## ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY: A TOTAL MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

At conference after conference statistics are tabled which confirm that things are not going well in road traffic safety. Reporting concentrates excessively on statistics and is at times so technical and distant from the human element and emotional dimension that the statistics seem

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A Joint Public - Private Responsibility!

A Comprehensive Appropriation!

to be an end unto themselves. But road traffic safety is not about statistics! It's about people and changing people's road use attitudes and behaviour. As such, it impacts on everyone and it covers a multitude of issues ranging from pedestrian traffic to motorized traffic to road use behaviour and attitudes and to technical standards.

If road traffic safety touches everybody's lives in a potentially wide-ranging way, then surely should everybody not also be involved in setting policy goals and translating these into tangible action and strategy that really makes a real difference at grassroot level?

Virtually everybody would say yes! Yet, in spite of this recognition and all the good intentions and efforts of governments things are not improving, particularly in developing countries. Most of these countries persist in leaving decision making to elite academically-driven institutions which are detached from the general public act and, at times, keep them at bay from decision making. This means that decision makers very seldom have the complete picture of what is needed and how to best respond. Programmes are therefore seldom spot-on.

Changing the statistics first requires changing culture, attitudes and mindsets. To do so, requires a new approach anchored in an environment receptive and conducive to improved service delivery. But what must this environment look like?

The proposal for a new approach put forward in this paper merely confirms conventional wisdom. It is not earth-shattering in nature but based on common sense. It confirms that everybody should be part of decision making and should appropriate institutions and processes and that decision makers must have the full picture at all times in order to take effective decisions. It also acknowledges that involving everyone and ensuring that every relevant issue is considered before taking a decision can be cumbersome and complex. The approach therefore also calls for an institutional response conducive

to supporting and accommodating the new approach.

Accordingly, this paper is structured as follows: in Part 2 a cursory overview is provided of inherent weaknesses in current approaches; in Part 3 the salient features of a new approach are outlined; Part 4 contains a proposed institutional response to accommodate the new approach; and Part 5 contains final remarks.

#### 2. SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT APPROACHES

A cursory scan of the position in some African countries shows that they have generally been active in the area of road traffic safety, although in differing degrees, even in spite of fairly prevalent funding shortages in some cases.

South Africa is currently planning to implement bold reforms by way of the establishment of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) established in terms of Act 20 of 1999. The RTMC is an arms-length independent statutory partnership between national, provincial and local government and the business sector with a view to entrenching co-operative government in respect of road traffic in general and road traffic safety in particular.

Virtually every country has road traffic safetyrelated legislation in place. Most of them have

statutory institutions dedicated to road traffic safety in the form of either councils or boards. Road traffic safety-related research abounds. There are numerous examples of published strategies and national plans. There is a multitude of specially designed programmes.

All these initiatives viewed in isolation seem to make sense and appear technically sound. Yet, most countries are low on sufficient impact as far as road deaths and serious injury and user behaviour improvements are concerned. This can be pulled through to a number of inherent weaknesses in institutional environment.

Road accident fatalities in Africa went up by over 350 percent from 1968 to 1990..... Along with human suffering, road accidents have economic costs equivalent to approximately 2 percent of GNP for developing countries.

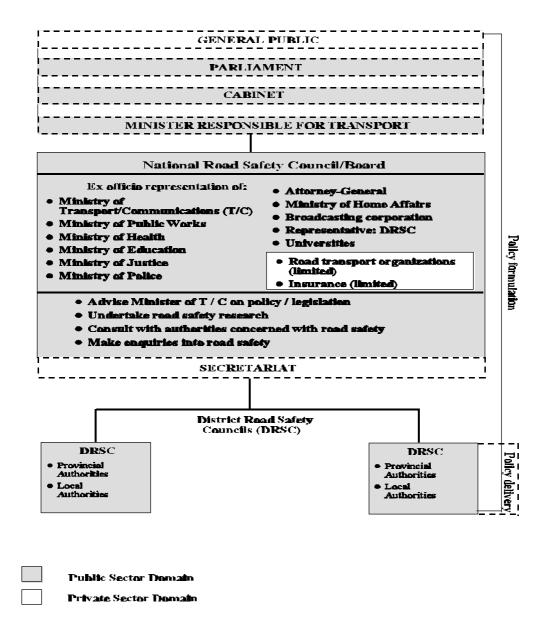
Dhliwayo M.E "A review of the road safety situation in Africa" Third African Road Safety Congress Pretoria South Africa, April 1997

