

## **U.S. Explanation of Position on the 2020 Stockholm Declaration Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety**

### ***U.S. Position on the Stockholm Declaration***

The United States joins other countries in echoing the importance of achieving improved global road safety. While the United States supports many of the objectives outlined in the declaration, we find it necessary to dissociate ourselves from certain paragraphs that, in our view, muddle our focus and detract attention from data driven scientific policies and programs that have successfully reduced fatalities on roadways. Specifically, the United States dissociates itself from preambular paragraphs (PP)7 and 8 that references climate change, gender equality, reduced inequalities, responsible consumption and production as these issues are not directly related to road safety. We also dissociate ourselves from PP9 because of its recognition of a limited number of regional initiatives.

Additionally, we dissociate ourselves from PP10 which states that the Voluntary Global Road Safety Performance Targets and indicators were “approved” by all WHO Member States. We do not encourage adoption of the targets and indicators, as last year’s meeting to discuss the indicators was unable to reach consensus. Further, we dissociate ourselves from references throughout the document to UN legal instruments that are regional in nature and we are not a party to, as well as technical standards and regulations that may be inconsistent with WTO agreements.

In addition, we take this opportunity – as we have done on other occasions – to make important points of clarification regarding language related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We underscore that the 2030 Agenda is non-binding and does not create or affect rights or obligations under international law, nor does it create any new financial commitments.

The United States recognizes that the 2030 Agenda can help countries work toward global peace and prosperity. We applaud the call in the 2030 Agenda for shared responsibility, including national responsibility, and emphasize that all countries have a role to play in achieving its vision. The 2030 Agenda also recognizes that each country must work toward implementation in accordance with its own national policies and priorities.

## *U.S. Record on Road Safety*

The United States is committed to improving global road safety and is leading by example. In the past 50 years, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicles miles traveled (VMT) has decreased by 76 percent. This represents a 31 percent decrease in total crash fatalities. In addition, the percentage of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities declined from nearly 50% of all fatalities in 1982 to less than 30% in 2018. Seat belt use has increased to about 90% nationwide.

Our success is the result of a concentrated effort to focus specifically on road safety issues through data, technology and education. U.S. regulatory policies and road safety measures begin with data. We collect safety data that helps all stakeholders better identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. Data drives our research, rulemakings, enforcement activities, and public education campaigns.

Through the adoption of improved vehicle safety features and other lifesaving technologies such as air bags and electronic stability control, and now advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) such as automatic emergency braking and lane keeping assistance, new vehicles have become much safer. Recent data indicates that vehicle occupants have a significantly greater chance of surviving a serious crash if they are in a newer vehicle than in an older one. These technological improvements to vehicle safety are the combined result of the U.S. government's safety standards and the voluntary investments that automakers have made in response to consumer demand for enhanced safety.

While we are pleased that fatalities on our nation's roadways have significantly fallen, much remains to be done. We must remember that 36,560 people were killed in traffic crashes in the United States 2018 and nearly three million adults and children were injured. Traffic crashes are not only a transportation challenge for our nation, but also a grave public health problem and a significant economic issue. The annual economic cost of motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. remains over \$240 billion.

Our research indicates that human error and behavioral factors, such as driving while impaired by drugs, and/or alcohol, failing to wear seatbelts, driving while distracted, and speeding are among the most consequential crash factors. To reduce the risk of crashes and their resulting injuries and deaths, the United States will

continue to work closely with our state and local partners to implement evidence-based public education and targeted awareness campaigns.

In addition, we are continuing research to better understand the relationship between roadway design, traffic volumes, speed, and crash outcomes. The United States is focused on improving road safety especially for pedestrians and bicyclists through infrastructure design.

Further, our country is on the verge of one of the most exciting and important innovations in transportation history—the development of Automated Driving Systems (ADSs), commonly referred to as automated or self-driving vehicles. This new technology can lead to a future in which vehicles increasingly help drivers avoid crashes. And, especially important, it's a future in which highway fatalities and injuries are significantly reduced.

The United States is committed to working with other international partners on the development of data driven policies and new technologies to improve road safety and encourages other countries to refocus their efforts on a targeted set of specific road safety initiatives to meet the 2030 Agenda.