BULLETIN

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FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Governance of road safety: outcomes of the expert workshop held in Buenos Aires

Background

The current situation with road safety around the world reveals that, despite the progress made, especially in the more developed countries, there is still a long way to go to meet the shared objective of preventing 5 million deaths, avoiding 50 million serious injuries, and saving US$ 5 billion during the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The Latin America and Caribbean region still accounts for 12% of traffic accident deaths worldwide. Within the region, traffic-related injuries claimed the life of roughly 154,000 persons in 2013, up by 3% from the data recorded in 2010 for the region.

Within these fatalities attributable to the lack of road safety in Latin America and the Caribbean, 45% correspond to vulnerable road users, i.e. pedestrians (22%), motorcyclists (20%) and bicyclists (2%). It is important to consider that these users in many cases have no other option for transportation, as most of them belong to the lower-income population groups who, in the absence of regular public transit services, must use these means of transport to move about, to get to work, and to access public education and health services.

During the first third of the decade, i.e. between the years 2010 and 2013, the proportion of deaths of motorcyclists rose by 5% in the region, coinciding with an exponential jump in the number of such vehicles in many cities of Latin America. In other words, these figures show that promoting sustainable mobility with better systems of safe and efficient public transit will have major implications for the quality of life, especially among the economically most disadvantaged, who in the absence of services must risk their life on a daily basis to go about their activities.

To address this global challenge, the United Nations General Assembly entrusted the World Health Organization and the regional commissions of the United Nations (including ECLAC and UNECE), in cooperation with other

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associates of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration group and other interested parties, with preparing a Global Plan for the Decade of Action as a document to guide and facilitate the achievement of its objectives. The Plan is intended as a "guiding document that will facilitate coordinated and concerted action towards the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020". It proposes action centred around five pillars:

- Pillar 1: Road safety management.
- Pillar 2: Safer roads and mobility.
- Pillar 3: Safer vehicles.
- Pillar 4: Safer road users.
- Pillar 5: Post-crash response.

Following the mandate issued by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/64/255) to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations regional commissions for regular monitoring of global progress against the objectives indicated in the Plan for the Decade of Action on Road Safety, ECLAC, together with UNECE, has been pursuing a series of actions coordinated among these regional commissions to highlight the importance of road safety for sustainable development. Of particular note here is the fact that road safety has been included among the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030, which provides a framework of additional action that favours a road safety focus integrated with other aspects of sustainable development. Thus, within Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, Target 3.6 calls for reducing by half "the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents" by 2020. Similarly, under Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Target 11.2 calls on States to "provide [by 2030] 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".

The foregoing is of particular importance for the Latin America and Caribbean region, which is far from a fulfilling the commitments assumed: indeed, some countries have not only failed to reduce their rates of traffic accident deaths but have seen them rise over their values at the beginning of the decade. To resolve this issue, it is essential to make major improvements in mobility policies in line with a national commitment to road safety, through ongoing involvement and dialogue with the various road safety stakeholders. In this regard, particular importance attaches not only to road safety policies and plans but also to the manner in which the different visions and actions concerning road safety are coordinated. Consequently,

the governance of road safety at the local, national and subregional level is a central theme that ECLAC is promoting to generate greater dialogue and to position this issue on the public and political agendas of countries of the region. Thus, the institutional improvements and measures contained in the Plan for the Decade of Action must incorporate improvements in the governance of road infrastructure and safety in order to achieve the targets of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, and, above all, to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

I. The Regional Workshop on Road Safety: Strengthening the governance of road safety and practical improvements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

In this context, a Regional Road Safety Workshop was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March 2017, on the topic of "strengthening the governance of road safety and best practices for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals". More than 150 participants from 17 countries of Latin America including representatives of government (national and local), the private sector and civil society attended the workshop, which was co-sponsored by the Office of the Special Envoy for Road Safety, the National Road Safety Agency of Argentina, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

During the two-day workshop, participants shared experience, good practices and challenges relating to the management and governance of road safety and accession to the international conventions of the United Nations on road safety, and adopted a set of recommendations to strengthen road safety governance in Latin America from a local, regional and global perspective.

This report presents the main contents and conclusions of the meeting as they relate to four of the five pillars of the Decade of Action that were addressed by the workshop:

- Pillar 1: Road safety management.
- Pillar 2: Safer roads and mobility.
- Pillar 3: Safer vehicles.
- Pillar 4: Safer road users.