Examples of such weaknesses include the following:

The general public is not adequately involved in setting goals and mandates. The general public does not have a sustainable role in setting goals. General public input to the preparation of legislative mandates is very limited. The process is generally dictated by public sector inputs and a top-down approach is predominantly followed.

Legislation is not sufficiently goal-oriented. Generally, the objects of the statutory institutions are defined in broad, vague terms, for example, to "promote road safety". Failure to clearly define the Parliamentary vision results in most institutions lacking sufficient direction, which filters through to unfocussed road traffic safety programmes. Legislation should be drafted to be more goal-oriented. This, for example, is the general trend in roads legislation where maintenance objectives are expressly defined. All roads-related institutions, mechanisms and processes are geared to translating the maintenance objectives into service delivery. If this can be done for roads why can it not also be done for road traffic safety?

Figure 1 illustrates the generalized current institutional framework.



#### FIGURE 1:

Institutional frameworks focus primarily on policy formulation. Institutional frameworks are generally not designed from a service delivery angle. The emphasis is on policy formulation and not on policy direction and delivery. As such, they do not provide adequate mechanisms to ensure sustainable stakeholder involvement in policy delivery and review processes. Furthermore, since the legislation is generally not goal-oriented, current councils/boards tend to concentrate on developing broad goals and objectives which distracts them from concentrating on interpreting policy and translating it into appropriate programmes.

**Stakeholder representation is inadequate**. All councils / boards fail to represent a sufficiently broad range of public and private stakeholder interests. Most are majority public-sector bodies with representatives from the national ministries of transport, communications, public works, education, health, home affairs and police, with the exception of the Zimbabwean Traffic Safety Board and the Zambian National Road Safety Council. Universities are generally well represented. Private sector

representation is usually confined to representatives of the insurance and motor transport industries. Users are generally not represented at all.

**Stakeholder representation is not sufficiently high-profile**. Membership of current councils/boards is predominantly limited to civil servants who represent Ministers *ex officio* and academics who are supposed to represent the general public. Neither of these groups has sufficient political and business credibility to be able to garner the human and financial resources required to make a difference on the ground.

**Stakeholder co-ordination is weak**. Current approaches provide very few sustainable mechanisms to co-ordinate the functioning of the few stakeholders that are involved. Developments are coincidental and are very often driven by particular individuals who have a desire to make an impact. Very often, it is not possible for these individuals to "beat" the system on a sustainable basis.

The income base is very narrow. Failure to involve the private sector reduces the chances of accessing private sector funds. Reliance therefore has to be placed almost exclusively on public funding which is never enough. Private funds which, with some focussed effort could be channelled to road traffic safety, are currently going to sports and, to a lesser degree, culture, only because those sectors are making the effort to involve the private sector more meaningfully in decision making.

**Decision-makers do not have the full picture when taking decisions**. Decisions are often limited to a particular focus which is relevant at a particular point in time, without considering the impact of the total picture. There is a tendency to overreact in times of crisis. Public pressure creates panic with authorities. Over time, Governments have developed predictable menus of 'quick-fix' short-to-medium term reactive measures to soothe public outcry. These measures include, for example -

- constructing new or upgrading existing road infrastructure;
- < amending and improving road traffic and related legislation;
- < intensifying law enforcement;
- < reducing speed limits;
- < boosting roadworthiness and driver behaviour campaigns;
- < strictly regulating maximum driving hours;
- < prescribing compulsory installation of automatic equipment to monitor speed and driving hours;</p>
- reviewing regulatory standards relating to drivers and professional drivers;
- < intensifying driver training programmes; and
- < intensifying communication and education programmes.

