



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

## **7th UN Road Safety Week**

**Statement by**

**Antonio Pedro**

**Acting Executive Secretary  
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

**Virtual, Monday 15 May 2023**

His Excellency Mr. Alemu Semie, Minister for Transport and Logistic of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Abdeljalil, Minister of Transport and Logistic of the Kingdom of Morocco,

His Excellency Mr. Ngalle Bibehe Jean Ernest Massena, Minister of Transport of the Republic of Cameroon,

His Excellency Chief Ndlaluhlaza Ndwandwe, Minister of Public Works and Transport of the Kingdom of Eswatini,

Mr. Thulani Mkhali, Principal Secretary, representing the Honourable Minister of Transport of the Gambia, H.E. Mr. Ebrima Sillah,

Her Excellency Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission,

Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety,  
Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to welcome you to this meeting to commemorate the 7<sup>th</sup> United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

Globally, road traffic crashes cause nearly 1.3 million preventable deaths and an estimated 50 million injuries each year – making it the leading killer of children and young people worldwide.

UN Road Safety Weeks provide a platform to raise awareness of the high number of road deaths worldwide, and to reflect on the challenges plaguing road safety management.

The theme of this year's Road Safety Week is sustainable transport, and specifically the need 'Rethink Mobility'.

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, that ECA contributed to articulate, emphasizes the importance of multi-modal transport to road safety.

Around 70% of the global population is expected to live in urban settings by 2030. The resulting increased demand for urban mobility will exceed the capacity of systems that rely largely on private vehicles such as cars.

Investing in public transport systems to facilitate safe and efficient movement of large and growing populations is therefore an imperative.

The UN advocates for multi-modal transport and land-use planning, with an optimal mix of motorized and non-motorised transport modes, to ensure safety and equitable access to mobility, while responding to diverse needs and preferences of a population.

Of course, multi-modal transport and land-use planning should be adapted to local contexts and climates.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Implementation of national and continental action plans as well as enforcement of laws and regulations on the African continent have generally been weak.

For example, a review of the status of implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan (2011-2020) by ECA and the African Union Commission showed that only 22 per cent of measures related to road safety management and 25 per cent of those that deal with road infrastructure were implemented.

Many challenges plague the safety of roads in Africa.

A lack of sustainable funding is a major constraint to the effective functioning of most road safety organisations and initiatives in Africa.

Although multiple funding sources are used for road safety in Africa, there is over-reliance on donor support.

African countries have adopted targets for road safety finance but rarely meet these targets, including allocating 5% of road maintenance resources and 10% of road investment to road safety.

It is encouraging, though, that Road Funds, generated from sources such as tolling, road levies, insurance, petroleum taxes, and vehicle inspection charges, are being allocated increasingly to road safety, including in Ghana, Ethiopia and Cameroon.

It is clear that governments alone cannot solve all road safety problems in Africa.

The private sector can step in by contributing financially and providing technical expertise, including through investment in Vehicle Inspection Centers and upgrading of roads to improve their safety ratings.

I also encourage African countries to harness existing road safety facilities such as the UN Road Safety Fund.

ECA is already using resources from this Fund to implement projects in Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda.

However, it may be time to set up an African Road Safety Fund, focusing on addressing the fundamentals of road safety on the continent, particularly management issues.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Another challenge I would like to highlight is that of the importation of used vehicles.

ECA's research has shown that implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would require over 2 million additional trucks to meet the increased demand for road freight.

It is expected that most of these trucks will be second-hand vehicles.

This would have serious road safety and environmental implications, in the absence of strong regulation on used vehicles.

Addressing the negative impact of used vehicles in Africa requires the harmonization of standards across the continent, and the enforcement of these standards.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the tools to address road safety challenges in Africa, particularly the African Road Safety Action Plan for the period 2021-2030.

This continental Plan is aligned with the Global Plan of Action for the UN Road Safety Decade (2021-2030) and takes into consideration the specificities of African countries.

I urge member States to use the continental plan to develop or revise their national plans.

Let me end by assuring you that ECA is ready to support member States to develop and implement their national Road Safety Action Plans.

We will also continue to track the performance of member States in implementing recommended road safety measures and to recognize those that contribute significantly to reduce road deaths on the continent through the Kofi Annan Road Safety Award.

Thank you for your attention.