Pillar 1: Road safety management

Under this pillar of the Decade of Action, discussions in the workshop addressed the principal elements of sound management and governance of road safety, conceived

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as the process of taking and implementing policy decisions based on mechanisms, procedures and standards established formally and informally by the various institutions and other stakeholders.

The workshop's thematic discussions focused on the challenges of encouraging the creation of multisector partnerships and the designation of lead agencies with the capacity to develop and coordinate the delivery of national road safety strategies, plans and targets, underpinned by data collection and evidential research to assess countermeasure design and monitor implementation and effectiveness.

In the first place, participants noted that in order to improve road safety in the region, existing institutions will have to be strengthened. Given the great number of institutions involved in the planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of road safety in every country, a major effort at multisector and multi-stakeholder coordination is needed, moving toward a multisector organization with a shared leadership. Given the institutional complexity that prevails in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the cross-cutting nature of road safety, countries of the region have sought various forms of organization. Regional experience shows that there is no single model for a road safety agency in the region, but that there are many experiments having to do with the creation of councils, national agencies and road safety observatories which, while they may differ in their degrees of independence and financing, are all geared to promoting dialogue and coordination of inter-sector efforts to implement effective measures for developing a safer road system.

In the case of Argentina, for example, to address the road safety challenges posed by the country's federal nature, there is a Federal Road Safety Council, which brings together the road safety bodies of the country's 23 provinces and the City of Buenos Aires, and is supposed to coordinate a road safety policy throughout the national territory, working jointly with the National Road Safety Agency of the National Transport Ministry. Other countries of the region, such as Peru and its National Road Safety Agency, have focused on decentralization, assigning responsibilities to regional and provincial councils with the objective of strengthening response capacity to road accidents not only in urban areas but in rural zones as well. In the case of Costa Rica, the approach to road safety is of a technical nature, and involves only the Governing Board and the Executive Directorate of the Road Safety Council, which has a political profile.

Countries also stressed the need to promulgate mobility and road safety legislation to strengthen management capacity in specific actions covering road safety in

an integrated, cross-cutting and sustainable manner. Argentina's Minister of Transport, Guillermo Dietrich, underlined the importance of citizen participation and support at the regional level in achieving the established targets. With Argentina's Safe Mobility Plan, road safety is not confined to a specific domain but cuts across all areas relating to the issue, grouped around four key pillars: infrastructure, reliable data generation, long-term awareness raising, and intergovernmental efforts. In the Dominican Republic, the recently approved Law 63-17 of 2017 creates a Transport Institute as a single entity embracing multiple institutions that until now had worked in an uncoordinated way, leading to duplication of efforts, among other problems detected. The law constitutes a tool for restructuring and integrating the sector and finding comprehensive and coordinated solutions. Political will is identified as one of the key factors for achieving better road safety governance. It was stressed that road safety must be part of a mobility policy that gives it coherence within the government and that addresses mobility, education, supervision, institutions and information in a cross-cutting manner. The focus on mobility, both urban and rural, implies the development of safe road infrastructure and a safe, efficient and non-polluting system of public transportation.

Secondly, discussions on better management of road safety paid much attention to the monitoring of road safety policies and the comprehensive evaluation of measures taken. Participants recognized that the region has made significant progress in compiling and systematizing information on road safety at the national level, with in some cases subnational coverage as well.

Tensions have emerged between the technical and political aspects of road safety in individual countries across the region, leading to an unbalanced approach to the problem and depriving the region of reliable, accurate and up-to-date statistics as needed for proper monitoring of the trend in accident rates and the quality of the vehicle fleet, and hampering the adoption of sound policies and regulations. Some countries have strong technical teams that they have managed to keep in place despite the vagaries of politics. On the other hand, countries where the approach has been more political have tended to assume commitments and accident reduction targets that are highly ambitious but that are technically and financially unrealistic and unachievable, leaving the public with the feeling that major changes in the quality of road safety are impossible. Political commitment and technical know-how should in fact be complementary. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can also be drivers of change, acting as catalysts to resolve these tensions.