Whilst these measures may be technically relevant in a given situation, they generally do not lead to sustainable improvements in user behaviour.

**Programming does not respond adequately to needs**. Inadequate user participation and weak co-ordination amongst stakeholders in policy delivery processes, weakens the needs assessment process. Needs are assessed at a level too remote from the level where impact is required. As a result, programmes often do not respond spot-on to needs.

**Private sector involvement in service delivery is virtually non-existent.** Service delivery is predominantly driven at the central level by elitist narrowly-focussed institutions in which the general public has little or no say. These institutions decide what the needs are, how these must be addressed and who must deliver services. The private sector is seldom involved in actually

delivering services. There are some examples of outsourcing service delivery to the private sector but these are generally limited to education / awareness campaigns. As such, the potentially beneficial role of the private sector is still overlooked.

Impact monitoring is inadequate. Current legislation generally does not provide for implementation of clear monitoring mechanisms. There is no system by which everyone checks up on everyone else. For example, some countries do not even provide for basics such as submitting annual reports to Parliament. Monitoring is generally co-incidental and sporadic. For example, feedback to the general public on road traffic safety conditions usually only occurs during and at the end of a festive season such as Christmas and Easter. At these times, we are provided with statistics that usually end up telling us that more people died than in the previous year over the same period. Little information is provided in between as to whether there are behavioural attributional changes underway, what are the lessons learnt and what should be done to accelerate or improve the pace of change. Furthermore, where any road traffic related data exists, this is often unreliable.

Mechanisms to reinforce accountability and transparency are inadequate. Because very few of us are checking up on anybody else, there is ample opportunity for mismanagement. Legislation also does not entrench clear mechanisms to support accountability or transparency. This feeds into an overall perception that there is a

Corruption is a widespread problem that also affects road safety. Nothing much is possible in a corrupt system, and corruption is difficult to root out - especially with poor management.

Assum T "Road safety in Africa: appraisal of road safety initiatives in five African countries" World Bank SSATP Working Paper No 33 1998

"free-for-all" at the level of governance and management of road traffic safety.

If leadership in governance and management of road traffic safety is lacking, how can road users be inspired to be accountable and responsible for their own actions?

## 3. A PROPOSED NEW APPROACH

This is a time for leadership and vision. We need to create new enabling environments which hinge on:

- < first: enhancing general public appropriation and providing clear mandates;
- < second: **expanding general public participation** in real decision-making by:
  - C involving high profile members of the public sector and business; and
  - C targeting service delivery at the level closest to where impact must be felt; and
- < third: entrenching inclusive and effective **monitoring**.

## 3.1 General public appropriation and mandate

The **general public** must be involved in the full cycle of activities to ensure that its needs are captured in legislative mandates and that mandates are translated into practical service delivery. The general public's first involvement is in setting goals and developing mandates. This entails entering into consultations that lead to the drafting of the legislation. There are numerous innovative ways to do so, for example through public competitions, radio and television phoneins, community meetings, interactive websites, interviews and the completion of questionnaires.

Once draft legislation has been prepared, it should be published for general comment and public input should be taken into account. Significant deviations from public input should be debated with those making the input and they should be notified of final decisions which deviate from such input.

**Parliament** provides the ultimate overall legislative mandate and must approve the enabling legislation which entrenches the new approach. The legislation must be goal-oriented and capture the goals and objectives which best respond to the needs of the general public as expressed through the input of the general public to the policy formulation process.

After promulgation of the legislation, the general public still has an interest in ensuring that the Parliamentary mandate remains valid and conducive to meeting needs. The general public is therefore free at any time to propose a revision or sharpening up of the mandate. The general public is free to access the policy formulation process at any time and at any point of entry, for example, through a member of Parliament or through a petition to a particular Minister or any technical official. Once again, this process could also be facilitated by canvassing public opinion through innovative means such as those referred to earlier.

