

DECADE OF ACTION FOR
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

global launch



“Now we need to move this campaign into high gear and steer our world to safer roads ahead. Together, we can save millions of lives.”

Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

“With coordinated global action through the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, let us ensure that the ten years ahead mark a turning point for global road safety, thus sparing people from avoidable deaths and injuries that cause so much anguish and cost for our communities.”

Ms Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia

“Experts estimate that more than a million people die on the roads each year, one in five of whom is a child. More than 50 million people are hurt or seriously injured. The international community therefore has a duty to develop a common strategy and joint action to enhance road safety.”

Mr Dmitry Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation

Introduction

On 11 May 2011, the first ever Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 was launched with great enthusiasm and optimism across the world. Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, the Decade is a historic opportunity for countries to stop and reverse the trend which – without action – would lead to the loss of around **1.9 million lives** on the roads each year by 2020.

Governments, international agencies, civil society organizations and private companies in more than 100 countries celebrated the launch of the Decade through hundreds of events, both national and local. From Sri Lanka to Albania and from Ethiopia to Peru, presidents and prime ministers; ministers of transport, health and others; heads of international and nongovernmental organizations; chief executive officers of companies; road traffic victims and their families; and other concerned citizens expressed their commitment to the goal of the Decade: saving 5 million lives.

The Secretaries of Health (former) and Communications and Transport of Mexico, respectively Dr José Ángel Córdova Villalobos (far left) and Mr Dionisio Pérez-Jácome Friscione (far right), personally attended Decade launch events in Mexico City.



Launching

the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 across the globe

From high-level ministerial gatherings to expert symposia, press conferences, drawing competitions and cycling races, more than 400 events took place in all corners of the world marking the official start of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020. Multiple events were hosted across countries such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Mexico, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the latter, events were held in more than 30 cities.

At national levels, commitment to the Decade and its goal was expressed by officials from the highest levels of government: in Croatia, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom, heads of state and government put their weight behind the Decade by personally attending launch events. For example, in Slovenia, President Danilo Türk publicly signed a statement of support for the Decade in a ceremony held on the main square of the capital, Ljubljana, and in Sri Lanka, President Mahinda Rajapaksa launched the Decade in the presence of more than 600 dignitaries highlighting road safety as a matter of priority for his country.

At local levels, events were largely driven by civil society organizations. Some examples include:

- In India, the mascot "Pappu the Road Sense Zebra" promoted campaigns in Orissa and Rajasthan which educate children on the value of using pedestrian crossings to safely cross the road;
- In Lebanon, students and volunteers signed pledges to drive carefully;
- In Mauritius, a candle-light walk was held in the memory of road traffic victims;
- In the Philippines, a 42-kilometre relay run was organized in Manila;
- In Romania, awareness raising activities in Bucharest included first-aid demonstrations;
- In Suriname, the traffic police in Commewijne District raised the traffic flag, a symbol of mourning for road deaths in the country.



One of the greatest achievements of 11 May 2011 was bringing together different sectors to jointly commit to improving road safety. In many countries, the launch of the Decade was a shared undertaking among ministries of transport, health and interior, frequently joined by the ministries of education, communications and others. This successful multi-sectoral cooperation should pave the way for progress in achieving national targets.

Private companies also joined the effort by signing the Global Road Safety Commitment, a pledge by the management of companies towards the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020. By signing the commitment an organization pledges to work towards zero deaths and severe injuries as a result of its operations. For further information, visit: www.grsroadsafety.org/global_road_safety_commitment/.

“The Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 creates the political platform needed to scale up some well-defined measures. Evidence tells us that these measures work, and can save millions of lives.”

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General

Releasing national action plans

for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 was developed by governments, through a process facilitated by members of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, including the Commission for Global Road Safety, the Global Road Safety Partnership, the United Nations regional commissions, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

It is a collective roadmap indicating critical areas for engagement. These include improving the safety of roads and vehicles; enhancing emergency services; and building up road safety management generally. The Global Plan also calls for increased and improved legislation and enforcement on using helmets, seat-belts and child restraints and avoiding drinking and driving and speeding.