Proper monitoring of policies requires a system of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Participants in the workshop highlighted the need to strengthen existing human resources as well as the quality of the available information, and to make that information transparent and share it among the institutions involved as well as with the general public. Since the great majority of databases are derived from police reports, many countries have information only on accident-site deaths, and this is not consistent with the standardized methodology of WHO. These methodological differences make it difficult to conduct inter-country comparisons and to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented, and underreporting is a persistent challenge. The collection of high quality data on traffic accidents is essential for taking evidence-based decisions about road safety in the three phases of accidents: pre-occurrence, occurrence, and post-occurrence. What is needed is, first, to identify correctly the magnitude of the problem and the users involved; second, to establish which are the main causes associated with accidents; third, to make projections for estimating countermeasures; fourth, to ensure continuous monitoring; and finally, in the evaluation phase, to determine whether the measures have succeeded in reducing the indicators of deaths and injuries from traffic accidents, and whether the pre-established targets have been met.

The national experiences analysed in the workshop showed that, along with improving the protocols for gathering information, significant efforts have been made to obtain high-quality information through the introduction of specialized observatories. However, the prevailing approach in many of those observatories has meant that they have failed to provide an effective and efficient solution for this issue, especially at the local and rural levels, where federal countries or those with a degree of decentralization have faced the greatest challenges.

Consequently, and despite the significant progress in the way in which governments relate to NGOs and civil society, access to reliable and timely information is still limited. The public needs access to the existing statistics in order to complement and monitor the efforts of governments with a view to ensuring their implementation. To this end, NGOs need to identify the existing weak points and to

complement public efforts with their support. Similarly, participating NGOs noted that they have been specializing progressively in certain aspects, such as accident prevention or managing legal change, in the hopes of improving their capacity to support and complement official efforts.

On this topic, participants pointed to the need for an independent body to formulate and evaluate the overall implementation of the measures. They cited the need for the region to collect unfragmented, accessible and continuous data in order to generate trust among the citizenry. Better and more transparent access to data on the part of civil society would facilitate the public understanding of government efforts and the planning of policies. In countries such as the Dominican Republic and Argentina, confidence in the data registries of public institutions is a priority factor, as the presentation of statistics is one of the primary channels of communication with the public.

Lastly, addressing the issue of strengthening the management and governance of road safety, participants stressed the role of financing, noting with concern that the total resources earmarked for this issue pale in comparison with the funds allocated to other themes. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt, described a proposal, now in preparation by UNECE in collaboration with the Special Envoy and in consultation with other United Nations regional commissions and WHO, to create a United Nations Road Safety Fund that would mobilize funds and improve the efficiency of global and regional efforts in implementing the Decade of Action.

Pillar 2: Safer roads and mobility

Discussions of this pillar focused on ways to enhance the inherent safety and protective quality of road networks for the benefit of all road users, especially the most vulnerable (e.g. pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists). It was recognized that this can be achieved through better standards and evaluations of road infrastructure and improvements in the planning, design, construction and operation of the region's roads.

ECLAC stressed the importance of infrastructure for improving the quality of life and, in particular, for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Without infrastructure, and especially without transport infrastructure, it is impossible to access labour markets and the services needed for sustainable development. Yet infrastructure alone is not enough: its quality must be reinforced, and safety is a fundamental aspect that must be included in infrastructure projects and in the regulation of transport services that use that infrastructure.

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The region is making progress in upgrading its road infrastructure through heavy investments, where private sector involvement in major expressways has been crucial in incorporating leading-edge technology and best designs. As established in Pillar 2 of the Decade of Action, the safety and quality of roads, both urban and rural, must be improved for the benefit of all users, especially the most vulnerable, through works that will separate traffic flows or serve as passive safety elements in case of an accident. To this end, the planning, design, construction and operation of roads must be improved and there must be regular evaluations of the status of road infrastructure (road audits) as well as periodic reviews of road safety, an area where ECLAC and UNECE can provide support.

There is still much to be done in the region with respect to secondary and rural roads, which account for a significant number of traffic accident fatalities due to the lack of adequate infrastructure. In fact, WHO notes in one of its reports that eight countries of the region still conduct no regular inspections of any kind to assess the safety conditions of their road infrastructure.

In several countries, as emphasized by the National Transportation Safety Commission of Chile, the public does not rank road safety among the priorities that government should address, and this is subsequently reflected in the importance that government attaches to investments of this kind. Road safety is seen as a transitory issue of shifting importance. It is essential, therefore, to position road safety on the public and political agenda so as to constitute a cross-cutting element within government until a State vision of road safety is achieved.

