



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



UNITED NATIONS
The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety



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PRESS STATEMENT

Date: 10 May 2024

The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety is visiting South Africa (13-15 May) to launch the UN-JCDecaux campaign for road safety!

The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt, will visit South Africa from 13 to 15 May 2024 to support national and local authorities' road safety initiatives. In particular, the Special Envoy will launch the UN Global Campaign for Road Safety, in partnership with the No.1 outdoor advertising company worldwide, JCDecaux, under the hashtag #MakeASafetyStatement.

One of the main goals of this campaign is to raise awareness of life-saving actions among young generations, who as statistics show, are the major victims of road crashes especially for young people aged from 5 to 29 years old worldwide. Supporting the efforts of South Africa in addressing this issue is key in a country where more than 60% of the population is under 35 years old.

The launch events are to be held in Johannesburg and Pretoria with the Minister of Transport of South Africa, the Executive Mayors of Tshwane and Johannesburg.

Mr. Todt will meet members of the Government as well as representatives of the private and public sectors and NGOs to advocate for the effective implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, which aims to halve the number of road fatalities by 2030.

"Africa is the continent most affected by road crashes. Knowing that these affect the youngest first, it is beyond the human tragedy, an economic devastation sacrificing or invalidating for life the active force of a country. While the vaccine to avoid this carnage on the road exists, I urgently call on everyone to use it." -- United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt.

#MakeASafetyStatement

The launch in South Africa of the UN Global Campaign for Road Safety - #MakeASafetyStatement, in partnership with JCDecaux, is part of UN efforts to raise public awareness of life-saving initiatives on the road. By the end of 2025, the campaign will appear on billboards and in public places in 80 countries, thanks to a global partnership with JCDecaux. It will be broadcast in about 1,000 towns and cities in 30 languages.

The campaign has garnered support from international and national celebrities, inviting individuals to consider their driving behaviour, emphasizing the importance of small actions that can save lives, and promoting partnerships to combat this scourge. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to decrease the number of casualties caused by road accidents around the world.

Under the slogan #MakeASafetyStatement, the campaign brings together celebrities worldwide, including Naomi Campbell, Didier Drogba, Ousmane Dembélé, Faith Kipyegon, Novak Djokovic and Youssou N'Dour, to encourage users to adopt simple but effective rules to keep their roads safe.

Ten South Africa's celebrities are also involved such as Yvonne Chaka-Chaka, Bryoni Govender, Dr. Khumalo, Sello Maake Ka Ncube, Maduvha Madima, Leanne Manas, Dr. Moratwe Masima, Thokozani Ndaba, Gaisang Noge, and Caster Semenya.

“Human Factors contribute 88% to South African road fatalities and therefore the involvement of celebrities as role models for the Youth in the #MakeASafetyStatement campaign will contribute towards the reduction of accidents on our roads”, stresses Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga, Minister of Transport of the Republic of South Africa.

New alarming figures

This visit coincides with the recent release of the Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023 from the World Health Organization (WHO) on road safety, highlighting that Africa remains the region the most affected by this tragedy.

According to the new WHO report, the figures for victims on African roads continue to grow with a mortality rate of 19/100,000 people, while in Europe, we observe a rate of 7 deaths/100,000 people. In South Africa, there are 25 deaths per 100,000 people.

According to the World Bank (2016), the cost of road crashes represented 8.6% of South Africa's GDP in 2016. The RTMC 2023 State of Road safety Report highlights for 2023 the rate of 2.74% of South Africa 's GDP.

Reliable data for swift revitalization

Recent bus accidents have highlighted the run-down state of Africa's vehicle fleet. Failure to comply with the Highway Code and to enforce penalties are also significant causes of accidents.

The solutions to be implemented are strengthening the health services that treat the injured, adhering to the African Road Safety Charter and the United Nations Basic Conventions on Road Safety, including stepping up public awareness campaigns. Collecting reliable and systematic data on road accidents and monitoring casualties is also a key element in reducing the number of victims.

There is also a need to protect the most vulnerable road users, pedestrians, and cyclists, who are often the most disadvantaged and the youngest. Africa has the highest proportion of cyclist and pedestrian deaths, accounting for 44% of all road deaths.

