

Preliminary conclusions on the Decade of Action for Road Safety and the 2030 Agenda

These conclusions are based on the workshop and discussions in the international Academic Expert Group meeting held in Paris on 26–28 February 2019.

The Decade of Action on Road Safety has raised global awareness of road safety among governments, business and civil society. It has produced measurable and effective safety improvements. It has also attracted new funding and new partnerships, and brought road safety closer to the global public health arena.

Target-setting is now common practice across a range of sectors of society as a means of managing progress toward ambitious goals, and in some cases the practice has developed from simple targets to complex sets of sub-targets, indicators and action plans.

A very significant achievement of the Decade of Action for the long-term has been the inclusion of road safety as a specific target – Target 3.6 – in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Integrating the Decade of Action target into Target 3.6 was a remarkable accomplishment with far-reaching implications. The 2030 Agenda states clearly that the 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets “are integrated and indivisible”. This recognition places road safety at the same level of criticality as other global sustainability requirements and clearly indicates that sustainable health and wellbeing cannot be achieved without substantial reductions in road deaths and injuries. While this integration with other SDGs has yet to be realised at global level, opportunities are now emerging for new partnerships, and the potential benefits that could stem from such integration are compelling.

According to the projections for road traffic deaths and the ambition set by the Decade of Action in 2011, some progress has been achieved. In 2011, road traffic deaths were expected to reach 1.9 million by 2020 if no action was taken. The ambition was to “stabilise and then reduce deaths” by about 50 per cent of the projected level, or around 900 000 deaths, by 2020. The road safety target included in the SDGs uses different definitions and data sources and calls for an ambitious 50 per cent reduction in the absolute number of global deaths, or about 650 000 deaths, between 2015 and 2020.

The 2018 Global Status Report estimates a current level of about 1.35 million road traffic deaths, indicating that the ambition of stabilising the trend of global deaths has been met. However, neither of the targeted numbers of annual deaths – the 900 000 proposed by the original Decade of Action and the 650 000 included in the later SDG – will likely be reached by 2020.

Renewal of Target 3.6

At their meeting in Paris on 26–28 February 2019, the Academic Expert Group discussed the importance of target-setting and carefully considered options. A strong consensus was reached on the following points.

It is crucial that a specific road safety target is retained and kept up-to-date in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Proposed wording for Target 3.6:

“Between 2020 and 2030, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes, achieving continuous progress through the application of the Safe System approach.”

In addition, the Academic Expert Group recommends the following:

- Operational targets should be set by individual global regions (consistent with the ambition of Target 3.6, but taking account of local developments, conditions and resources).
- Regional targets should include fatalities and severe injuries.
- Targets should include numbers of deaths and non-fatal injuries because this is most relevant to our mission. However, identifying appropriate casualty rates is also desirable. The optimal measure of fatal and non-fatal injury rates has yet to be determined.
- Linkages and collaborations should be established among the constituencies associated with the range of other SDGs affected by and associated with road safety. These include Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Climate Action and others. Actions should involve both the public and private sectors.
- Between 2020 and 2030, progress should be monitored by means of safety performance indicators and actions to ensure that continuous improvement is made. The most promising means of achieving continuous progress is by mobilising traditional and new road safety partners to use the tools identified in the Safe System’s five road safety pillars.