In the sessions devoted to the topic of safer mobility, participants analysed the great improvements that have been made in the safety of roads and mobility through the implementation of various conventions on road safety developed within the United Nations framework, such as the 1968 Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals. These two conventions, managed by UNECE, are global benchmarks for the behaviour of users of roads and of road infrastructure (i.e. road signage). However, to date only Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay are contracting parties to the conventions.

The workshop concluded that the low percentage of accession by Latin American countries to the legal instruments of the United Nations relating to road safety reflects in part the lack of rapport between discussions of the United Nations conventions at the global level and the debates conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean based on regional needs. Workshop participants therefore agreed that each country should review its own position on accession to these conventions, and the real possibility of implementing them, with a view to formulating an initial internal assessment.

The 1968 United Nations Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals

The two Vienna conventions, on road traffic and on road signs and signals, are important legal instruments that are intended not only to facilitate international trade and transportation by harmonizing the rules, but also to encourage the development of road safety policies focused on reducing the number of traffic accidents and their victims.

The 1968 Convention on Road Traffic replaces the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic, with a view to achieving greater uniformity in the rules governing road traffic so as to facilitate international transport, boost road safety, and protect the environment through traffic standards agreed internationally, as well as the reciprocal recognition of documents issued in accordance with those rules. The Convention came into force on 21 May 1977, and currently has 67 contracting parties. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Guyana, Cuba and the Bahamas have acceded to this Convention. The Convention contains six chapters and seven annexes, which detail the obligations of the contracting parties to admit vehicles and drivers in international transit into their territory (while reserving their rights to deny such entry); it establishes general and specific rules for drivers; it defines standards of behaviour with respect to pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable groups, and it establishes general rules for vehicle registration and licensing. With a view to adapting and updating the contents of these texts on an ongoing basis, in light of technological progress and in response to growing social demands in the area of road safety and environmental protection, Working Party 1 of UNECE, the only permanent working group of the United Nations system to concern itself with road safety, has proposed a number of updates to the Convention on Road Traffic. The amendments recently approved include a prohibition on the use of cell phones while driving and the introduction of new information on the driver's license. Its benefits include reciprocal recognition of vehicle certificates and driver's licences, facilitated international transportation, trade and tourism, and the use of this Convention as a benchmark for national highway codes.

The 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals was designed to enhance road safety and encourage the standardization of the signage system in order to facilitate international road traffic. The Convention came into force on 6 June 1978, and currently has 65 contracting parties, including three from the region: Chile, Cuba and Guyana. The Convention contains six chapters and three annexes which establish a set of mutually agreed road signs, classified into three categories-danger warning, regulation and information signs-offering for each category definitions and a description of their physical appearance (colour, shape, size, etc.). In 2003 the Convention was amended in matters relating to the legibility of signs, priority at roundabouts, and new signage to enhance safety in tunnels. The Convention defines more than 200 model road signs, facilitates trade and tourism traffic through harmonization, and promotes road safety through education based on common standards.

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Pillar 3: Safer vehicles

Pillar 3 of the Decade of Action encourages universal deployment of improved vehicle safety technologies for both passive and active safety through a combination of harmonization of relevant global standards, consumer information schemes, and incentives to accelerate the uptake of new technologies. In this respect, the countries participating in the workshop identified the following three main challenges:

- Lack of inter-sector and interagency coordination.
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation of regulations and policies.
- Lack of management capacity in specific areas.

With respect to the lack of inter-sector and interagency coordination, several countries pointed to the absence of protocols for interagency coordination, without which it is difficult to work with other ministries, departments and institutions. In many countries of the region, the actions of various members of government and institutions involved in vehicle regulation issues, technical inspection and other related topics are currently uncoordinated, making it essential to adopt a cross-cutting approach for meeting the proposed targets and commitments. Changes of government pose a particular obstacle to the implementation of certain rules and to the sustainability over time of policies and dialogue concerning countries' accession to the United Nations conventions.

Boosting the presence of safer vehicles on the region's roads will require new regulations and the further development of existing ones, ensuring their enforcement and generating greater awareness and interest on the part of the public in acquiring safer vehicles. In several countries, as illustrated by the Mexican case, safer vehicles are seen as a luxury, in that every safety device increases the cost of vehicles: consequently, the development of social awareness on this issue will help significantly to reduce accident rates. To ensure a broad reach for these policies, countries have suggested the creation of a supranational agency to enforce provisions of this kind, establishing a "top-down" mechanism for carrying out quality controls with regard to safer vehicles and verifying the existence of those controls, in order to avoid the fallout from shifting policies.