**Cabinet's** role is to translate the Parliamentary mandate from a Government / political perspective and to provide broad policy guidance to individual ministries through Cabinet guidelines to ensure that further implementation is needs-oriented.

The **Minister responsible for transport** is responsible for further refinement and interpretation of the Parliamentary mandate and Cabinet guidelines in order to facilitate further implementation and service delivery. As such, the Minister exercises this function interactively with the general public, Parliament and Cabinet. The Minister must canvass the opinion of the general public through ongoing interaction. The new institutional approach does not replace but supplements the general public's democratic right of access to the Minister.

## 3.2 Expanding general public participation in real decision-making

Elevating profile, role and status of road traffic safety through involvement of high profile members of the public sector and business

High-profile politicians and captains of industry must pull together as equals in a group of "wise persons" and use their influence, status, authority, credibility and expertise to co-manage road traffic safety, unleash human and financial resources and put these at the disposal of communities so that such communities will do what needs to be done (In **Figure 2** below it is proposed that the group of "wise persons" be institutionally organized as a statutory board).

The high-profile politicians will bring to the partnership their authority to create enabling environments, to de-burden regulatory systems and to stimulate conditions for technology transfer and innovation, but they often lack funds and skills to apply new technologies efficiently. The captains of industry, in turn, bring business acumen and skills, access to pools of expertise and funds and capacity to sustain implementation at levels where impact is required.

## Co-management will entail:

- < ensuring more effective strategic planning through, for example, the development of a national road traffic safety strategy detailing what needs to be done and who is best suited to do it given the available funds; and
- very broadening the income base through exploitation of new and creative funding sources other than public funding and generating a more stable flow of funds for road traffic safety. Co-ordination among politicians will ensure a consolidated flow of funds from the National Treasury, while the private sector will be encouraged to allocate more grants, donations or pledges for road traffic safety. Many private sector industries for example, the insurance and alcohol industries dispose over large amounts of money which are often earmarked for sports and culture. These industries are reluctant to allocate similar levels of funds for road traffic safety probably because they are not meaningfully involved in decision-making and the benefits of such involvement are therefore not clear to them.

The proposed board whilst bringing status, influence, authority and credibility to the table is still too removed from the level at which service delivery must be executed and will not have the time to become sufficiently intimately involved at this level. Therefore in order to ensure that strategic plans respond to the real needs of communities, they will have to be assisted by users and service providers.

The proposed board will have to advise the Minister responsible for transport to invite representatives of users and categories of services providers to serve on a statutory representative body (For example, see the proposed service delivery committee - or SDC - in **Figure 2** below).

The proposed SDC's primary role is to open up and co-ordinate service delivery at the lowest possible level. The SDC as such will not be delivering services. Their task is to ensure that as many accredited service providers as possible enter the service delivery market (see discussion on **accreditation** below). Their mindset should be to open up and release opportunities at community level.

The proposed SDC will assist the proposed board to keep a finger on the pulse on what community needs are and what appropriate responses should be. At the same time, the proposed SDC must also keep users and service providers sensitized as to the realities of the overall picture which will be conveyed to them interactively by the proposed board. The strength of this interaction will lie in the cross-pollination of ideas. The interactive output coupled with service providers' willingness to get things done, will be powerful driving forces toward effective service delivery.

## Targeting service delivery at the level closest to where impact must be felt

Selecting appropriate service providers: accreditation

As indicated earlier, the SDC will not actually deliver services but merely co-ordinate service delivery. Essentially, any service provider who can demonstrate impact should have access to opportunities to deliver road traffic safety-related services. But only service providers who can demonstrate real impact through service delivery which adequately targets user needs at impact level should be involved. To ensure this, there is a need for quality control or pre-qualification by way of accreditation.

This calls for introduction of an accreditation procedure which is impartial, fair and devoid of red tape. Such a procedure would entail that any service provider interested in delivering road traffic safety-related services may apply to an accrediting body (preferably the Minister responsible for transport) to obtain an approval which confirms that:

- such service provider is suitable to provide a specified type of service(s) country-wide or in particular locations over a specified period of time; and
- continued involvement by such service provider will remain accredited for as long as service delivery meets negotiated performance targets.

