World Health Organization

Geneva 14 March 2013 – Only **28 countries**, covering 7% of the world's population, have **comprehensive road safety laws** on all **five key risk factors**: drinking and driving, speeding, and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat-belts, and child restraints.

The pace of legislative change needs to rapidly accelerate if the number of deaths from road traffic crashes is to be substantially reduced, according to the *Global status report on road safety 2013: supporting a decade of action,* published today by the World Health Organization (WHO).

In 2010, there were 1.24 million deaths worldwide from road traffic crashes, roughly the same number as in 2007. The report shows that while 88 Member States were able to reduce the number of road traffic fatalities, that number increased in 87 countries.

Key to reducing road traffic mortality will be ensuring that as many Member States as possible have in place laws covering the five key risk factors listed above. The report highlights that:

- 59 countries, covering 39% of the world's population, have implemented an urban speed limit of 50 km/h or less and allow local authorities to further reduce these limits.
- 89 countries, covering 66% of the world's population, have a comprehensive drink-driving law, defined as a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit of 0.05 g/dl or less.
- 90 countries, covering 77% of the world's population, have motorcycle helmet laws which cover all riders on all roads with all engine types and have a motorcycle helmet standard.
- 111 countries, covering 69% of the world's population, have comprehensive seat-belt laws covering all occupants.
- 96 countries, covering 32% of the world's population, have a law requiring child restraints.
- The report also highlights that most countries – even some of the best performing in terms of the safety of their roads - indicate that enforcement of these laws is inadequate.

"Political will is needed at the highest level of government to ensure appropriate road safety legislation and stringent enforcement of laws by which we all need to abide," says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. "If this cannot be ensured, families and communities will

continue to grieve, and health systems will continue to bear the brunt of injury and disability due to road traffic crashes."

"The *Global status report on road safety 2013* serves as a strong warning to governments that more needs to be done to protect all those who use the roads," says Mr Michael R. Bloomberg, philanthropist and Mayor of New York City, whose foundation funded the report. "Road traffic fatalities and injuries are preventable. This report is an important next step in the effort to also keep pedestrians, cyclists and motorists safe on the world's roads. It demonstrates that progress is being made, but we still have a long way to go."

Several groups are particularly at risk of dying in a road traffic crash:

- 59% of those who are killed in road traffic crashes are between the ages of 15 and 44 years, and 77% are male.
- Pedestrians and cyclists constitute 27% of all road deaths. In some countries this figure is higher than 75%, demonstrating decades of neglect of the needs of these road users in current transport policies, in favour of motorized transport.
- The risk of dying as a result of a road traffic injury is highest in the WHO African Region at 24.1 per 100 000 population and lowest in the WHO European Region at 10.3 per 100 000 population.

The report is the second in a series analyzing to what extent countries are implementing a number of effective road safety measures. In addition to the five risk factors noted above, it highlights the importance of issues such as vehicle safety standards; road infrastructure inspections; policies on walking and cycling; and aspects of pre-hospital care systems. It also indicates if countries have a national strategy which sets measurable targets to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads.

The *Global status report on road safety 2013* presents information from 182 countries, accounting for almost 99% of the world's population or 6.8 billion people. It uses a standardized method that allows comparisons between countries to be made. In addition to the main narrative text, it offers one-page profiles for each participating country and a statistical annex.

"The Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 is a fantastic not-to-be-missed opportunity," says Dr Etienne Krug, Director of WHO's Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability. "With the *Global status report on road safety 2013* we have the information we need to track progress. We need now to join forces to ensure that the Decade of Action's goal of saving five million lives is realized."

Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, the Decade of Action is a historic opportunity for countries to stop and reverse the trend which – without action – has been predicted to lead to the loss of around 1.9 million lives on the roads each year by 2020. Launched on 11 May 2011 by governments across the world, the Decade of Action seeks to build road safety management capacity in countries; improve the safety of roads and vehicles; enhance the behaviour of all road users; and strengthen post-crash care. In the context of the Decade of Action, WHO supports efforts in these areas, in particular through the “Road Safety in 10 Countries (RS10) Project”, which in collaboration with partners provides technical guidance on legislation, enforcement, mass media campaigns, data collection and trauma care.