As the countries recognized, in order to strengthen management capacities, civil society representatives and international organizations have an important role to play in making vehicles safer. The countries identified the lack of a research culture as well as a strong industry stance against the inclusion of minimum vehicle standards, the lack of transparency, and lagging efforts to create and update technical standards as some of the main challenges in the

region. In turn, better incentives are needed for renewing the vehicle fleet, for enforcing the requirements for vehicle certification, and for technical inspection of vehicles.

Several NGOs at the event also highlighted the need to focus on firms, with a view to eliminating the present dualities in the manufacture of vehicles on different continents and to generate better production control standards. They also thought it important that civil society and individual citizens should be able to exert influence to counter lobbying by the automotive industry. It is essential, then, that civil society should be aware of the consequences of unsafe vehicles, and what makes them unsafe.

In the view of participants, to achieve pillar 3 of the Decade of Action it is essential to encourage governments to issue and enforce more demanding minimum standards. In this respect, the "New Car Assessment Programmes" (NCAP) are encouraging these voluntary standards and setting an example of good practice for the region. Thus, the workshop proposed mandatory testing and qualification by the NCAP for Latin America and the Caribbean (Latin NCAP) of all models sold on the market. To achieve these concrete steps, further development of existing rules must be supported by a citizenry that is more involved and interested in safer vehicles. The systematic and consensus-based use of social networks can be a practical tool for disseminating the results and relevant information. A communication policy coordinated with the social networks would help exert pressure and create awareness of road safety, together with greater use of public transportation.

The workshop examined carefully the role of the United Nations agreements of 1985, 1997 and 1998 on vehicle regulation as a highly valuable tool available to countries of the region. It was noted that these agreements address issues of active and passive safety, together with comprehensive attention to the environment, pollution, and energy use. Accession to the United Nations agreements would bring with it positive social and environmental impacts, as well as economic benefits, including the possibility to market vehicles outside the region, a pressing need given the region's current economic downturn. While popularizing the benefits among the citizenry is a question still to be addressed, the real challenge lies in implementation. The public needs to be made aware of the benefits of a vehicle regulation system together with the effectiveness of penalties, which should be seen as a necessity and not merely as an economic burden. At the same time, the myths concerning the high cost of vehicle certification must be dispelled. International traffic standards, recognized in the 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, make possible a gradual harmonization from the domestic to the international level, and the international standards

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can serve as a guide for developing domestic standards in this area. This harmonization implies great benefits for the region in terms of mutual recognition of driver's licences, vehicle certificates and standards between countries and subregions for facilitating cross-border traffic, tourism and trade.

The workshop's technical discussions showed that many countries of the region view accession to the United Nations conventions and their ratification as both an enormous challenge and a great opportunity. The challenge relates to the perceived complexity of the process of discussion and accession at the technical and legal levels, while the opportunity is for the countries to present themselves to the world as a competitive region that speaks with a single voice. Given the complexity of the process and the mechanics of the WP. 29 meetings (World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations), countries posed the need for support and involvement of the United Nations system in facilitating dialogue for understanding and popularizing the conventions, and incorporating them into the laws and regulations of countries of the region. The United Nations system offers a source of information and a forum for facilitating dialogue between the public sector, the private sector, civil society and other institutions for adhering to these standards and agreements.

The workshop noted that most Latin American products cannot be exported to larger markets outside the region because of the level of current local vehicle regulations. Local industry can develop specific lines of production for export beyond the region, but this will be less efficient and more costly than if all automotive producers comply with United Nations regulations (the 1958 and 1998 agreements) accepted in other markets. This is particularly relevant in light of the current crisis in the automotive industry, as illustrated by the case of Brazil. If the industry were to adhere to harmonized international regulation, this would lead to the development of higher-quality products and would induce the local industry to develop more and better technology and to generate greater local capacity to meet these new requirements. In turn, the existence of worldwide vehicle regulations, as established through UNECE WP. 29, will mitigate the negative impacts of vehicle use in the region.

Some of the standards are designed to enhance drivers' capacity to detect and avoid dangerous circumstances, while others seek to boost their ability to control their vehicles. Apart from enhancing vehicle safety, other advantages of acceding to WP.29 include: the possibility for countries to participate in the technical process of preparing the United Nations regulations, sharing information among the contracting parties to the agreement, which encourages the technological development of domestic manufacturers, facilitating trade, mutual recognition of certifications, development of more environmentally-friendly vehicles at a reasonable price, and a greater range of vehicle choice.