Taking inspiration from the Global Plan, many countries have developed, or are in the process of developing, national plans for the Decade. High-level national launch events frequently served as an opportunity to issue these plans, or to publicly announce road safety targets related to the Decade. On 11 May 2011 countries such as Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, the Philippines and the United Kingdom issued national Decade plans or strategic frameworks in line with the Global Plan. Countries such as Cambodia, Cook Islands, Egypt, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Niger and Viet Nam are currently finalizing their Decade plans.

“Every six seconds someone is killed or seriously injured on the world’s roads. We simply cannot go on like this.”

Mr David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Announcing new legislation

at the start of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

A number of countries used the occasion of the Decade launch to revise existing or adopt new road safety legislation. These include:

- In Austria, the National Council amended road traffic regulations which from 31 May 2011 mandate that children under the age of 12 years wear helmets while cycling or while being transported on cycles.
- In China, new legislation entered into force on 1 May 2011. From that date drinking and driving has been criminalized and penalties for transgressions have increased exponentially.
- In France, the Interministerial Committee for Road Safety took the decision with immediate effect to strengthen enforcement of legislation on speeding by, for example, criminalizing speeding in excess of 50 kilometres per hour over the speed limit, and drinking and driving by, for example, increasing the number of points lost on one's driving permit for drivers with a blood alcohol content level above 0.08 g/dl, among others.
- In New Zealand, the Parliament passed the Land Transport Amendment Act 2011, which includes actions from Safer Journeys: New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy 2010–2020 to improve the safety of young drivers and reduce the impact of alcohol in road crashes. From 1 August 2011, the law raises the minimum licensing age from 15 years to 16 years and lowers the youth drinking and driving limit to a blood alcohol content level of zero for drivers under 20 years.

It is hoped that legislative change will be a key undertaking of countries during the course of the Decade.

THE GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY SUGGESTS THAT IN THE WORLD TODAY, ONLY 15% OF COUNTRIES HAVE COMPREHENSIVE LAWS WHICH ADDRESS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING KEY RISK FACTORS: MOTORCYCLE HELMETS, SEAT-BELTS, CHILD RESTRAINTS, DRINKING AND DRIVING AND SPEEDING.

