

● ● ● Community-based organizations

We, the youth of the world, ask community-based organizations including faith-based, sports-related and youth organizations, to create a broader awareness among our families and friends about the magnitude of the road traffic injury problem and the main factors which place people at risk. Because road traffic trauma affects individuals, friends and families, and ultimately the entire community we live in, we encourage you to promote road safety and adopt the most effective channels to make messages heard, involve road crash survivors and youth in programmes, and promote policies that work. We further call upon you to collaborate as much as possible with other organizations which are active in road safety initiatives.

● ● ● Private companies

We, the youth of the world, call upon you, the managers of private companies to acknowledge your social responsibility in developing safe products and to market your products responsibly. Being young and more at risk, there is a tendency for some of us to seek sensation including through speeding and drink-driving. When your advertisements glamorize speed and encourage the excessive use of alcohol, you give us the impression that we can afford to take risks! We therefore ask vehicle manufacturers to divert more resources towards the development and promotion of safer vehicles and alcohol companies to increase the promotion of responsible drinking and avoid marketing to the youngest of us. We further call upon insurance companies to promote the benefits of safe road traffic behaviour and develop effective and efficient insurance policies. We also call upon owners of public transport companies to ensure their vehicles and driver behaviour are as safe as possible. We call upon the private sector as a whole to establish joint funding for road safety campaigns and to develop safe driving policies for their employees.

● ● ● Media

We, the youth of the world, are greatly influenced by media, particularly youth-oriented media, and the lifestyles that the media portrays. As such, we call upon you, the journalists and leaders of the media to address road traffic injuries as a global health and development problem that affects millions of lives each year. We depend on you to make our voices heard. We particularly ask you to report responsibly and accurately on the traumatic consequences of road traffic crashes and to broadcast advertisements for responsible road traffic behaviour as often as you broadcast advertisements to sell products. We call upon you to use the most appropriate media to attract the attention of youth. We also call upon you to promote road safety by featuring stories of young road traffic survivors and their families and by highlighting best practices in road safety. We call upon you to ensure that private companies refrain from showing advertisements or TV shows that glamorize speeding and drink-driving during times when youth might be watching.

● ● ● Celebrities and the entertainment industry

We, the youth of the world, call upon celebrities and the entertainment world to actively promote road safety. Our behaviour is often influenced by celebrities in the sport, film, music and art industries. We therefore call upon you, artists and celebrities to realize the impact that you can have on youth. We ask you to serve as role models by promoting safe road traffic behaviour, such as always wearing a seat-belt or helmet and not drink-driving and speeding, not only in your professional roles but also in your personal lives.

● ● ● The Life of this Declaration

In conclusion, we, the youth of the world, declare our commitment to actively pursue the demands of this Declaration to ensure its impact. We will not allow it to remain ink on paper. From the moment we adopt the Declaration, it will go around the world like the Olympic flame, carried by youth on all continents, to enlighten countries, one by one, with the voice of the youth calling for action. We want to make the roads of the world safer and more secure, not only for ourselves, but for everyone and for the generations to come.

“Adopted by the Youth Delegates from more than 100 countries at the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety, Geneva, Switzerland, 2007.”

youth declaration for road safety



ROAD SAFETY
IS NO ACCIDENT

You get a phone call to inform you that your friend has been seriously injured in a car crash on his way home from a late night party. You are one of the first to hear. You rush to the hospital, but by the time you reach there, your friend has already died. You don't even have a chance to say goodbye. You have to tell your other friends that they have lost a buddy but you don't know what to say. They are devastated.

You witness a crash on a rural road. Two little girls are walking along the roadside and are struck by a speeding vehicle. You and a few other passersby frantically try to find them transport to the local hospital. It takes more than an hour for them to reach the hospital and the services there are inadequate. Both little girls die on that same day. You return home traumatized by the incident, wishing you could have done more to save their lives.

You are among a group of school children on a class field trip. The school bus is packed with more than 50 of your excited classmates. The road is long and dangerous, the weather conditions are very poor and seat-belts in the bus are absent. The bus driver, who has been drinking alcohol, loses control of the bus on an embankment, and it swerves off the road into a ditch. Four boys and three girls are killed instantly, among them one of your dearest friends. Many of the children are severely injured.

Think about these tragedies for a moment... Each day, more than 3000 lives are abruptly ended because of a road traffic crash while many more people survive but are left with life-changing injuries. In a split second, a crash transforms lives forever through the loss of beloved fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, grandchildren, colleagues, classmates and friends. Each and every one of these deaths causes immense pain and suffering. Some emotional wounds never heal.

Now imagine that you could turn back time and prevent these tragedies from happening in the first place. If your friend had been wearing his seat-belt, if the vehicle had not been speeding and had been properly maintained, if the little girls had a safer place to walk and had been more visible, if the bus driver had not been driving while under the influence of alcohol, if the state of the road had not been so poor, if appropriate medical services had been available... There are so many actions that could have been taken. We cannot turn back time and save those who have already died on our roads, but we can prevent such needless losses of life occurring in the future.

Together we can make road crashes history.

