

ROAD SAFETY AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

Road traffic fatalities and injuries have been overlooked by the international community as an issue of sustainable development and were not considered as relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In recent years, however, global road safety has gained recognition by the international community as a significant public health problem. The World Health Organisation, the World Bank and the UN General Assembly have given the issue much more attention. The 2004 World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention achieved a consensus agreement on the best framework for road traffic injury prevention. The UN General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions on road safety which provide a mandate for global action and will again consider the issue this Autumn. The 2007 UN Global Road Safety Week represents further recognition by the international community of the alarming rise in road traffic injuries which are now the number one killer of the 10 to 25 age group. The 2006 'Make Roads Safe' report of the independent Commission for Global Road Safety, chaired by Lord Robertson provides recommendations for action to ensure that road safety is included as an issue of sustainable development relevant to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. The report calls for both greater resources and political commitment to global road safety. The Commission recommends a \$300 million action plan, commitment of at least 10% of all road projects costs to safety measures and a UN Ministerial Conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The Make Roads Safe campaign has been launched to encourage support for these recommendations. The forthcoming 62nd Session of UN General Assembly will again debate global road safety and will provide an important reference point for future action.