

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE 8TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

Distinguished Members of the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group,

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 8th Meeting on October 27th, 2016 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving Road Safety in the OIC Member States.” During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations concerning policy approximation among the Member Countries in the field of road safety. The Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted for the 8th Meeting of TCWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions, were the main input for the discussions. During the Meeting, the participants discussed the policy recommendations given below.

Policy Recommendation I: Raising Awareness of Road Safety in the Member States

Rationale:

Road traffic injuries are a major but neglected global public health problem, requiring concerted efforts for effective and sustainable prevention. Of all the systems that people have to deal with on a daily basis, road transport is the most complex and the most dangerous. Worldwide, the number of people killed in road traffic crashes each year is estimated at almost 1.2 million, while the number injured could be as high as 50 million - the combined population of five of the world’s large cities. In addition to fatalities, many less severe injuries are caused by road traffic crashes: between 20 and 50 million non-fatal injuries are estimated to occur annually around the world. These non-fatal injuries are also an important cause of disability.

Human factors such as carelessness, fatigue, lack of skill, drunkenness, speeding, proximity to other drivers and jaywalking are major factors in road crashes. In this respect, intense road safety campaigns, strengthened enforcement strategies, driving school standardization programs and introduced medical exams for commercial drivers are needed for raising awareness.

Policy Recommendation II: Adhering to the Major UN Road Safety Agreements and Adapting/Utilizing the Safe Systems Approach¹ for National Road Safety Management System

Rationale:

In March 2010 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution proclaiming 2011 to 2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The goal of the Decade is to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road deaths worldwide by 2020 by increasing road safety activities at national, regional and global levels.

The plan relies on the underlying the Safe Systems principles as adopted in the Decade of Action. The Safe Systems approach aims at developing a road transport system that accounts for human error and the vulnerability of the human body. The premise is that humans continue to make mistakes and crashes cannot be totally avoided although their impact (in terms on injury outcomes) can be mitigated

¹ *The Safe System approach was conceptualised with the introduction of the Dutch Sustainable Safety approach and the Swedish Vision Zero. This thinking laid the foundation for the recommendations developed by WHO and UN and was incorporated into the OECD report “Towards Zero” and the World Bank Country Guidelines for the Conduct of Road Safety Management Capacity Reviews. The World Bank guidelines were developed specifically to promote the Safe Systems Approach and to introduce road safety capacity reviews as a first step to redress the growing road safety problems.*

by providing safe and forgiving roads and vehicles. Road users have the responsibility of abiding for rules and regulations. This is all supported by a legal and judicial system, including effective enforcement capacity, emergency care and incident management systems, training facilities, funding systems, research and monitoring functions as required by a Safe Systems Approach.

The Safe Systems Approach is internationally accepted as the most appropriate approach in guiding the management of road safety. It has been increasingly recognized as the most effective way to make road transport systems safer for all users. This approach envisages that road safety is a shared responsibility of designers and users of the road transport system. The main aim of this approach is to prevent fatal and severe injuries by identifying and addressing the major sources of error and the design flaws that cause to them. Unlike the traditional approaches, road users, vehicles and road network/environment are considered in an integrated manner in the Safe Systems Approach.

Therefore, adhering and implementing UN agreements and conventions including the Convention on road Traffic (1998); the Convention and Signs and Signals (1968) and the AETR (1970), harmonizing road safety legislation across country borders, and utilizing the Safe Systems Approach to the National Road Safety Management System are vitally important to achieving success.

Policy Recommendation III: Establishing a Reliable and Sustainable Road Safety and Crash Data System

Rationale:

Basic information on road traffic crashes and injuries is collected every day in many countries. Unless such information is properly coded, entered in a computerized database system, processed, analyzed, and disseminated, it cannot be used for identifying risks, selecting interventions, or measuring outcomes. The term crash data system refers to the people, processes, hardware and software involved in collecting and managing information related to road traffic crashes. Data systems should process information that allows analysis at an aggregate level and facilitates data-driven actions.

Furthermore, reliable and accurate data is needed to raise awareness about the magnitude of road traffic injuries, and to convince policymakers to take necessary measures. Reliable and accurate data is also needed to correctly identify problems, risk factors and priority areas, and to develop strategies, set targets and monitor performance. Furthermore, it would also contribute to a better resource allocation. The use of reliable data is also a key element of the Safe Systems Approach presented in the previous policy recommendation.

Policy Recommendation IV: Developing a National Road Safety Strategy and Assigning a National ~~—Multidisciplinary Body—~~(Lead Agency/Institution) Responsible for Road Safety Management

Rationale:

Developing a national road safety strategy in light of international good practices is important for having a better road safety management and addressing nationwide challenges. Developing and implementing road safety strategies and programs that would be incorporated into country specific policies and strategies is one of the eight specific objectives of the Global Plan (UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020).

In this respect, a national multidisciplinary body, or a lead agency, is vital for developing a national road safety strategy as well as coordinating its implementation. Assigning a lead agency responsible for road safety is one of the six primary activities identified under the first pillar, i.e. Road Safety Management, of the said Global Plan. The main aim of the lead agency would be reducing deaths and serious injuries substantially. The agency would identify the scope of its management systems, particularly related to its role as well as its relevant partners and stakeholders' roles in road traffic safety. Accordingly, it would have a system level coordination role in ensuring that the interventions, which are typically systemic and directed towards a large-scale implementation, are taking place.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.