

CSR/G8183/JHU

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## IRU POSITION ON ALLOCATING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO TRAINING FOR ROAD SAFETY

Unanimously adopted by the IRU Commission on Road Safety.

### I. ANALYSIS

- Deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes are a major and growing public health epidemic. The World Health Organisation has estimated in their "World Report on Traffic Injury Prevention" (2004) that in 2002 almost 1.2 million people died in road crashes worldwide and as many as 50 million were injured. It was however stated that this is a global perspective and commercial vehicles are responsible for only a small fraction of all those accidents.
- In low and middle income countries the accident rates per vehicle km are 15%-20% higher than in developed countries and more than 85% of road deaths occur in low and middle income countries. Those deaths impose huge economic costs on those developing economies. The overall economic costs, which are estimated at €60 - €80 billion, are a major burden for achieving sustainable development.
- Despite the rapidly increasing road traffic deaths and injuries in low and middle income countries and despite the fact that road safety has a direct role to play in alleviating poverty, road safety does not feature in the UN Millennium Development Goals.
- Even at the Gleneagles G8 summit, where it was agreed to launch a €1 billion programme for building roads, the road safety component was set below 1% which can be considered a serious under-financing.
- Governments in developed countries spend between €500 and €800 million per year on road maintenance and between €200 and €1000 per square metre on building new roads. However, only a limited amount of this money is strictly allocated to road safety measures which is a sign of insufficient, unclear attention/commitment to road safety during the planning process.
- A striking example on how infrastructure investments are linked to road safety is given by the Ministries of Transport from Canada. The Canadian Ministry of Transport has identified a master list of road safety countermeasures helping to improve road safety. Those countermeasures are part of the funding and investment criteria for infrastructure projects in Canada. However, there is no financial minimum component set for road safety as part of those investments.
- Only limited statistics are available regarding accidents involving heavy commercial vehicles and less is known about the cause of these accidents. To fill this lack of knowledge, the European Commission and the IRU have undertaken a unique scientific study, the European Truck Accident Causation Study (ETAC). Knowing that

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there are many factors which contribute to an accident and knowing that those factors are interlinked, the aim of the study is to identify the main causes of accidents involving trucks. The study shows that human error is the main cause of 85.2% of the studied cases. However, out of those 85.2%, 75% are caused by other road users and only 25% by the truck drivers. In-depth analysis shows that when the human being caused the accident, non-adapted speed, failure to observe intersection rules and improper manoeuvring when changing lanes were the main causes. The concluding recommendation of the study is that improving driver training and upgrading driving school programs are key to improve road safety.

- In conclusion, high income countries have developed effective road safety measures after decades of trial and error. While more effort is still needed in the industrialised nations, the major challenge now is to ensure through early interventions that other countries can benefit from these experiences. The key to success to further improve road safety in developed and developing countries will be to clearly allocate a minimum amount from infrastructure investments to target the main cause of accidents and to properly fund knowledge transfer, using tools such as the ETAC study and its methodology, the IRU Drivers' Check Lists, the IRU proposed global harmonisation of roadworthiness procedures or the IRU Academy programmes (driver training, manager training).

## **II. IRU POSITION**

- Adequate financing of infrastructure development is a prerequisite to achieve road safety.
- Benchmarked to national/local accident statistics, a percentage of this adequate financing should be dedicated to effective road safety measures and, according to the recommendations of the ETAC study, to the training of all road users.

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