

Summary report on the

Consultative meeting on the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators

WHO-EM/HLP/109/E

Amman, Jordan
25–27 September 2018



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE

World Health
Organization

Eastern Mediterranean

Summary report on the

**Consultative meeting on the Eastern
Mediterranean Regional Forum for
Road Safety Legislators**

Amman, Jordan
25–27 September 2018

© World Health Organization 2019

Some rights reserved. This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo>).

Under the terms of this licence, you may copy, redistribute and adapt the work for non-commercial purposes, provided the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that WHO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the WHO logo is not permitted. If you adapt the work, then you must license your work under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If you create a translation of this work, you should add the following disclaimer along with the suggested citation: “This translation was not created by the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original English edition shall be the binding and authentic edition”.

Any mediation relating to disputes arising under the licence shall be conducted in accordance with the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Suggested citation. [Title]. Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; 2019. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Sales, rights and licensing. To purchase WHO publications, see <http://apps.who.int/bookorders>. To submit requests for commercial use and queries on rights and licensing, see <http://www.who.int/about/licensing>.

Third-party materials. If you wish to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, it is your responsibility to determine whether permission is needed for that reuse and to obtain permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

General disclaimers. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Summary of discussions.....	4
3.	Recommendations.....	9
4.	Next steps.....	11

1. Introduction

Globally, road traffic injury is the eighth leading cause of death according to WHO estimates (2018). Over 1.36 million people lost their lives in 2018 due to road traffic crashes across the world. However, the road traffic death rate per 100 000 population has stabilized and has remained fairly constant since 2007, despite the increase in global motorization and population and the predicted rise in deaths. This suggests that interventions to improve global road safety are preventing increases that otherwise would have occurred.

The Global Status Report on Road Safety 2015 revealed that the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region has the second highest road traffic death rate globally, after the African Region. Over 40% of regional road traffic deaths are among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, reflecting that road traffic crashes are a problem for the most vulnerable road users. However, 45% of deaths in the Region also occur among car occupants and drivers, and almost 80% are among men. Furthermore, over 30% of road traffic fatalities in the Region are among adolescents and young people between 15 and 29 years of age. In some countries of the Region, road crashes are the leading cause of death in this age group; WHO estimates that they are one of the leading five causes of death among adolescents in the Region.

Estimates for the Region show an increasing burden when compared to other regions, which are showing significant reductions. However, with the right investment and commitment, reductions can be achieved. In this regard, legislators have an essential role to play in improving road safety. They have a responsibility to address road safety by establishing appropriate governance mechanisms, with sufficient resources and the power to act.

Legislators have a role to play in changing social norms, providing legal protection for bystanders from civil liability, ensuring access to emergency care, enabling subnational authorities to take appropriate action to address safety in their communities, ensuring the adoption and implementation of international standards for vehicles, parts and equipment, and setting penalties that act as deterrents when properly enforced.

A systemic approach to road safety is required. The adoption of the Safe System approach entails a paradigm shift from considering accidents or crashes as unavoidable human errors, to seeing fatalities and injuries as preventable through evidence-based measures. Besides changing road user behaviour, other key components of a Safe System approach include safe vehicles and infrastructure to help manage speed and reduce the likelihood of a crash.

In April 2018, a set of 12 voluntary global performance targets for road safety and service delivery mechanisms were welcomed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in resolution A/RES/70/271 on improving global road safety. The 12 targets provide a clear framework to guide actions towards achieving the global targets of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals. At the regional level, the 56th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in 2009 endorsed resolution EM/RC56/R.7 on road traffic injuries, a growing public health concern in the Region. In addition, WHO, with other UN agencies and partners, has developed implementation guidance on Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) to help countries prioritize interventions to prevent and respond to injuries among adolescents, including road traffic injuries.

This focus on road safety is reflected in WHO's thirteenth global programme of work, 2019–2023 (GPW 13) and Vision 2023 for WHO's work in the Region over the next five years. One of the three strategic priorities contained in GPW 13 is promoting healthier populations, which includes preventing the occurrence of road crashes and other causes of injury, including by addressing risk factors. One of the targets set is a 20% reduction in road traffic fatalities in Member States by 2023, which can be achieved through cost-effective interventions to prevent their occurrence and provide emergency and longer-term services for those injured.

Against this background, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean held a consultative meeting on the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators on 25–27 September in Amman, Jordan.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- launch the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators as a chapter of the Global Network for Road Safety Legislators and agree on its governance and future actions; and
- obtain the perspectives of the participating members of the Regional Forum and experts on a draft road safety strategic framework on accelerating action on global road safety targets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Thirty-three experts and parliamentarians from 12 countries of the Region participated in the meeting, in addition to the Director General of the Gulf Health Council and the Chairs of the Global and African Regional Networks for Road Safety Legislators. Participants included representatives from the health, transport and interior sectors, as well as nongovernmental organizations such as the Arab Organization for Road Safety, Oman Road Safety Association and Nada Foundation.