In South Africa, the efforts of the authorities are to be commended, with new initiatives such as the implementation of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, Research various areas of Road Safety, the adoption of new technologies to enhance access to traffic licencing services (National Traffic Information System Online Services), the professionalisation of the Traffic and Road Safety Officers Training through the National Framework Level 6 Qualification), Standardisation and Harmonisation of Traffic Law Enforcement and the development of a National Traffic Law Enforcement Code.

Risk factors that are too often neglected

Drink-driving, speeding, drowsiness, carelessness, non-use of seatbelts and helmets, negligence and non-compliance with the Highway Code are responsible for most road accidents in Africa. However, according to the WHO, more progress must be made regarding legislation and safety standards.

Only six countries in the world have laws that comply with WHO best practices for all the risk factors - speeding, driving under the influence or distracted driving, use of UN-standard motorbike helmets, and use of seatbelts and child restraints.

In South Africa, speeding in urban areas is high (60KM/h), and child restraint systems are not always available. At a time when the use of motorbikes is on the increase, particularly among young people, the wearing of seatbelts and quality helmets remains a real challenge, even though it could prevent many deaths and reduce the risk of serious injury by 69%.

Recent data reveals that majority of road crashes occur at night from Friday until Sunday with Youth and in particular Pedestrians being the leading victims of road crashes.

About the Special Envoy

The former United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, appointed in 2015 Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety. He was reconfirmed in this role by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, in 2017 and in 2021. In 2018, together with 14 UN organizations, the Special Envoy launched the UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF). The Special Envoy contributes, among other things, to mobilize sustained political commitment to make road safety a priority; to advocate and raise awareness of UN legal instruments on road safety; to share established good practices in this area; to striving to generate adequate funding through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Special Envoy brochure and Twitter account.

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About JCDecaux

JCDecaux – a French family-owned company founded in 1964 and the No.1 outdoor advertising company worldwide – is committed to improve the quality of life for people wherever they live, work and travel by offering innovative, sustainable street furniture and services that are meeting citizens' expectations and financed by brands and their advertisement. With a presence in more than 80 countries, JCDecaux is the only company in the world to operate exclusively in the outdoor advertising sector and to develop all of its activities: street furniture, transport advertising and billboards. For almost 60 years, the products and services offered to cities by JCDecaux have been considered the benchmark for quality, aesthetics and functionality. As a sustainable media in contact with more than 850 million people every day and true to its mission of improving the quality of life for all citizens, JCDecaux enhances and promotes responsible outdoor advertising and places social and environmental quality at the core of its solutions and its business. Since 2023, JCDecaux is an official partner of the UN Joint SDG Fund, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across its Group.

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About the United Nations Global Campaign for Road Safety in partnership with JCDecaux

Under the motto #MakeaSafetyStatement, the campaign gathers celebrities to encourage road users to adopt simple and effective rules to stay safe on the road.

The first participating celebrities include:

- Naomi Campbell, supermodel
- Ousmane Dembélé, football icon
- Patrick Dempsey, actor
- Novak Djokovic, tennis legend
- Didier Drogba, football legend
- Michael Fassbender, actor
- Julie Gayet, actress
- Faith Kipyegon, Olympic champion
- Charles Leclerc, F1 driver
- Marc Márquez, motorcycle racer
- Kylie Minogue, musician
- Youssou N'Dour, musician
- Mick Schumacher, F1 driver
- Michelle Yeoh, Oscar-winning actress & UNDP Goodwill ambassador

They #MakeaSafetyStatement to:

- wear a seat belt
- drive slow
- wear a helmet
- not text and drive
- not drive under the influence
- not drive tired
- I respect pedestrians

and call on fans, followers and the public to adopt the same habits.



Note to editors:

The UN has invested heavily in road safety globally. Following the “Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020”, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in August 2020 for "Improving Road Safety", which reaffirmed its commitment to halve global road deaths and injuries and provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030. In July 2022, the road safety community met in New York for the first-ever high-level meeting on improving global road safety at the United Nations General Assembly, unanimously adopting a text entitled: “Political declaration of the high-level meeting level on improving global road safety”.

To galvanise cross-sectoral actions and increase the visibility of road safety, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jean Todt as Special Envoy for Road Safety in 2015. He was reconfirmed in this role by the new Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, in 2017 and 2021. In his role as Special Envoy for the UN, Mr Todt contributes, among other things, to mobilising political commitment supported to make road safety a priority; defending and publicising United Nations legal instruments on road safety; sharing established good practices in this area and strives to generate adequate funding through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sector.