

**UPU Global Plan for Road Safety**

**Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030**

Worldwide, road traffic accidents cause approximately 1.3 million preventable deaths and around 50 million injuries each year – making them the leading cause of death among children and young people.

Under present circumstances, they are expected to cause more than 13 million deaths and around 500 million injuries during the current decade and to hamper sustainable development, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Despite painstaking work by the United Nations and other road safety bodies, these unacceptable numbers, both in absolute and relative terms, have remained unchanged over the past 20 years.

Recognizing the importance of the problem and the need to act, governments around the world unanimously declared, through UN General Assembly Resolution 74/299, a second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, with the explicit goal of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% during that period (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 Infogram



This plan, which is intended for policymakers and outlines the actions necessary to achieve this goal, serves as a blueprint for the development of national, regional and local plans and goals. UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6 sets the goal of reducing deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030.

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 rejects the continuation of current trends and urges stakeholders to forge a new path, one that prioritizes and implements an integrated “safe system” approach that directly positions traffic safety as the key factor for sustainable development. It also proposes actions aimed at helping the world to achieve a 50% reduction in the number of road traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

Aware of the social and economic impacts that road-related fatalities and injuries have on member countries, this is a challenge that the Universal Postal Union (UPU) is taking on with equal dedication. Although the UPU is restricted in acting vis-à-vis postal operators, the impacts achievable through action within the postal sector would undoubtedly be significant. As road transport is a primary means of moving mail from facility to facility, and facility to delivery, billions of kilometres are driven globally on a yearly basis. As the risk of road-related accidents increase proportionally with the number of kilometres driven, ensuring road safety within the global postal network is a significant and noble goal. To this end, the UPU aims to align with this initiative and serve as a seed for action in its 192 member countries.

The basis of this work is a safe system approach, which is a key resource for the Decade of Action for Road Safety. This approach recognizes that traffic is a complex system and places safety as a priority. It also recognizes that people, vehicles and road infrastructure must interact in ways that ensure a high level of safety.

A safe system:

- predicts and considers human errors;
- incorporates road and vehicle designs that limit the impact of claims to levels that are within human tolerance to prevent death or serious injury;
- encourages those who design and maintain roads, manufacture vehicles and administer safety programmes to share responsibility for safety with road users so that when an accident occurs, system-wide solutions are sought instead of placing blame on the driver or other road users;
- seeks a commitment to the proactive and continuous improvement of roads and vehicles so that the entire system is safe, and not just the places or situations where accidents occur; and
- adheres to the basic premise that the transport system should cause zero fatalities or serious injuries and that safety must not be compromised owing to other factors such as cost or a desire for shorter transport times.

### **Methodology proposal for the implementation of the Global Plan within the scope of the UPU membership**

The global postal sector operates a massive fleet of more than 1.5 million vehicles, with intense use, millions of drivers, and a huge diversity of situations.

As recognized in the UPU Global Road Safety Research Report, there are postal operators with implemented road safety practices and programmes, recognized as examples of excellence.

On the other hand, there are UPU member countries, usually of low or medium development, characterized by very high levels of road accidents.

The basic proposal is to encourage:

- The dissemination of good road safety practices among postal operators through online and in-person seminars at the global, regional and local levels.
- The construction of a guide containing good road safety practices on all relevant topics for the development and implementation of road safety programmes, including:
  - The scope of the challenge;
  - Interested parties;
  - Fleet policy and user accountability;
  - Risk identification;

- Selection of drivers;
- Training of workers on road safety;
- Preventive maintenance and accident repair;
- Verification/control of maintenance and condition of vehicles;
- The importance of an adequate and well-managed fleet;
- Performance indicators;
- Diagnosis of road accidents and investigation of accidents;
- Recognition of good practices;
- Monitoring of road accidents and root cause analysis.

This guide will also be prepared as a basis for the creation of an internal audit process that designated postal operators can use to evaluate their respective programmes. Some of the criteria to be monitored would include:

- Documented processes for professionals in the scope of fleet operations and safety management with the aim of enhancing road safety and thus contributing to the reduction of accidents. In this context, training will be developed for two different groups: the mentors, coming from postal operators with implemented road safety programmes; and the builders, with professionals from postal operators with high road accidents.
- Documented processes for employees who drive, with the requirement for knowledge of safe and economical driving.

Some additional, important aspects of this programme would include:

- Mechanisms to establish collaboration between postal operators, particularly partnerships between operators with established road safety programmes with a history of success in order to support and develop the road safety programmes of operators with high accident rates;
- Recognition of successful work carried out under this programme with the creation of the UPU Road Safety Award, with the goal of presenting the award at a UPU Road Safety Global Conference to be held annually, starting in 2026;
- Creation of pathways to ensure and increase support from top management, which is essential for the development of this programme. This will be expressed through the UPU commitment to road safety, as well as the commitment of postal operators and the organization of UPU road safety days.

All work will take into account the recommendations already expressed in the Road Safety Research Report<sup>1</sup> and in the Global Plan<sup>2</sup> itself.

All work will be carried out with the coordination of the road safety expert team (RSET), which operates under the Postal Security Group in conjunction with the UPU and the intervening postal operators. Initial work will be carried out, evaluated and taken forward through pilots designed to test and consolidate the methodology.

<sup>1</sup> Available from the UPU on request (security@upu.int).

<sup>2</sup> pmnlo-upu-iso03.upu.ch/doc/docview/viewer/docN5A198108E319d0e7febf21ea8f26cb77c2343acdaaabf9b6266c9b5d8a6a70b1512ec715e61a