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C. PLAN OF ACTION ON ROAD SAFETY

Background

1. This report considers the progress made in road safety in the Region of the Americas from October 2011 to December 2014, following up on Resolution CD51.R6 of the 51st Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (1, 2).

Progress Report

2. This progress report is based on the Global status report on road safety (3) and includes additional information received from the country offices.

3. There has been an increase in the number of countries that have an agency responsible for coordinating measures to promote road safety. Since the establishment of the 25-country baseline, two additional countries (Colombia and Paraguay) have created a road safety agency in this period.

4. There has been an increase in the number of countries that have passed laws setting the blood alcohol limit for drivers at ≤ 0.05 g/dl (concentration of alcohol in the blood). The number of countries that have set this limit has risen from 10 to 15. Chile is one of the countries that have lowered the limit to a maximum of 0.03 g/dl.

5. Compared to the baseline, two countries (Mexico and Panama) have passed laws setting speed limits at ≤ 50 km/h in urban areas, while allowing local authorities to set lower limits.

6. Major progress has been observed in the countries as the result of new laws making seatbelt use compulsory for all passengers in vehicles: the baseline figure of 20 countries has risen to 32. Countries that have improved their laws include: Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela.

7. Progress has been made in terms of passing laws on compulsory helmet use for all motorcycle passengers: there are now 30 countries with such laws, compared to 12 on the 2011 baseline. Argentina, Bolivia, and Nicaragua are among those that have improved their laws.

8. Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay have improved their laws on the compulsory use of child restraint systems.

9. There have been improvements in national policies to promote safe public transportation in Argentina, Cuba, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay.

10. The 22 baseline countries that promoted pre-hospital care for victims of traffic injuries have now been joined by three more countries: El Salvador, Jamaica, and Peru, bringing the figure to 25.

11. No improvement was observed in the quality of data on traffic injuries. The Andean, Central American, and Southern Cone subregions have high percentages of deaths classified as “other or unspecified causes” (48%, 34%, and 20%, respectively). There is clearly an urgent need to improve the registry and classification of traffic-related deaths in these subregions.

12. Attention to user mobility and safety is not uniform across subregions; for example, only 14 countries have policies to create separate, safe spaces for cyclists as part of roadway infrastructure in certain cities.

13. No information is available in the PAHO database or in any other regional database to determine whether progress has been made on the technical inspection of the entire vehicle fleet.

14. The majority of the countries have programs to follow up on the provisions of laws related to risk factors and the use of protective equipment, but very few countries consider the level of implementation of these laws to be effective.

Action Necessary to Improve the Situation

15. It is again recommended that the countries establish advisory committees or national agencies to coordinate road safety, providing them with the necessary authority and resources to promote, implement, and ensure compliance with the approved road safety laws and measures (4).

16. The Member States should consider establishing a national surveillance system or strengthening the existing ones to improve the quality of data on: the groups and areas at greatest risk of road traffic injuries (4), vehicle fleet inspections, and implementation of legal frameworks, among others.

17. It is important that the Member States ensure that laws and regulations clearly establish how implementation, compliance, and monitoring will be ensured, and which entity is responsible (5).

Action by the Directing Council

18. The Directing Council is requested to take note of this progress report and to formulate the recommendations it deems relevant.

References

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