

Driving Change: Advancing Road Safety Across Africa in alignment with the Marrakech Declaration 2025

Five years on from Stockholm, the 4th Ministerial Conference on Road Safety took place in Marrakech, Morocco, in February this year. Ministers from 100 countries were there to endorse the Marrakech Declaration which calls on governments to prioritise road safety to achieve the goal set out in the United Nations Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, to halve the number of road deaths by 2030.



A staggering 1.19 million road traffic fatalities occur annually, according to the WHO's Global Road Safety Status Report (2023). From 2010 to 2021, deaths from road traffic crashes in Africa increased by 17 percent, which compares with a 5 percent decrease worldwide. Despite improvements in Europe, numbers continue to rise in low and middle-income

countries (LMICs). Nine out of 10 road deaths occur in LMICs placing a significant burden on health services which are already over-stretched. Road traffic fatalities are now the leading cause of death for individuals aged 5-29 years in sub-Saharan Africa, often affecting the most economically active individuals, further exacerbating household poverty.

In endorsing the Marrakech Declaration, governments committed themselves to making safety a primary concern in all transport related planning and policy development. The Declaration called for stronger collaboration across ministries, and between sectors and key stakeholders, with an emphasis on greener and more inclusive mobility. It emphasised the need to support active mobility and improve access to public transport, as well as enhance regional and international knowledge-sharing, technical support and technology transfer.

Transaid was proud to participate in the conference and remains committed to implementing activities to help achieve the 2030 targets. We continue to work with governments to improve professional driver training standards in sub-Saharan Africa backed up by sustainable capacity building packages to train more trainers. In 2024 Transaid announced the launch of a new Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) standard in Ghana, where we continue to support the rollout of the new standard with our partners at the Driver and

Vehicle Licensing Authority and with the help of our funding partner the Puma Energy Foundation.

The specialist truck and bus driver training institute in Uganda which we helped establish and continue to support, with our partner Safe Way Right Way, continues to provide refresher and new license acquisition driver training to hundreds of drivers each year. A growing proportion of trainees are women, and this institute is home to one of the best equipped training vehicle fleets and best skilled master training teams in the East African region.

More recently our work in Kenya on motorcycle safety reflects our commitment to fostering greater dialogue and collaboration between government agencies and cross-sector stakeholders. This approach is essential to addressing the growing proportion of road traffic deaths and serious injuries linked to the use of commercial motorcycles. Likewise, our support to the FIA Foundation's recent push for a pan-African call to action on helmet safety as part of the Safe African Helmet Initiative (SAHI), which provides a forum through which government and civil society representatives can share knowledge to reduce this unnecessary loss of life, is gaining traction. This involves a growing number of African countries, from five countries at our inaugural meeting in Kigali in December 2024, and now nine countries planning to participate in SAHI Nairobi in July this year.

The fact remains that political commitment is key to reducing this unacceptable loss of life. Transport is by its very nature highly politicised and often manipulated for political gains in ways which often run contrary to implementing improvements to road safety. Never more have we needed strong political leadership to drive the necessary change, combined with assurances that sufficient funding for road safety initiatives, particularly in LMICs, will be available to the agencies and organisations implementing impactful work on the ground.

Fostering collaboration between ministries challenges conventional ways of working in many of the countries that need collaboration most. Ministries responsible for health, transport, education, the environment, finance all have a stake in implementing solutions and therefore must find ways of working together.

As we enter the second half of the UN Decade of Action and take stock of how far there is to go, Transaid remains positive of achieving the global goals on road safety. We will continue to actively advocate for action on road safety, working with governments and the private sector to support them to fulfil their commitment to the Marrakech Declaration. We are committed to raising public awareness about the importance of road safety, promoting evidence-based initiatives to improve access to quality driver and rider training, and increasing availability of affordable, certified helmets and protective gear.



At the heart of our approach is meaningful engagement with and learning from communities - to ensure that our road safety programmes are relevant to context and designed for maximum impact, so that together we will reduce the loss of life on Africa's roads.