contact information for WHO Country Offices is available at www.who.int/country.

◆ Africa

Olive Kobusingye, Regional Advisor, Disability & Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation: kobusingyeo@afro.who.int

◆ Americas

Alberto Concha-Eastman, Regional Advisor, Violence and Injuries: Conchaal@paho.org

◆ Eastern Mediterranean

Sussane Bassiri, Regional Advisor, Healthy Lifestyles Promotion: Bassiris@emro.who.int

◆ Europe

Francesca Racioppi, Technical Officer, Transport Programme WHO, European Centre for Environment and Health: frr@who.it

◆ South East Asia

Madan P. Upadhaya, Regional Advisor, Disability, Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation: Upadhyam@whosea.org

◆ Western Pacific

Hisashi Ogawa, Regional Advisor, Environmental Health: ogawah@wpro.who.int

For more information on WHD 2004, contact Ms Laura Sminkey, WHD 2004 Liaison Officer, Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention, World Health Organisation, Avenue Appia, 20, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland; Tel: +41 22 791 4547; Fax: +41 22 791 4332; e-mail: traffic@who.int.