Illuminating the launch

of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

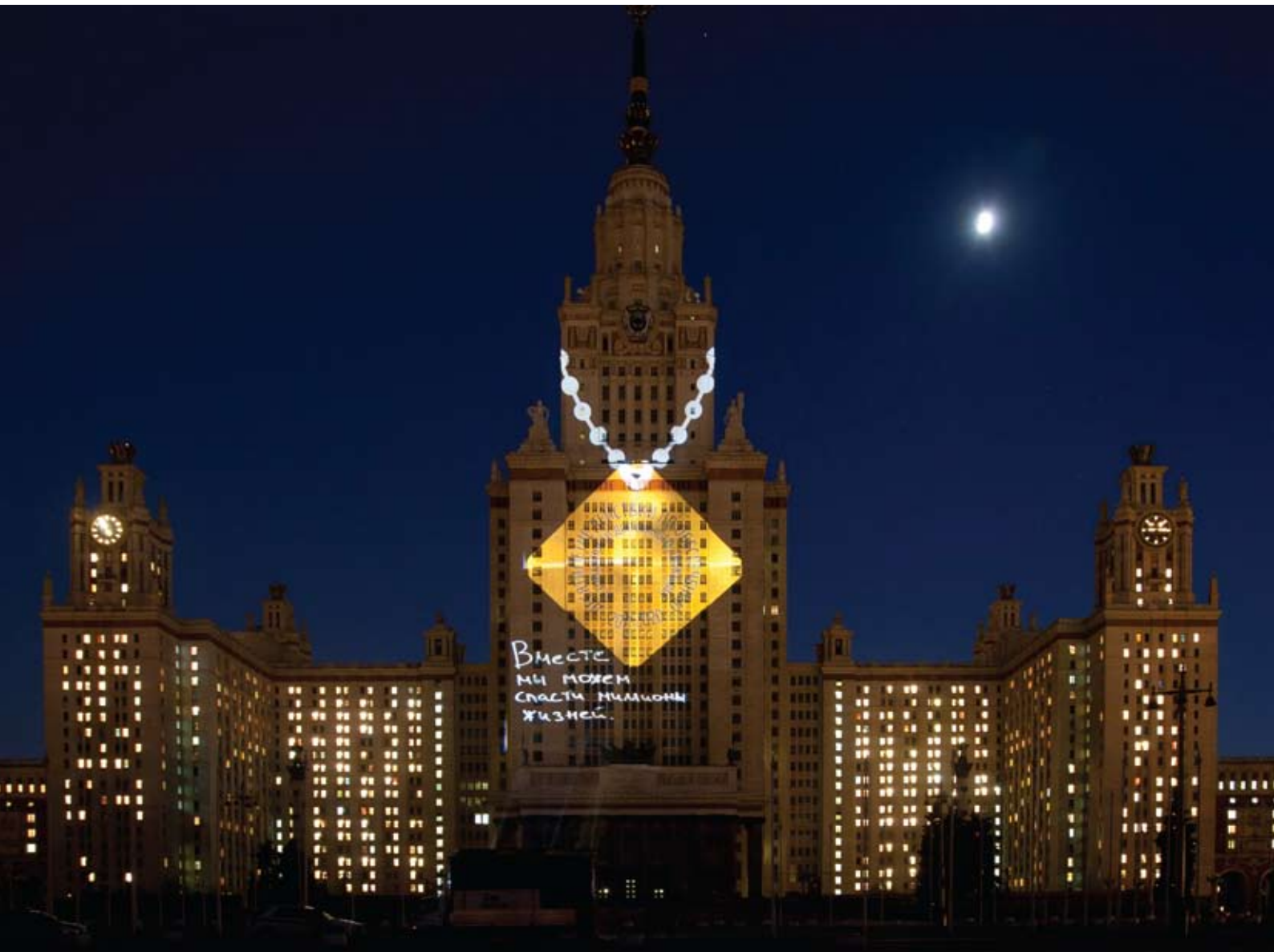
To herald the beginning of this ten-year drive to prevent 5 million road traffic deaths, several iconic landmarks were illuminated with the road safety “tag”, which is the graphic symbol for the Decade. Some of the best known of these include:

- In Argentina, El Obelisco of Buenos Aires;
- In Australia, Sydney Harbour Bridge and Brisbane City Hall;
- In Brazil, the Christ the Redeemer Statue and Castillo de Focruz both in Rio de Janeiro; the Botanic Gardens in Curitiba; and the Congress in Brasilia;
- In Canada, the CN Tower in Toronto;
- In Poland, the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw;
- In the Russian Federation, Moscow State University;
- In Sri Lanka, the World Trade Center in Colombo;
- In Switzerland, the Jet d’Eau in Geneva;
- In the United Kingdom, Trafalgar Square in London;
- In the United States, Times Square in New York City;
- In Venezuela, the fountain of Plaza Venezuela in Caracas;
- In Viet Nam, the Dong Xuan Market in Hanoi.

Images of these illuminations circulated the world, and clearly gave a global resonance and sense of unity to Decade launch events.

THE DECADE “TAG” HAS BEEN PRODUCED IN MORE THAN 30 LANGUAGES. ALL GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ARE FREE TO MAKE USE OF THE TAG FOR THEIR ROAD SAFETY EVENTS AND MATERIALS. TO ACCESS THE TAG, REGISTER YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS OF USE HERE: WWW.DECADEOFACTION.ORG/RESOURCES/INDEX.HTML .





The new symbol for the Decade – the yellow road safety “tag” – was projected on iconic monuments around the world. Above is an image of the tag on Moscow State University in the Russian Federation.



