4th IRTAD Conference
Road Safety Data: Collection and Analysis for Target Setting and Monitoring Performance and Progress
Seoul, 16-17 September 2009

Seoul Statement

17 September 2009

On 16-17 September 2009, 120 leading safety experts from 33 countries attended the 4TH IRTAD Conference in Seoul to discuss key issues and challenges regarding safety data collection and analysis as an essential tool to improve road safety.

More than 1.2 million people die on the world's roads every year, including 700 000 in the Asia-Pacific region. Road crashes impose significant economic costs in all our countries (of the order of 2% of GDP). Recognising the need for action, ITF Ministers have set targets for reducing road casualties[i] and Ministers from United Nations ESCAP countries met in 2006 to define a number of specific goals to improve the state of road safety in the region. Turning these initiatives into effective policies first requires the collection and analysis of good quality road safety data, including crash, exposure and performance data. This in turn requires cooperation between all key stakeholders (including police, transport, health, regional authorities).

Reliable crash and exposure data are essential elements to assessing the nature and magnitude of road safety problems and to designing and implementing effective policies. Targets for reducing deaths and injuries will be more credible if based on sound data, which forms the basis for monitoring road safety programme effectiveness.

The Conference enabled participants to highlight and discuss common issues related to safety data collection, reporting and analysis. Even in countries with good data systems, there is scope for improvement. International co-operation is an important step for identifying best practices and ways forward. Discussions focused on four critical areas:

Investment in effective data collection systems: While many countries have national road safety strategies that include goals and targets and some countries have established effective systems for road safety data collection and analysis, many countries still need to improve their data collection and reporting systems, particularly for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the targets set.

Failure to share and publish safety data hampers research and serious analysis of safety policies*.* Many local, regional and national level agencies collect safety data. However, a number of countries lack a systematic institutional framework to share data and information.

Underreporting of road crashes is a persistent problem in all countries. It is an acknowledged problem even in the world's best performing countries, which biases information published on the consequences of road crashes, and needs to be accounted for in decisions on road safety policies.

Harmonised definitions need to be used systematically in all countries. Road crash fatalities are widely defined on the basis of death within 30 days but this definition is not used in all countries, which makes international comparisons difficult. Absence of internationally agreed definitions also impedes effective use of data on injuries and crashes involving injury.

Recommendations

Conference participants agreed on a set of recommendations for consideration by national governments. They included:

- The development of a comprehensive road accident data system should be fully integrated into national road safety plans. At the same time, objectives for investments in improving data collection systems need to be clearly established.

- Systematic exchange and sharing of safety data among key agencies (including transport authorities, police, local government, health authorities) involved in road safety is critical to developing effective road safety policies and interventions. Where necessary, governments should improve the institutional framework to facilitate data exchange and analysis.

- Public authorities should be accountable for road safety records and inform the public on progress by regularly publishing key safety indicators.

- International definitions should be adopted in all countries. Participants encourage continued efforts in IRTAD and the WHO to develop guidelines for road safety data collection and analysis.

- Data quality can be improved in all countries. In particular, methodologies should be established to compare police collision reports with comparable hospital data and to link these records to improve data quality and consistency, especially with regard to serious injury crashes.

- Consistent with the recent ITF/OECD report *Towards Zero: Ambitious Road Safety Targets and the Safe System Approach*, participants recommend that all countries adopt road safety targets to drive improved performance and accountability. These targets should include an ambitious vision backed by realistic interim targets that are based on the analysis of data and modeling of the potential benefits of planned program and policy interventions to improve safety performance. Monitoring progress in meeting targets is

important and useful for informing the public of the challenges to be met. This includes studies to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies.

- International co-operation and knowledge transfer should be pursued. International benchmarking is a useful tool to raise road safety issues on political agendas. Initiatives to involve more low and middle-income countries in the IRTAD network, including cooperation with the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, were welcomed as a tool for the effective transfer of knowledge on data collection and analysis.

Finally, conference participants welcome the initiative to hold a panel discussion on road safety data collection during the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety hosted by the Russian Government on 19-20 November 2009 in Moscow with the United Nations. Outcomes from the IRTAD Conference should be shared at that panel together with highlights of IRTAD's 2009 annual report.

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[i] Target to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2012, agreed by the European Conference of Ministers, predecessor to the International Transport Forum, in 2002.