In the decision on accession to these conventions by countries of the region, the technical areas should have greater participation, backed by ministerial and presidential support. The workshop's discussions of the process of accession to the United Nations conventions showed that governments and institutions perceived the steps to be followed for accession as more complex than they really are. Many countries of the region are already applying some of the United Nations regulations, and many manufacturers already meet the requirements established by those regulations. Accession to the conventions offers a flexibility that allows countries to adhere to some but not all of the specific regulations in those conventions, on the basis of the national context and needs, and the process can be carried out progressively. It was noted that, for applying the regulatory certification tests that are complex but essential for vehicle safety (such as frontal or lateral collision), the 1958 United Nations agreement provides that Contracting Parties may request the accredited technical services of other Contracting Parties to perform the tests on their behalf. In turn, any country can use the United Nations regulations by acceding to the United Nations agreements or by applying those regulations on a national basis. The decision as to the priority of the regulations to be adopted must be taken on the basis of advice from the safety observatories to the ministries, in a "bottom up" approach, with a view to identifying the priority areas. For countries with a complex institutional structure and a federal system, such as Brazil, Argentina or Mexico, the great challenge lies in adopting the amendments to the agreements and incorporating them into domestic regulations. Countries were informed that, once they become Contracting Parties to the 1958 United Nations agreement, they can apply the regulations attached to that agreement as an alternative to their domestic regulations, while maintaining national standards. The only obligation flowing from the agreement is that the Contracting Parties must accept the Type Approvals granted by other Parties that apply the same United Nations regulation, observing the rule of "certified in one country, accepted in all".

One of the final recommendations on this topic was to move forward jointly as a bloc, establishing common forums for work and dialogue in order to evaluate possible accession to the United Nations conventions from a regional viewpoint. The countries present, specifically Brazil and Uruguay, argued the need to present themselves as a group in the global discussions on the safe vehicle conventions, given their many common interests.

Pillar 4: Safer road users

This pillar encourages the adoption of comprehensive programmes to improve the behaviour of road users: these would include permanent and enhanced observance and enforcement of laws and standards together with public education and awareness campaigns to boost seatbelt and helmet use, and to reduce drunk driving, speeding and other risk factors.

Participants noted that, despite the region's progress with harmonization, there is still a great disparity in the wording of licences, in the age for obtaining licences for various kinds of vehicles, in the period of validity of licences, and in the preparation of candidates for driver's licences. There are also problems in categorizing vehicles due to the lack of consistency among countries in the definition of vehicle types. Although nearly all countries require in theory that candidates pass a test to obtain a driver's licence, in practice that test is often not applied. In this regard, Costa Rica sets a good example for the region in having available solid information on the percentage of drivers who have proven their suitability through a rigorous test. As noted by the NGOs participating in the workshop, safer drivers are needed if the region's accident rates are to decline, and one of the ways to achieve this is to make the issuance of licences more demanding. The discrepancies among countries of the region in this matter are impeding the growing cross-border mobility of vehicles. Accordingly, some countries of the region, such as Chile and Argentina, are working at border crossings to harmonize speed limits, cell phone use, and the safety of child passengers in vehicles.

When it comes to the disparity relating to driver licensing and driver training, the United Nations conventions are a useful tool for the region in deepening harmonization and regional integration. Harmonization is needed, both in terms of traffic, vehicle and road policies and in terms of driver training and driver licensing, in order to have a greater, cross-cutting impact on the human factor in the "vehicle-driver-road" triangle. As to regional harmonization of driver's licences, the European Union offers an example: Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishes a single model driving licence for the Union, together with minimum standards of physical and mental aptitude for obtaining licences, and regulation of the process throughout the European Union territory.

The region also betrays a lack of regulation on some key issues such as the transportation of children on motorcycles and the use of new technologies. These new technologies are generating new needs that must be addressed, in terms of both regulation and of education, training and social awareness. In the face of poor urban planning, Peru has focused on promoting a sustainable city that gives priority to pedestrians and their use of public spaces through the construction of bicycle lanes, metro lines, underground parking and pedestrian safety zones.