Highlighting

the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 in the media

On or around 11 May 2011, media coverage of Decade launch events was excellent, both on the national and the global levels. Based on a media review in a limited number of languages, nearly 300 articles were published in online newspapers in more than 60 countries.

Stories featured in prestigious print media such as The Accra Mail, The Bangkok Post, The Economist, The Guardian, The Irish Times, The Jakarta Post, *La Nación* (Argentina), The New Zealand Herald, *La República* (Peru), The Times of India, The Washington Post, as well as BBC, CNN, *Globo* (Brazil), *Televisa* (Mexico), Voice of Russia and 18 newswires. Coverage of the Decade also appeared in scientific journals such as the British Medical Journal and the Lancet. Additionally, the launch was covered on more than 100 public non-media web sites, such as those of governments, civil society organizations and private companies. At last count, more than 1.5 million web pages feature the Decade. While the coverage on 11 May 2011 focused largely on the Decade and related launch events, broader road safety issues were also highlighted.

The Decade also had a vibrant social media presence through Facebook, Flickr and Twitter. At the time of the launch, more than 2000 fans joined the Decade's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/roadsafetydecade, while hundreds of photos were shared through the Decade Flickr group: www.flickr.com/groups/roadsafetydecade. The hash tag dedicated to the Decade, #roadsafetydecade, was tweeted more than 1000 times, reaching more than 300,000 people, while many governments and other media tweeted about the Decade, reaching more than two million people.



Media world-wide covered the launch of the Decade. Photographed here is President Ivo Josipović of Croatia speaking with the media on the occasion of the launch of the Decade in Zagreb.

“For far too long, roads have been planned and built with one vital element forgotten: the people they should be designed to serve”

Ms Michelle Yeoh, Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe Campaign

“My heart is already broken, but what makes this even worse is that so often road crashes are preventable. We must all support the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety – our children’s lives are at stake. It is our duty to end the suffering. ”

Ms Zoleka Mandela, granddaughter of Nelson Mandela, mother of Zenani Mandela, killed in a car crash at the age of 13 years

Taking forward

the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

MOVING FROM THE GLOBAL PLAN TO NATIONAL ACTION

As noted several countries have developed, or are in the process of developing, national plans for the Decade. Many others already have a road safety strategy in place. The challenge in the coming ten years will be to maintain the support of the international community to ensure that these plans and the targets defined therein are achieved. This is particularly true for low- and middle-income countries. As a first step the international community is mapping Decade efforts by country to help them to identify the expertise needed to respond to their stated needs for support.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF THE DECADE

The *Global status report on road safety*, published in 2009, provided the first comprehensive assessment of the road safety situation globally. It collected information on the number and rates of fatalities; the existence of national strategies and targets; legislation and enforcement on a number of key risks; and the current state of post-crash care. The forthcoming edition of the *Global status report on road safety*, to be released in 2012, will serve as the

Many groups produced their own advocacy materials to support the Decade launch. The youth-led organization YOURS is offering free use of a new series of road safety posters, three of which are shown here.



Wear a seat-belt

Wearing a seat-belt reduces the risk of being ejected from a vehicle and suffering serious or fatal injury by between 40%-65%. [Be part of the solution](#)

www.youthforsafety.org
www.who.int/roadafety/decade_of_action

YOURS YOUTH ORGANIZATION FOR ROAD SAFETY



Don't speed

Speed kills all types of road users - drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. A 5% cut in average speed can reduce the number of fatal crashes by as much as 30%. [Be part of the solution](#)

www.youthforsafety.org
www.who.int/roadafety/decade_of_action

YOURS YOUTH ORGANIZATION FOR ROAD SAFETY



Be seen on the road

Pedestrians and cyclists can be difficult to see on the roads, which increases their risk of road traffic injuries. Wearing lighty-coloured or reflective clothing makes them much more visible and can help avoid collisions. [Be part of the solution](#)

www.youthforsafety.org
www.who.int/roadafety/decade_of_action

YOURS YOUTH ORGANIZATION FOR ROAD SAFETY

2010 baseline for monitoring activities across the Decade, with subsequent reports published every two to three years. The report will contain one-page profiles for all contributing countries, and the information therein may also be used to support policy and advocacy efforts.

