

Global Network of Heads of National Road Safety Agencies: Meeting Report

Marrakesh, Morocco March 17, 2025

Introduction

The Global Network of Heads of National Road Safety Agencies convened its second in-person meeting on March 17, 2025 in Marrakesh, Morocco. The meeting brought together 120 participants from around 85 countries to discuss progress, challenges, and strategies in advancing the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 (see the Agenda, Appendix 1). As an informal network initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Network serves as a platform for knowledge-sharing, peer learning, and enhanced coordination among national lead agencies. This meeting was jointly organized by WHO and the Global Road Safety Facility (World Bank) and was hosted by the Government of Morocco in conjunction with the 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety.

Opening session

Opening remarks from global road safety leaders—including Abdessamad Kayouh, Minister of Transport and Logistics, Morocco, Juan Carlos Munoz, Minister of Transport and Telecommunications, Chile, Etienne Krug, WHO, Nicolas Peltier-Thiberge, World Bank, Said Dahdah, World Bank, and Nneka Henry, UN Road Safety Fund — set the stage for a day of interactive discussions focused on actionable solutions.

The meeting focused its discussions on four key themes: country progress, the role of lead agencies, the Global Network's scope, and the integration of technology into road safety efforts (See Appendix 2).

Focal Points of Discussion and Outcomes

1. Country Progress and Challenges

Countries reported varied progress in achieving road safety goals. Discussions highlighted:

Over the past decade, many countries have demonstrated that significant reductions in road traffic fatalities are possible when road safety is approached as a systemic issue. Those that have made the most progress share common characteristics: they have strong institutions managing road safety, rely on high-quality data to guide decision-making, and have established sustainable funding mechanisms to support long-term road safety initiatives. By systematically addressing

key risk factors—such as speeding, impaired driving, unsafe road environments, and inadequate vehicle safety—these countries have built safer transport systems that protect all road users.

As road safety systems mature, a shift in focus is occurring. Countries that have already achieved relatively low fatality rates are now looking beyond traditional safety metrics. They are adopting more integrated approaches that link road safety with broader sustainability goals, such as climate action, urban mobility, occupational health and public health. These efforts increasingly include strategies to reduce serious injuries, improve accessibility, and create safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists. In many cities, there is growing recognition that road design plays a crucial role in safety outcomes. Efforts are being made to redesign urban streets to accommodate all road users, lower vehicle speeds, and minimize conflict points between different transport modes.

However, despite these successes, significant challenges remain. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted road safety progress in many parts of the world, affecting political priorities, enforcement capacity, and mobility patterns. Law enforcement agencies, already stretched thin, have struggled to maintain effective road safety enforcement, while shifts in travel behavior have introduced new risks. The growing prevalence of powered two-wheelers, e-bikes, e-scooters, and the rapid expansion of delivery services has made urban mobility more complex, introducing safety challenges that many road systems are not yet equipped to handle. Frequent changes in political leadership have also made long-term road safety planning difficult, with shifting priorities affecting the continuity of national strategies. Even in countries that have historically made significant progress, many are now encountering plateaus in road safety improvements, struggling to maintain downward trends in fatalities and injuries.

For low-income countries, the situation is even more challenging. Many countries facing fundamental barriers, including weak institutional capacity, unreliable road safety data, and chronic underfunding. In several cases, enforcement remains inconsistent due to limited resources, and road safety often competes with other pressing national concerns. At the same time, new mobility patterns are introducing additional risks. In many urban areas, the rapid rise of motorcycles as a primary mode of transport—both for personal use and commercial activities—has led to increasing numbers of crashes involving vulnerable road users. Unregulated transport services, insufficient road infrastructure, and gaps in traffic law enforcement further complicate efforts to improve safety. Poor road design in fast-growing cities, particularly the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure and inadequate separation between different transport modes, has made urban environments particularly hazardous. These challenges make it difficult for countries to develop and sustain effective road safety strategies, even as the risks on their roads continue to evolve.

2. Role of Lead Agencies in Coordination

The discussions underscored the central role of lead agencies in road safety governance, highlighting several key insights. The most effective agencies are those with clear mandates, legal authority, and institutional independence, enabling them to drive national road safety policies with consistency and long-term impact. However, many agencies struggle with

coordinating multi-sectoral efforts, particularly when engaging critical sectors such as health, policing, infrastructure, and transport.

Beyond coordination, a strong and visible lead agency serves as a national champion for road safety, ensuring that the issue remains on the political agenda and receives the attention it requires. In many cases, civil society organizations, including NGOs and advocacy groups, play a crucial role in empowering lead agencies within government systems. These organizations often help mobilize public and political support, push for stronger policies, and hold governments accountable for road safety commitments. A well-functioning lead agency can effectively collaborate with civil society to translate advocacy into concrete policy action, ensuring that road safety remains a national priority and that evidence-based interventions are implemented.