Finally, motorcycle use has become a major problem for road safety in many countries of the region: a prime example is the Dominican Republic, where 54% of the vehicle fleet consists of motorcycles, and the rate of motorization is seven times that of population increase. As noted in the Ibero-American Charter on Driving Licenses (Situation Report 2012), good international practice for improving motorcycle safety calls for the introduction of progressive access in the use of these vehicles. Specifically, following the example of the European Union, access to driving a high-powered motorcycle will be conditional upon at least two years' experience in driving medium-powered motorcycles.

II. Conclusions and final recommendations

As a result of the technical discussions in the workshop, representatives of government (national and local), the private sector and civil society agreed on the following proposals for submission to the national authorities in preparing road safety policies in these countries of the region:

- There is great concern over the slow progress in implementing the Decade of Action in Latin America, and the need for better road safety policies is particularly acute in the region's federal countries.
- Current road safety policies betray significant limitations, as most of them do not have a comprehensive focus for reducing exposure to risk. Moreover, many of these policies fail to take into account international (United Nations) and regional rules and standards. In most cases, they have no mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, nor any reliable indicators based on quantifiable and relevant data.
- The workshop addressed in detail the global regulatory system referring to safer vehicles (the 1985, 1997 and 1998 United Nations conventions on vehicle regulation), which addresses safety issues both active (avoiding collisions) and passive (reduce the effects of collisions) on a global scale, together with comprehensive attention to the environment, pollution and energy use.
- Accession to the United Nations conventions would not only have positive social impacts (reducing road accidents) and environmental impacts but would also yield important economic benefits, allowing the Latin American automobile industry to access markets beyond the region. Exporting local products to new

markets could mean greater resiliency for the industry and the local economy, as has already occurred in Europe at a time of sluggish growth.

- The process of accession to the United Nations conventions offers the needed flexibility of gradual accession, recognizing that it will require a major and systematic effort at technical preparedness in the region.
- Beyond the ongoing task of developing the vehicle regulatory framework, there are issues of interministerial coordination, measurement and monitoring of regulations, as well as supervision and enforcement. Civil society has an important role to play in improving regulatory systems in reference to automobile clubs, consumer organizations, NGOs, governments and insurance companies. There have also been successful experiments with the use of social networks for raising awareness and mobilizing the public in favour of eliminating unsafe vehicles.
- As to the social and economic benefits of vehicle certification in the context of the United Nations conventions on vehicle regulation, while these benefits are well known, their implementation remains a challenge, along with the need to have a convincing and less vulnerable system and to do away with certain myths concerning the certification process, such as its allegedly high cost.
- The United Nations Conventions on Road Traffic (1968) and on Road Signs and Signals (1968) are the best benchmark in this matter and they provide the basis for creating high-quality regulations at the national and regional level. The conventions imply mutual recognition as well as improved quality and understanding of signage and road traffic, thereby facilitating international mobility. However, these conventions have attracted only limited accession by countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The discussion on the United Nations conventions underlined the progress with regional harmonization. At the same time, it recognized that this harmonization could be enhanced in order to facilitate and promote regional integration. In this respect, the United Nations standards are a useful tool for the region. However, to this end each country will have to review its institutional policy (its accession and ratification, or its willingness to accede and ratify) and its capacity for implementation.
- The issue of harmonization of driver training and driving licences needs to be revisited at the regional level, a process that several countries have already undertaken, although they have not yet progressed in its implementation.
- The workshop highlighted the importance of moving toward better road safety governance so as to resolve the observed shortcomings in the policies of the region. Better governance is not a substitute for

public action, but rather a means of reinforcing and legitimizing it. Governance is specific to the national context and must therefore be flexible in adapting to new requirements, players and challenges in transport and mobility, encouraging participation by all stakeholders and supplying information for monitoring actions.

- Participants highlighted the need to establish ongoing regional dialogue on road safety governance and on regional and global best practices, and they stressed the importance of establishing and strengthening a regional network of experts on this topic. They called upon organizations of the United Nations system and the regional multilateral banks to pursue the issues addressed in the workshop and to organize monitoring activities.
- The resources devoted to road safety worldwide continue to fall short in comparison with efforts related to other issues. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, in his opening remarks, referred to a proposal that UNECE is preparing in collaboration with the Special Envoy and in consultation with other regional commissions of the United Nations and WHO to create a United Nations Road Safety Fund. Participants are invited to review and comment on the proposal and to send their comments to the Executive Secretary (executive.secretary@unece.org).