ADVOCATING FOR ROAD SAFETY ACROSS THE DECADE

During the Decade there will be opportunities for advocacy around which the road safety community will be able to rally. These include the following:

- The annual World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, which takes place every third Sunday in November www.worlddayofremembrance.org/ ;
- United Nations Global Road Safety Weeks, the second of which is tentatively scheduled for 2013;
- Annual national road safety days or weeks in each country.

It is important that these are used strategically by participating agencies in order to move the agenda forward.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE ROAD SAFETY FUND

In recent years, there have been several attempts by the international community to raise funds for governments and civil society organizations wishing to support road safety. Launched in early 2011, the Road Safety Fund is soliciting financial contributions from private companies and others to support road safety initiatives in low- and middle-income countries. Private companies wishing to align themselves officially with the Decade are encouraged to visit: www.roadsafetyfund.org . All those in the road safety field are invited to draw attention to the Road Safety Fund as they engage with their private sector partners.



Staying updated

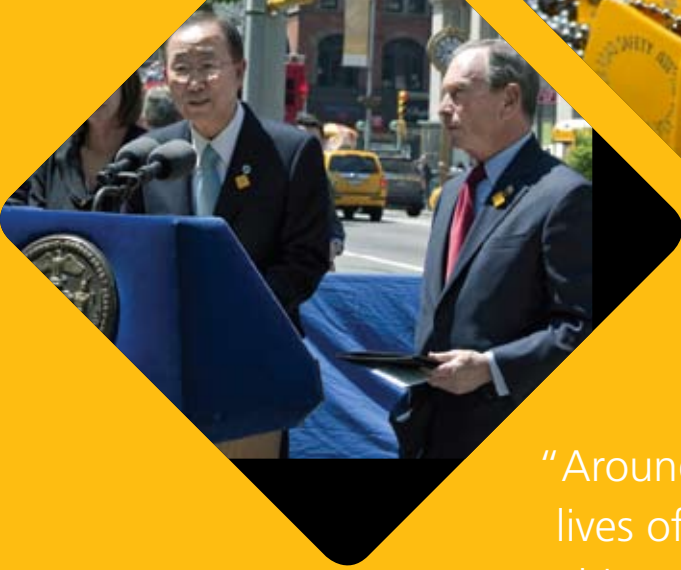
There are various ways to keep informed about Decade developments and share news, materials and other resources:

- Visit the official Decade websites: www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action and www.decadeofaction.org
- Sign up for email updates on the Decade: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/email_signup/en/index.html
- Join the Decade on Facebook: www.facebook.com/roadsafetydecade
- Follow the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration on Twitter @UNRSC
- Share Decade and other road safety photos on Flickr: www.flickr.com/groups/roadsafetydecade

Conclusion

The Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 got off to a great start on 11 May 2011 with the involvement of governments, international agencies and thousands of civil society organizations, private companies and committed individuals from around the world. Yet its success will only be measured by its achievements of the next ten years. **Saving 5 million lives across the Decade** would be a triumph for all of us.





“Around the world road traffic injuries take the lives of 145 people every hour of every day. This problem affects us all, but particularly affects the world’s poorest people. I therefore warmly welcome the first ever Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, which provides a unique opportunity to take this issue by the horns and apply the lessons which we have learned in previous years.”

Mr Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York

Acknowledgement

The World Health Organization wishes to gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution of the FIA Foundation to the development and publication of this document.



Contact

For further information about the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, please contact the Decade Secretariat:

Ms Laura Sminkey
Communications Officer
World Health Organization

Email: sminkeyl@who.int

Tel: +41 22 791 4547