Financing remains a persistent challenge, with agencies exploring various funding models to ensure sustainability. These include dedicated road safety funds, revenue from fines, and fuel levies, which provide more stable financial resources for implementing safety interventions. Additionally, successful lead agencies place a strong emphasis on accountability frameworks, integrating structured data collection, target setting, and performance monitoring to track progress and adapt strategies based on measurable outcomes.

3. Strengthening the Global Network

Participants reinforced the importance of the Global Network as a collaborative platform for strengthening road safety leadership worldwide. A key priority identified was the need to enhance knowledge-sharing and peer learning. This could be facilitated through a combination of online and in-person exchanges, allowing for more direct and meaningful engagement.

Another important recommendation was the mapping of available technical resources to improve coordination and prevent duplication of efforts across different international organizations. By identifying existing tools and expertise, the Global Network can better align support and maximize impact.

Additionally, participants highlighted the value of regional network activities in fostering more targeted and context-specific solutions. Issues such as motorcycle safety, speed management, and post-crash care were identified as areas where stronger regional collaboration could lead to more effective interventions and policy alignment.

4. Harnessing Technology for Road Safety

The role of technology in improving road safety was a major focus of this discussion, with participants emphasizing that technological advancements are relevant for all countries, regardless of economic development. However, the way technology is applied varies significantly across contexts. High-income countries are increasingly integrating advanced safety features directly into new vehicles, such as automated braking systems, driver-assist technologies, and black-box crash analysis tools. In contrast, low- and middle-income countries often rely on retrofitting existing vehicles with safety-enhancing technologies, such as speed

monitoring devices, telematics-based enforcement tools, and basic crash-data recording systems to improve road safety outcomes.

Beyond vehicle safety, technology is playing an expanding role in enforcement and data-driven decision-making. Automated enforcement tools, such as speed cameras, mobile phone detection systems, and AI-powered monitoring, are proving essential in reducing risky behaviors on the roads. However, their success depends on strong legal frameworks, public trust, and fair enforcement policies. The digitalization of road safety data—integrating information from police, health, and transport agencies—is also critical for improving crash investigations, strengthening enforcement, and shaping evidence-based policy planning. Additionally, the use of CCTV and telematics-based enforcement has sparked discussions on how to balance privacy concerns with public safety benefits.

Despite the potential of technology, participants pointed out that successful implementation requires more than just access to new tools. Raising awareness about the opportunities that technology presents, promoting its uptake among decision-makers and the public, and ensuring effective enforcement mechanisms are equally important. Many of the challenges surrounding technology adoption are not technical but rather rooted in culture, attitudes, and funding constraints. Without adequate investment, strong governance, and public buy-in, even the most advanced technologies will fail to deliver their full impact on road safety.

One key avenue for advancing the adoption of road safety technology is through organizations and large vehicle fleets. Companies, government agencies, and international institutions have a unique opportunity to lead by example by integrating safety-enhancing technologies into their fleets. Fleets can act as important early adopters, addressing cultural barriers by demonstrating the effectiveness of technologies such as speed monitoring, fatigue detection systems, and telematics-based driver behavior tracking. This approach is often easier to implement than broad public adoption, as organizations can set policies that mandate the use of proven safety technologies.

The United Nations and other large fleet-operating entities can play a pioneering role in promoting technology adoption, showcasing its benefits, and setting a precedent for wider implementation. By prioritizing technology-driven safety improvements within their own vehicle fleets, these organizations can drive industry-wide change, create demand for safer vehicle technologies, and influence policymakers to integrate these tools into national road safety strategies.

Conclusion

As an informal network, this was the second in-person meeting, yet it is already clear that there is strong interest and demand for its continuation. Countries and regions see great value in knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer learning, and enhanced coordination, reinforcing the need for a platform where lead agencies can exchange experiences and collectively address shared challenges. At the same time, the network presents an opportunity to position road safety as a

truly global challenge, emphasizing that it is a critical issue regardless of a country's level of economic development.

Looking ahead, the network has both an internal role in strengthening cooperation among its members and an external role in influencing global public policy processes. Internally, it can ensure coordinated efforts between global, regional, and national levels, creating stronger alignment across different initiatives and improving the effectiveness of road safety strategies. Externally, the network can serve as a voice for those advocating for road safety in global development discussions, ensuring that the issue receives the political attention and resources it requires. A key strategic priority will be to raise awareness of road safety as a major development challenge and to advocate for increased resource mobilization to support sustainable interventions worldwide.

To build on this momentum, we are exploring the possibility of organizing another in-person meeting in Malaysia in the near future. Malaysia has expressed interest in hosting this meeting. In the meantime, we will work to expand regionally focused activities, strengthening engagement at different levels and further embedding the network into global road safety governance structures.