The accrediting body executes its function on a non-discretionary basis. It must only verify that an applicant meets certain pre-determined standards. If standards are complied with, the accrediting body **must** accredit the applicant in writing. An unsuccessful applicant will be able to appeal. The Ministry responsible for transport must periodically submit to the proposed board lists of the accredited service providers and notify them of any cancellations in accreditation.

Appropriately focussed programmes

If impact is to be felt at community level, then programmes must effectively target:

- the users or groups of users who have a particular need and there must be a clear understanding of who the users are. For example, this will entail consideration of social/ demographic factors such as age group, culture, language, vocation, gender, ability differentiation and levels of literacy;
- < the **spatial areas** in which such users are located, for example, a suburb, municipal area, regional areas, province or development corridor; and
- < the actual needs, such as those relating to pedestrians in rural areas; transportation of farm labourers; drunken driving; speeding; overloading control; cellphone usage; seat-belt usage; etc.</p>

Accredited service providers must be free to pro-actively design creative and innovative programmes and apply for funding to implement them from the proposed SDC. The proposed SDC should also be able to prompt service providers to design needs-based programmes where such a need exists.

In designing such programmes, categories of service providers may voluntarily associate or be encouraged to associate by the proposed SDC in any combination or permutation which best suits service delivery. For example, the trucking industry active in a particular development corridor could partner road managers, law enforcers, vehicle manufacturers and the insurance industry to implement a vehicle overloading awareness and enforcement campaign. Route management groups as contemplated in Article 5.6 of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology could qualify as service providers.

The proposed SDC must consider the appropriateness and validity of any proposal submitted to it and, in this regard, pay particular attention to for example:

- < eliminating duplication in service delivery;
- < promoting economies of scale;
- < ensuring that design responds to particular cultural, language and spatial needs; and
- < ensuring that the service provider has the ability and the capacity to make an impact and provide value for money.

After applying its mind, the proposed SDC must recommend to the proposed board:

- < to approve a programme unconditionally;
- < to approve a programme subject to specified conditions; or
- < to reject a programme.

The implication of a programme being approved is that the service provider who submits the proposal will receive funding from the pooled public-private funds to deliver the approved service.

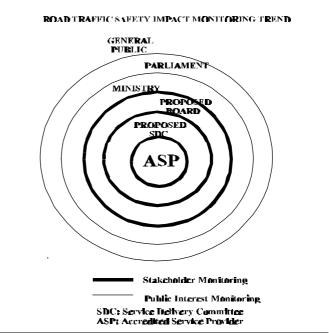
The proposed board's decision must be reduced to writing and the service providers concerned must be notified of such decision. Unsuccessful service providers will have an opportunity to lodge appeals against unfavourable decisions.

Successful service providers will be required to conclude contracts with the proposed board or their delegatee (which would probably be the proposed chief executive officer. See **Figure 2** below). The contracts should attribute to the service provider the highest possible level of executive freedom. For example, the service provider should be free to procure goods or services from any source and to subcontract. The contracts should also, for example, set out performance targets and modalities concerning funding and the nature, frequency and format of data submission.

If a service provider fails to meet contractual performance targets, the proposed SDC must notify the proposed board who would then decide whether to suspend or cancel the contract. In the case of cancellation, the Minister responsible for transport would be requested to withdraw accreditation. Service providers whose accreditation is withdrawn could be blacklisted and prevented from providing road traffic safety services permanently or for specified periods of time. To this end, the Minister would be tasked to develop and maintain an appropriate register of blacklisted service providers.

Implementation is premised on the following:

- < all stakeholders at all levels must be included in the monitoring process;
- everybody must be in a position to monitor everybody else;
- the output of everyone's monitoring activity must be fed to decision makers at appropriate levels so that it can be used to inform further decision making; and
- the optional use of innovative monitoring mechanisms which promote comparability of information must be pursued.