The meeting was inaugurated by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. In his opening remarks, Dr Al-Mandhari highlighted that WHO had always worked to support countries in implementing cost-effective, evidence-based road safety interventions, drawing on regional and global commitments. He stressed that road traffic injury was a priority area for WHO in the Region, being a leading killer of the younger generations and a public health problem in all countries regardless of income level. Recognizing the crucial role that members of parliament play in translating commitments into national legislation and policy frameworks, the Regional Director stressed the importance of launching the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators to accelerate action to reduce regional road traffic deaths and injuries. Dr Al-Mandhari said that launching the Regional Forum was a step on a longer collective journey, in which WHO was committed to providing its full technical support.

2. Summary of discussions

Situation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Road traffic injuries place a burden on national economies in the Region, and particularly affect the younger and most economically active age groups. However, the lack of studies on the economic burden of road traffic crashes in the Region has led to a subsequent lack of recognition of the heavy burden placed on national economies and households.

There is a lack of good quality data to support evidence-based legislation, policies, strategies and plans. The definition of a road traffic death and injury is not consistent across countries and data sources, in particular for the police and health sectors. Data sources are often unlinked, compromising official road traffic fatality

estimates. In addition, different scales and scores for the severity of injuries exist between countries. This lack of data is a major challenge in the Region. The discrepancy between reported national data and estimated road traffic deaths reveals that a substantial proportion of deaths is not captured. If a shift towards evidence-based action is to be seen, a first step is to improve data.

The situation of road safety varies greatly across the Region. Some countries lack a road safety infrastructure to help manage speed and other risk factors, reducing the likelihood of crashes and deaths. There remains a persistent misunderstanding that road safety is about preventing crashes, and not about saving lives and preventing severe injury.

Road safety is rarely considered a national priority. It is a complicated issue, which cannot be addressed under one authority and is affected by many factors. In many countries, there is no active national body or coordinating mechanism for road safety. Advocacy efforts are needed to keep road safety high on the governmental and public agenda. Strong leadership at the national level is required to address the impact of this grave public health and development concern.

Legislation plays a central role in shaping not only policies, but also the cultural norms, attitudes and values that are essential for a society to embrace the issue of road safety. There is a need to value road safety, to empower citizens, passengers and civil society, and to ensure accountability.

Awareness will not in itself decrease mortality rates from road crashes; enacting and enforcing appropriate laws is also needed. There is a need to amend existent laws in line with best practices. While some countries do have good laws, their implementation is often weak. Poor or inadequate enforcement frequently undermines the

potential of road safety laws to reduce injuries and deaths from road traffic crashes. High levels of enforcement are needed to persuade the public that breaking the law will result in a penalty.

Inadequate resources are allocated for road safety at the country level. This includes a lack of dedicated funding for road safety in national budgets in some countries and insufficient drawing on potential funding sources, including the private sector. There is also inadequate human and institutional capacity in different aspects of road safety at the country level.

Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators

The main outcome of the consultative meeting was the launch of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators by Dr Al-Mandhari and the attending members of parliament. The Regional Director read out the launch statement highlighting the importance of recognizing regional and country contexts in achieving global targets to reduce road traffic deaths. He said that the Regional Forum would provide a platform for legislators in the Region to set priorities and exchange best practices in road traffic injury prevention, and to advocate for and adopt legislation to improve road safety at the municipal, country and regional level.

The Regional Forum is a chapter of the Global Network for Road Safety Legislators. The Global Network was launched in 2016 by WHO and the Towards Zero Foundation to catalyse action by legislators throughout the world towards achieving the SDG target to halve road deaths by 2020. Two members of the Global Network from the WHO African Region (United Republic of Tanzania) and WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (Egypt) shared the experiences of their

countries in improving road safety and key challenges in enacting and enforcing road safety legislation.

The parliamentarians discussed the governance mechanisms and terms of reference of the Regional Forum, and agreed on next steps for the coming year. Members of the Regional Forum need to communicate with other parliamentarians in their countries to initiate discussion on road safety. It is important to sustain the momentum created by the launch of the Regional Forum through ongoing communication and joint initiatives towards common road safety goals. Parliamentarians have the authority to advance the road safety agenda at the national level.

A Leadership Council of the Regional Forum was formed from the attending members of parliament. The membership of the Regional Forum and the Leadership Council, as well as the Council's terms of reference and a proposed inaugural declaration were discussed. The Leadership Council will drive the agenda of the network, according to its terms of reference. Senator Dr Sikandar Ali Mandhro, from Pakistan, was elected as Chair and Dr Hala Abou Ali, from Egypt, as Co-chair. WHO will act as Secretariat for the Regional Forum and the Leadership Council for the first two years.