Appendix 1: Agenda



Global Meeting of the Network of Heads of National Road Safety Agencies

17 February 2025

Palais des congrès, Meeting room FES 1

Marrakech, Morocco

Monday, 17 February 2023

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:30	Registration
09:30 – 10:00	Welcome and Introduction Open remarks: Abdessamad Kayouh, Minister of Transport and Logistics, Morocco Juan Carlos Munoz, Minister of Transport and Telecommunications, Chile Etienne Krug, Director, Department of Social Determinants of Health, WHO Nicolas Peltier-Thiberge, Global Director for Transport Sector, Infrastructure Vice Presidency, World Bank Said Dahdah, Global Lead for Road Safety at the World Bank Nneka Henry, Acting Head of the Secretariat for the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety Benacer Boulaajoul, Director-General, National Road Safety Agency / Agence Nationale de la Sécurité Routière. Morocco
10:00-10:15	Introduction to World Café Format

		<p>Overview of the World Café approach, session structure, and table roles.</p> <p>Matts Belin, Global Lead, Unit Safety and Mobility, Department of Social Determinants of Health, WHO</p>
10:15-10:35		Morning Break
10:35– 11:35	Round 1	Theme 1 – State of Country Progress and Challenges toward SDG Road Safety Targets
11:35– 12:35	Round 2	Theme 2 – Role of Lead Agencies in Coordinating Road Safety Efforts
12:35 – 13:35		Lunch Break
13:35-14:35	Round 3	Theme 3 – Scope, Purpose, and Activities of the Global Network
14:35 – 15:35	Round 4	Theme 4 – Harnessing Innovative Technology for Enhanced Road Safety
15:35-15:50		Afternoon Break
15:20-16:50		<p>Summary of Discussions and Next Steps</p> <p>Facilitators from each table present a summary of key insights and proposed next steps for their theme, with participant reflections and Q&A.</p> <p>Moderators:</p> <p>Matts Belin, Global Lead, Unit Safety and Mobility, Department of Social Determinants of Health, WHO</p>
16:50-17:00		<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Nicolas Peltier-Thiberge, Global Director for Transport Sector, Infrastructure Vice Presidency, World Bank</p> <p>Etienne Krug, Director, Department of Social Determinants of Health, WHO</p>

Appendix 2: Description of themes

Themes and Guided Questions

Theme 1: State of Country Progress and Challenges toward SDG Road Safety Targets

The primary objective is to assess the progress made toward reducing road traffic fatalities and injuries, especially in the context of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. This will include reviewing key data and identifying priority areas for further action, particularly in regions where progress has been slow. The focus is to highlight successful interventions that have made a measurable impact on road safety outcomes, sharing examples from countries that have demonstrated strong leadership and innovation.

Tentative Questions:

- What successful interventions have made the greatest impact on road safety outcomes in your country or region?
- What are the primary barriers to achieving progress in your region, and how can they be addressed?
- How can data collection and analysis be improved to better track progress and identify priority areas?
- What are the next steps needed to accelerate progress in regions where progress has been slow?

Theme 2: Role of Lead Agencies in Coordination Road Safety Efforts

Effective collaboration across sectors is essential for implementing road safety strategies. This meeting will focus on enhancing cooperation between road safety agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and international organizations to share best practices, improve governance, and mobilize resources to support sustainable road safety initiatives. The focus is to present successful partnerships and resource mobilization strategies that have enabled agencies to secure funding, improve governance structures, and implement high-impact interventions. The discussions aim to explore how stronger collaborations can lead to more effective road safety outcomes.

Tentative Questions:

- What are the most successful examples of collaboration between lead agencies and other stakeholders?
- How can partnerships be strengthened to address governance challenges in road safety?
- What strategies have been most effective for mobilizing resources to support road safety initiatives?
- What lessons can be shared about sustaining long-term collaborations for road safety outcomes?

Theme 3: Scope, Purpose, and Activities of the Global Network

This meeting will help shape the future role of the Global Network of Heads of National Road Safety Agencies. It will explore how the Global Network can best complement the work of regional road safety observatories and other networks to support their initiatives. The focus is to emphasize how the Global Network will serve as an additional layer of support, facilitating global knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and innovation to further enhance regional and national efforts.

Tentative Questions:

- What role should the Global Network play in complementing the work of regional road safety observatories?
- What specific activities should the Global Network prioritize to support its members effectively?
- How can the Global Network enhance global knowledge-sharing and capacity-building?
- What should the Global Network's relationship with other initiatives look like to maximize its impact?

Theme 4: Harnessing Innovative Technology for Enhanced Road Safety

The meeting will explore the adoption of innovative technologies, including vehicle safety systems, traffic management tools, and enforcement technologies, with a focus on scalability and affordability for low- and middle-income countries. The focus is to share examples of how technology has been successfully integrated into road safety strategies, discussing challenges and solutions for making these technologies accessible to all regions.

Tentative Questions:

- What innovative technologies have been most impactful in improving road safety in your region?
- What challenges have you faced in adopting or scaling these technologies, and how were they overcome?
- How can technology be made more accessible and affordable for low- and middle-income countries?
- What role can international organizations play in supporting the adoption of road safety technologies?