## Overall public interest monitoring

The **general public** continuously monitors activities at all levels to ensure that needs are captured in mandates and met at service delivery levels. For example, the general public can monitor how Parliament develops and puts into place the mandate by being involved in the process of legislative development and subsequent revision, for example, through participation in workshops, consultations and pro-active submission of comments to the Ministry on published draft legislation. The general public also monitors Cabinet's and individual Ministries' interpretation of the mandate and the translation of Cabinet and Ministerial guidelines or directives by the proposed board and proposed SDC. Complaints procedures, petitions and submission of information to the media could all serve as channels for inputs in this regard. The general public's perception of the effectiveness of road traffic safety services is also a valuable monitoring tool and may be tapped through, for example, user participation in the proposed SDC, organized user conferences, snap telephone surveys or call-ins and interactive websites which invite members of the public to comment or provide inputs as well as the use of questionnaires and interviews.

**Parliament** constantly monitors how Cabinet and the responsible Minister give effect to their mandate. Apart from constitutional mechanisms such as compulsory Ministerial participation in Parliamentary debates, Parliament's monitoring role is facilitated through submission of an annual report from the proposed board which provides a comprehensive overview of the state of road traffic safety as well as any independent performance audit report submitted by the Auditor-General.

**Cabinet** monitors the Minister responsible for transport to determine whether he or she is giving full effect to the mandate through periodic Ministerial inputs to Cabinet.

## Stakeholder monitoring

The **Minister responsible for transport** monitors the proposed board through its submission of annual or periodic reports. The Minister is empowered to request performance-related information from the proposed board. The Minister may provide guidelines or directives on the financial controls to be applied by the proposed board and is also empowered to conduct external audits.

The **proposed board** needs to monitor overall levels of road traffic safety and service delivery. They too should have the power to request information or initiate an independent audit in respect of the proposed SDC or any accredited service provider. The proposed board may also undertake independent audits or surveys to canvas user satisfaction and perceptions as an input to its strategic planning activity.

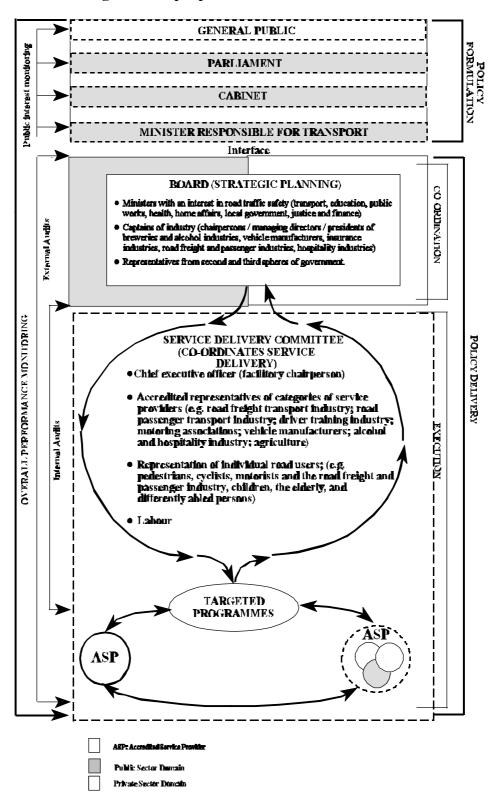
The **proposed SDC** monitors the proposed board through feedback provided by the chief executive officer and through, for example, a mechanism to compel the proposed board to give reasons where it rejects a service delivery-related recommendation of the proposed SDC.

At service delivery level, **peer monitoring** is a powerful tool. This entails service providers with similar backgrounds and business goals checking up on each other's performance. The proposed SDC monitors service providers through periodic on-site inspections and the submission of periodic reports. The proposed SDC must develop guidelines on the nature, types and level of data to be submitted or gathered from service providers and reporting formats and these may be incorporated in service delivery contacts. The proposed SDC must also monitor user satisfaction and may, subject to approval of the proposed board, conduct independent audits or surveys. The proposed SDC will develop and manage an appropriate database incorporating information received from users and service providers.

