

## Within the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Global Road Safety Week

### Regional Workshop on

### *Streets for Life: Making Walking and Cycling Safe*

14 May 2025

### Concept Note

#### I. Background:

Road traffic deaths and injuries remain to be a significant global health and development challenge. In 2021, WHO estimated that 1.19 million people lost their lives due to road traffic crashes. Road traffic crashes are considered as the leading cause of death among children and youth aged 5 to 29 years. Two-thirds of road deaths occur among people of working age (18–59 years), causing significant health, social, and economic harm throughout society. Furthermore, more than one in every four deaths involves pedestrians and cyclists.<sup>1</sup>

The Eastern Mediterranean Region accounted for 11% of global road traffic deaths, at a rate of 16 deaths per 100,000 population<sup>2</sup>. Despite a decrease in the regional road traffic death rate from 18.3 in 2016 to 16.4 in 2021, the Eastern Mediterranean Region still has the second-highest road traffic death rate in the world, a rate shared with the South-East Asia Region, and following the African Region (19.4 per 100,000 population)<sup>2</sup>.

This indicates that efforts to improve road safety are working, but they fall far short of what is needed to meet the target of the [United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030](#), which aims to halve road-related deaths and injuries by 2030 as per UNGA resolution [74/299](#).

The United Nations General Assembly officially supported the establishment of a Global Road Safety Week in resolution [A/RES/60/5](#), aimed at improving global road safety. The resolution invited the United Nations Regional Commissions and the World Health Organization (WHO) to

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2023). Global status report on road safety 2023. World Health Organization. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/375016>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. (2024). Road safety in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: facts from the global status report on road safety 2023. World Health Organization. Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/379840>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

jointly organize the 1<sup>st</sup> United Nations Global Road Safety Week, providing a platform for global, regional, and particularly national and local activities to raise awareness of road safety issues<sup>3</sup>.

In line with this initiative, ESCWA has organized several events during the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> UN Global Road Safety Weeks.

## II. Regional Workshop entitled “Streets for Life: Making Walking and Cycling Safe”

The 8<sup>th</sup> UN Global Road Safety Week (8<sup>th</sup> UNGRSW) adopted the theme “Streets for Life.” The focus of the week is on making walking and cycling safe, offering an opportunity to spur action at national and local levels. The 8<sup>th</sup> UNGRSW will highlight concrete, specific interventions that can be implemented by various stakeholders including governments, international agencies, civil society, businesses, and schools.

These actions will help promote and facilitate a shift towards walking and cycling, which are healthier, greener, more sustainable, and economically advantageous modes of transport. This shift will also contribute, both directly and indirectly, to the attainment of numerous Sustainable Development Goals.

To mark the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Global Road Safety Week, ESCWA will organize a Regional Workshop on “Streets for Life: Making Walking and Cycling Safe”. The event will serve as a platform to share knowledge, best practices, and regional insights on non-motorized transport.

### i. Objectives:

The workshop aims to:

- Raise Awareness – Highlight pedestrian and cyclist risks and promote the UN Framework for Action on non-motorized transport safety.
- Showcase Best Practices – Present successful case studies from the Arab region on safe walking and cycling initiatives.
- Promote Safe Urban Planning – Introduce best practices and guidelines for walkable and bike-friendly cities.
- Enhance Multi-Sector Collaboration – Bring together policymakers, UN agencies, urban planners, and road safety experts, to advance non-motorized transport safety.
- Facilitate Regional Dialogue – Discuss challenges, opportunities, and solutions for improving pedestrian and cyclist safety in Arab cities.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://unece.org/background-2>

**ii. Participants:**

- UNDP, UN-Habitat, and the World Bank
- National focal points of the ESCWA Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory (AIRSO) project
- Representatives of NGOs working on road safety and sustainable transport in Lebanon
- Master's students in Road Safety Management at Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ)
- Students from the American University of Beirut (AUB) working on walkability and walking behavior projects

**iii. Venue:**

The regional workshop will be held at the UN House in Beirut on 14 May 2025.

**III. Contact Persons:**

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