Given the diversity of experience of countries in the Region, specific national challenges and legislative processes will need to be taken into consideration. The experience of the Chair of the African network in overcoming challenges and moving beyond political differences to set up an all-party network for road safety legislators, with a five year national action plan for the United Republic of Tanzania, generated a lot of interest.

In Pakistan, a committee of parliamentarians on road safety has been established, with representation by Senators from all provinces, to

look at strengthening road safety legislation, enforcement, resource allocation and accountability. The committee is complemented by an implementation body, the Road Safety Council.

Road safety strategic framework on accelerating action on global road safety targets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

A draft road safety strategic framework on accelerating action on global road safety targets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was discussed, and suggestions made to ensure its relevance and feasibility for implementation at country level.

The strategic framework is intended to enable countries to design and implement context-specific and comprehensive road safety policies and action plans based on the Safe System approach. The goal of the framework is to progressively and continuously reduce the number of road traffic deaths and serious injuries. Participants provided feedback on the framework regarding its feasibility, usability and practicality.

The framework is composed of four strategic objectives with linked tasks and actions. The strategic objectives are to: set ambitious, achievable, and progressive annual targets for road safety performance that are data-based, toward achieving the vision of zero deaths and serious injuries; establish a strong structural and institutional foundation for road safety that enables multiple layers of safeguards for road users and builds a culture of safety; implement policies, measures and programmes in key action areas to achieve a Safe System; and monitor performance, evaluate outcomes and feed back into the system for continual improvement and progressive reduction of fatalities and serious injuries.

In countries lacking a road safety infrastructure, the proposed regional framework can be applied in a graduated manner. The starting point should be an assessment of the road safety situation to identify existing deficiencies and gaps.

3. Recommendations

To Member States

1. Prioritize road safety at the national level. Strong political commitment, support and national ownership at the highest levels is crucial in ensuring that road safety programmes are accorded high priority.
2. Take multisectoral action for road safety based on a Safe System approach. Multisectoral collaboration increases access to resources and strengthens shared responsibility and ownership of road safety activities.
3. Establish or strengthen national entities responsible for road safety and for coordinating the efforts of the different bodies and ministries involved, and including other stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector.
4. Ensure that parliaments engage in advancing the road safety agenda at the national level, in collaboration with other stakeholders, international organizations and parliamentary bodies in other countries.
5. Improve road safety legislation and strengthen enforcement at all levels, using diverse methods and mechanisms, including social marketing campaigns, to maximize impact.
6. Promote adolescent and youth participation and engagement, not only as recipients of services, but through their involvement in the planning and implementation of interventions for which they are the targets.

7. Strengthen the quality of data and evidence to support the setting and monitoring of national road safety targets.
8. Promote the exchange of experiences and best practices in road safety.

To WHO

9. Take into consideration, where relevant, different country contexts across the Region, including level of development and conflict and emergency situations, when providing technical support for the development, implementation and monitoring of national road safety interventions.
10. Provide technical support for country capacity-building, advocacy efforts, and developing policies and legislative frameworks.
11. Provide support to the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators, in particular in its first two years, based on the agreed terms of reference of the Forum.
12. Pursue advocacy efforts targeted at high-level policy-makers based on the economics of road traffic crashes, including building a road safety investment case involving the cost of lives lost, long-term injuries and use of health care services.
13. Ensure that the inputs from the experts and members of parliament who attended the consultative meeting are reflected in the updated version of the regional framework.

4. Next steps

On the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators

- The amended terms of reference of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Forum for Road Safety Legislators, based on the consultative meeting's discussions, will be shared with members of parliament for their endorsement.
- Members of parliament are invited to provide further feedback on the inaugural declaration of the Regional Forum for two weeks after the consultative meeting. The declaration will be amended accordingly and distributed to ministries of health during the 65th session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in October 2018.
- A meeting of the Regional Forum will be organized in 2019, with the support of WHO.

On the road safety strategic framework on accelerating action on global road safety targets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

- Members of parliament and experts are invited to provide further inputs to the draft regional framework and to propose action for two weeks after the consultative meeting. The framework will be updated based on the inputs provided during the meeting and those received by email.
- The finalized draft of the framework will be piloted in countries of the Region, followed by further revision in preparation for official endorsement through the appropriate channels in WHO.
- Participants of the consultative meeting will be regularly updated on any road safety developments related to WHO and other global and regional initiatives.



World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
P.O. Box 7608, Nasr City 11371
Cairo, Egypt
www.emro.who.int