In terms of the new approach, **service providers** must also be encouraged to undertake peer and impact monitoring through the exchange of information on an informal basis.

## 4. A PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Figure 2 illustrates at a glance the proposed new institutional framework



#### **Institutional Pointers**

## The new agency

The best way to institutionalize the new approach discussed in Part 3 above is through the creation of a financially independent but accountable agency at arms-length of Government which comprises of:

- < a predominantly high-profile private sector board;
- < a service delivery committee (SDC) representing users and categories of service providers accredited by the Ministry responsible for transport; and
- a chief executive officer who is adequately skilled in management, financing and road traffic safety matters appointed in terms of a performance contract.

#### **Board**

The board serves as the interface between Government and service providers. It should preferably have a majority private sector membership and a private sector chairperson and comprise:

- < Ministers with an interest in road traffic safety (such as transport, education, public works, health, home affairs, local government, justice, police and finance);
- < captains of industry (such as chairpersons / managing directors / presidents of breweries and alcohol industries, vehicle manufacturers, insurance industries, road freight and passenger industries, hospitality industries); and
- representatives from second and third spheres of government.

The board must appoint a chief executive officer, who should be supported by a small Secretariat possibly funded by the private sector, to deal with day-to-day administrative matters. The board must hold regular meetings, but will be free to define its own meeting procedures.

Service Delivery Committee (SDC)

The SDC is established to serve as the operational engine room and consolidate service delivery. The SDC comprises:

- < the chief executive officer as facilitatory chairperson;
- representatives of categories of service providers accredited as such by the Ministry responsible for transport which could include:
  - , the road freight transport industry;
  - , the road passenger transport industry;
  - , the driver training industry;
  - , motoring associations;
  - , vehicle manufacturers;
  - , the alcohol and hospitality industry;
  - , the insurance industry;
  - , road managers;
  - , vehicle manufacturers;
  - the media:
  - , the education sector;

- , the agricultural sector;
- , the medical and healthcare profession;
- , the emergency services sector;
- , local authorities; and
- , any other sector with a demonstrated interest in and innovative approach to road traffic safety;
- < appropriate representation of individual road users; e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and the road freight and passenger industry, as well as special interests such as those of children, the elderly, and differently abled persons; and
- < labour.

The SDC should maintain a high degree of operational flexibility and should be empowered to organize itself in the manner it best sees fit through, for example, the establishment of issue- or geographically-based sub committees.

#### Chief executive officer

The chief executive officer is appointed by the board in terms of a performance contract and must be skilled in management, financing and road traffic safety matters. The chief executive officer will be responsible for the day-to-day administration relating to the board and will serve as accounting officer of pooled public-private funds. He or she also facilitates discussions at SDC meetings as chairperson.

#### 5. A FINAL REMINDER

If we want to turn the statistics around, comprehensive holistic road traffic safety reforms will have to be adopted and implemented urgently. Getting to effective implementation requires as a first step putting into place enabling legislative

In 1990 road traffic accidents were rated ninth in the top ten causes of death and disability in the world. By 2020, it is predicted that they will be rated third.

Harvard School Of Public Health Projections

frameworks which provide the right balance of empowerments, guidelines and directive provisions. In the meantime, however, nothing prevents existing statutory institutions (road traffic safety councils / boards) from drawing in stakeholders more meaningfully into service delivery and establishing "shadow" SDCs on a voluntary basis which could serve as the unofficial predecessors of the proposed statutory SDCs.

In conclusion, our challenge is:

- description of the control of the
- < to implement a holistic road traffic safety management approach which integrates general public participation and enables informed decision making against the background of the full picture of road traffic safety in support of effective delivery to change road use culture!
- to establish a responsive and streamlined institutional framework in order to implement a holistic road traffic safety management approach!
- to catalyse stakeholder buy-in!

How are we going to respond to this challenge?

# ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY: A TOTAL MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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