CONCEPT NOTE

1. Introduction

Globally, road traffic injuries claim more than 1.2 million lives each year and have a huge impact on health and development. They are the leading cause of death among young people aged between 15 and 29 years. Road traffic injuries kill approximately 316,000 people each year in the WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR), equivalent to 25% of global road traffic deaths. In addition to deaths, up to 50 million people incur non-fatal injuries each year as a result of road traffic crashes, while there are additional indirect health consequences that are associated with this growing epidemic.

Road traffic injuries cause financial difficulty at all levels: from individual health-care cost, loss of employment and productivity, and effects on family and relatives, to the cost of public damage and high impact on the national health and economic system. Low- and middle-income countries are estimated to lose up to 5% of GDP as a result of road traffic crashes. Road traffic injuries hamper the most important asset of every society, its human resource, in the long run, and also expand the social inequity. Investment in road safety can yield high return to the whole society, in many forms including prevention of premature mortality and disability, prevention of productivity loss, promoting human asset and quality of life, and prevention of health care cost and public damage.

Recognizing the burden the United Nations General Assembly, through resolution 64/255 in 2010, declared the period 2011–2020 the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. The United Nations General Assembly resolution introduces the concept of comprehensive actions in promoting road safety through “Five Pillars”: (i) road safety management, (ii) safer roads and mobility, (iii) safer vehicles, (iv) safer road users, and (v) post-crash response.

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action on Road Safety 2011-2020 guided Member States to strengthen these five road safety pillars through 34 actions. In addition, UN Member States, in September 2015, also included two targets on road safety in the Sustainable Development Goal. These are 1) Target SDG 3.6 – a reduction in the absolute number of road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2020, and 2) Target SDG 11.2: by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

Particular for SEAR, over half of road traffic mortality are on Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs). These VRUs include motorcyclist, bicyclists and pedestrians. SEAR has witnessed the sharp increase in motorcycle-related death in recent period, along with the increase in number of motorcycles in the Region. VRUs, especially motorcyclists, therefore should be prioritized in road safety program. Evidence shows that major risk factors for motorcycles include non-use of helmet, speed, alcohol use, mixed traffic conditions, lack of protection from the vehicles, and lack of safe infrastructures (such as poor surface and roadside hazards). The Global Status Report on Road Safety 2015 showed that good practices in each pillar have led to significant reductions in deaths and injuries among VRUs in many countries. Therefore, the road traffic injuries among VRUs are preventable.
Despite the existence of proven interventions, the agreed target, and commitment to promote road safety, Member States in SEAR are still encountering with the common challenges in protecting VRUs. These include the lack of functional multisectoral coordinating platforms and engagement of stakeholders—particularly beyond health, comprehensive and updated road safety strategies and regulations, capacity of national authorities, availability and accuracy of road safety information.

This high level meeting, by having participation from various sectors, is likely to inspire and accelerate action on all the 5 pillars at national and sub national levels, in order to protect vulnerable road users, especially motorcyclists. This conference will not only enhance the collaboration within and among the Ministries, but will provide the opportunity for appropriate collaboration among the UN agencies and organizations involved in Road Safety, as well as to reconfirm high political commitment to address road safety issue.

2. General objective

To accelerate implementation of action on Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, with focus on vulnerable road users, in the WHO South-East Asia Region through High-Level Advocacy

3. Specific objectives

1) To prioritize road safety actions in SEAR Member States and develop innovative strategies for the accelerated implementation of five road safety pillars, with focus on protecting vulnerable road users, especially motorcyclists.
2) To achieve high-level advocacy and strengthen political commitment on Decade of Action for road safety towards SDG objectives in the WHO SEA Region for accelerated implementation in Member States.
3) To discuss the role of WHO and other partners in supporting the SEAR Member States in accelerating achievement of DoA and SDG goals towards road safety.

4. Participants

- Health Minister
- Secretary from
  - Ministry of Health,
  - Ministry of Transport,
  - Ministry of heavy industry (from three country with mass vehicle production),
  - Head of road safety lead agencies,
  - Head of road safety law enforcement agencies (police)
- National programme managers
  - Ministry of health
  - Ministry of transport,
  - Road safety lead agencies (if not MOH or MOT)
- SEARO Technical Advisory Group
- Prominent persons from Thai Government (Prime Minister/ Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister: TBC)
- WHO staffs

5. Tentative agenda

i. Inaugural session
ii. Technical sessions for each of selected areas:
iii. Brainstorming for the way forward and preparation for meeting outcome document(s)
iv. Ministerial Panel
v. Adoption of outcome documents
vi. Field trip to observe road safety management in Thailand
vii. Closing session
6. Day-wise agenda

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<th>Day</th>
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<th>Agenda</th>
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| Day 1                   | National program managers, technical advisory groups, experts, development partners | • Opening remarks  
• Introductions  
• Technical presentations; Road safety status and experience sharing  
• Brainstorming on key common challenges in the Region  
• Discussion on the (draft) outcome document |
| Day 2                   | High level officials, Secretaries, and participants form day 1                 | • Presentation of prioritized actions from Day 1  
• Technical discussions: successes in road safety in SEA Region  
• Way forward in five road safety pillars  
• Conclusions and recommendations |
|                         | This second part might be joined by Ministers,                                | • Field trip for Phuket Road Safety Management in Phuket  
• Reception Dinner |
| Day 3                   | Representative from Thai Government, Health Ministers, RD, WHO-SEARO, Secretaries and participants from Day 1 | • Formal Inauguration  
• RD Speech  
• Speech by Hon’ble Prime Minister of Thailand (to be confirmed)  
• Conclusions and recommendations from Day 2  
• High Level roundtable  
• Adoption of outcome document(s)  
• Closing session |

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