Youth Declaration for Road Safety ● ● ●

● ● ● Background

Globally road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for youth aged between 10 and 24 years. Of the 1.2 million people who lose their lives in road traffic crashes each year, almost a third of them are youth under the age of 25 years. More than 90% of these fatal crashes occur in low-income and middle-income countries. In these settings, road users most likely to be involved in a crash are pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, and passengers, while in high-income countries they are drivers. The cost of road crash injuries is estimated to be between 1% - 1.5% of the gross national product in low-income and middle-income countries, increasing to 2% in high-income countries. If no action is taken, road traffic deaths are predicted to escalate exponentially in the years ahead.

● ● ● Opening

Against this background, we, the youth of the world, the future leaders and hope for tomorrow, have gathered at the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety on 23-24 April 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. We have written and adopted this declaration to make every young man and woman in the world aware of the global problem of road traffic injuries, show our commitment to address the problem, and urge the world to take action to prevent road crashes. We can no longer accept that the lives of our friends and family members are senselessly destroyed on the road. Because road traffic injuries and deaths can be predicted and therefore prevented, the world has an obligation to stop them.

As potential victims of road traffic crashes, we, the youth of the world, stand up for ourselves and call for the right to travel safely on the world's roads. Being young road users ourselves, we know what is on the

minds of our peers, their likes and dislikes and the kind of messages that will reach them. Therefore, we need to be listened to when road safety initiatives are being developed and implemented.

● ● ● Our commitment

We, the young people of the world, have respect for our lives. Because life is so fragile, we have to do our best to live safely and encourage others to do the same. We realize that road safety has as much to do with a safe road environment as with safe driving behaviour. With respect to road safety in particular, we fully acknowledge the importance of youth involvement to make road safety a reality. We call for awareness among all youth on the high risks they run in becoming involved in road traffic crashes on the world's roads. We call upon all youth to serve as role models on the road and to promote road safety among their friends and families - particularly their younger brothers and sisters. Specifically, we ask all youth to never drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs, shun speeding, refrain from aggressive behaviour on the roads, use helmets when riding on motorcycles and bicycles, wear seat-belts when travelling in motor vehicles, and ensure that they are visible when walking or cycling on the roads. Furthermore, we call upon all youth to stand up and participate in local, national and international road safety campaigns and programmes. It is our responsibility as emerging young leaders to stand up and do our part in demanding our safety on the world's roads.

Our efforts alone do not suffice! We therefore must also call upon our parents and guardians, our schools and universities, the communities where we live, the policy-makers in government throughout the world, community-based organizations active in road safety, private sector companies, the media, celebrities and the entertainment sector, to take responsibility and work together with us.

● ● ● Parents and guardians

We, the youth of the world, remind our parents and guardians that our risk of dying on the road is very high. You are the ones we completely rely on when we are young. You are not only our parents and guardians, but you are also our heroes and our mentors. However, we call upon you to create a safe environment for us when we are on the road, and to serve as role models for safe road traffic behaviour. Teach the rules of the road and good road safety practice to our younger brothers and sisters and buckle them up in child restraints when you are driving. Teach us from a young age about our vulnerability as pedestrians and cyclists - encourage us to wear seat-belts, reflectors and helmets. Support us as we learn how to drive and provide supervision so that we can gain on-road driving experience under a range of conditions, including in the rain, at night and in traffic. We call upon you to help raise a generation of responsible road users.

● ● ● Educational institutions

We, the youth of the world, see educational institutions as very important. They give us the knowledge and skills which we need to live happy, healthy and productive lives. Hence, we request you, our school administrators and teachers to include road safety in our school curricula from an early age; to ensure that our surroundings and routes to school are safe; and to encourage the use of safe school buses. We call upon you to organize regular road safety activities at schools, and create opportunities for us to engage in road safety programmes. We further call upon university administrators to promote and develop courses and programmes on road safety and to conduct and publish more research on road traffic injury prevention.

● ● ● Community leaders

We, the youth of the world, appeal to community leaders to create safe communities for everyone. We believe that local authorities play a leading role in ensuring road safety and in supporting groups that promote road safety. We ask you not to forget the survivors of road traffic crashes but aim to provide better care and services for them and involve them in advocacy campaigns and other road safety initiatives. We also call upon you to encourage youth to be active in community road safety groups and initiatives. We call upon you, the owners and managers of bars, clubs and discos to serve alcohol responsibly.

● ● ● Policy-makers

We, the youth of the world, demand that governments acknowledge road traffic injuries as a major public health and development problem and place road safety higher on political agendas. We call upon you to take leadership in providing safety and quality in our road infrastructure. Therefore, we call upon you to ensure safe and affordable public transportation options that are accessible by all. We also urge you to create a national plan for road safety, and appoint a lead agency which has leaders responsible for its implementation and coordination. We demand you to enact and enforce road traffic laws, and boost your investment of financial resources to make safer roads. We urge that you provide affordable access to emergency health care and services for victims of road crashes. We further urge you to acknowledge the importance of the involvement of youth in road traffic policy-making and implementation and encourage partnerships with other jurisdictions and road safety organizations.