



African Road Safety Conference
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Vienna Conventions
on Road Traffic
and on
Road Signs and Signals:

**Benefits and responsibilities of
African countries**

Why an international approach?

- Road safety is a global problem. Over 1 million people are killed and up to 50 million are injured in road accidents every year.
- Over 75 per cent of the casualties occur in developing or transition countries.
- Economic losses caused by road accidents amount to \$500 billion worldwide.

Economic benefits of road safety

Apart from the money saved by reduced fatalities and injuries, road safety can also help to:

- Enhance international trade
- Facilitate international road transport
- Encourage international tourism
- Lead to improved infrastructure and encourage foreign direct investment

Only one of the solutions

Conventions are not a panacea. They are one of the solutions and verification of implementation is important. Other key components include:

- Identifying the extent of the problem
- Strong political support
- Enforcement

UN General Assembly Resolution A/60/5 (2005)

Improving Global Road Safety:

“... Encourages Member States to adhere to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and Convention on Road Signs and Signals, in order to ensure a high level of road safety in their countries, and also encourages them to strive to reduce road traffic injuries and mortality in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals ...”

Meet targets

- African Ministers have agreed to reduce by half the rate of accident fatalities by 2015
- Asia and the Pacific countries will reduce by 20 per cent the road fatality and injury rates from 2007 to 2015

UN General Assembly Resolution A/60/5 (2005)

Improving Global Road Safety:

“... Stresses the importance of the improvement in the international legal road traffic safety norms, and welcomes in this regard the work of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety of the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe in the elaboration of a substantial package of amendments to the 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals...”

UN General Assembly Resolution A/60/5 (2005)

Adopted by consensus without a vote

African sponsors of that resolution:

Algeria, Gambia, Morocco, South
Africa, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea-
Bissau, Libya, Madagascar, Nigeria,
Senegal, Sudan, Zambia

Developments in other regions

- The Vienna Conventions are also being promoted for the development of trade, tourism and transport
- Regional or subregional initiatives by Development Banks
- UNESCAP Resolution (98/11)

United Nations legal instruments for road safety

- 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic and Protocol on Road Signs and Signals
- 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic
- 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals

Other United Nations legal instruments for road safety

- 1971 European Agreements supplementing the Vienna Conventions
- Agreement on Road Markings
- Agreement on Minimum Requirements for the Issue and Validity of Driving Permits (APC)

1949 Convention on Road Traffic and Protocol on Road Signs and Signals

- Global Convention
- 92 Contracting Parties
- 23 African countries: Algeria, 1963, Benin, 1961, Botswana, 1967, Central African Republic, 1962, Congo, 1962, Democratic Republic of Congo, 1961, Egypt, 1957, Ghana, 1957, Lesotho, 1973, Madagascar, 1962, Malawi, 1965, Mali, 1962, Morocco, 1956, Namibia, 1993, Niger, 1961, Rwanda, 1964, Senegal, 1962, Sierra Leone, 1962, South Africa, 1952, Togo, 1962, Tunisia, 1957, Uganda, 1965, Zimbabwe, 1998

1968 Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals

- Global conventions covering every region of the world
- Road Traffic - 65 Contracting Parties
- Signs and Signals - 54 Contracting Parties
- Ghana (22 Aug 1969) is a signatory to both Conventions but never ratified them so it is not a Contracting Party
- 11 ECA member countries are Contracting Parties: Central African Republic (1988) (both), Côte d'Ivoire (1985) (both), Democratic Republic of Congo (1977) (both), Liberia (2006) (both) Morocco (1982) (both), Niger (1975), Senegal (1972) (both), Seychelles (1977) (both), South Africa (1977), Tunisia (2004) (both), Zimbabwe (1981)

Why the 1968 Conventions?

- More modern than the 1949 Convention and more relevant to today's traffic conditions
- Undergo constant revision by a Working Party in Geneva to keep them up to date and relevant
- Replace the 1949 Convention for States which have acceded to them
- The 1949 Convention still applies between countries which have only acceded to the 1949 Convention

Responsibilities of Contracting Parties

- Ensure that rules of the road are in force – may go further
- Ensure minimum technical requirements of vehicles
- Admit vehicles which respond to provisions and permits and registration certificates which conform
- Ensure that road safety education is provided
- Ensure that domestic legislation has minimum standards for driver testing and qualifications for instructors
- Communicate with other Contracting Parties in the case of serious road safety infringements which might lead to serious penalties or disqualification.
- Ensure adequate road signing

Transport facilitation aspects

- Distinguishing sign of the State of registration
- Driving permits – domestic and international
- Technical conditions concerning motor vehicles and trailers
- Conditions regarding registration certificates and registration numbers.

Transport facilitation aspects

- Benefits are greatest for neighbouring countries
- Also for landlocked countries
- Encourages simplified customs, police, health and other similar formalities

A systems approach

- Firstly, the driver and perhaps the most difficult to influence
- Secondly, the vehicle
- Finally, the infrastructure

Driver

- Every driver must hold a driving permit
- Only issued after driving tests
- And the necessary physical and mental ability – medical tests
- Permits are issued for different categories of vehicles

Vehicle

- Registration by a competent authority
- Registration number legible from at least 40 metres
- Distinguishing sign of the State of registration

Vehicle

- Identification marks – chassis number
- Minimum technical requirements and periodic technical inspections
- Exception – vehicles whose overall mass or mass per axle exceeds limits fixed by domestic legislation.

Infrastructure

- Road signs and signals
- Road markings
- Traffic light signals
- Driver behaviour in relation to various infrastructure components

Responsibilities of Contracting Parties

- Adopt the system as soon as possible
- Replace within 4 years signs with a different meaning than intended by the Convention
- Replace within 15 years signs, systems, installations or markings which do not conform
- No obligation to adopt all the signs - encouraged to limit.

Convention on Road Signs and Signals

Basic principles:

- Shapes and colours, graphic symbols rather than words
- Colours - red triangles are warnings. Red circles are restrictions. Blue circles are requirements. Squares and rectangles give guidance
- Signs should have maximum visibility at night and in bad weather. They should use reflecting materials, but not so that they dazzle the driver
- Number of signs should be limited to what is strictly necessary
- Siting and size of the sign depends on the distance from the hazard and the usual speed of the vehicle on the road section

DANGER WARNING SIGNS

equilateral triangle, ground white or yellow, border red



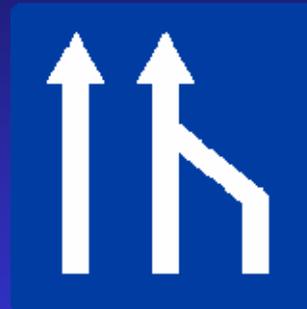
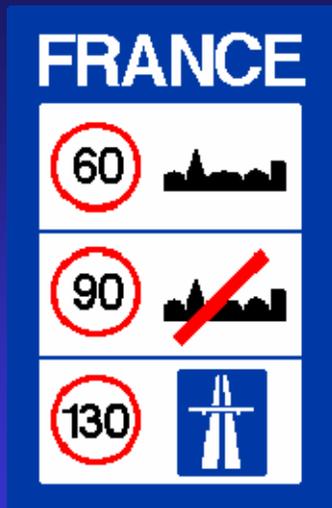
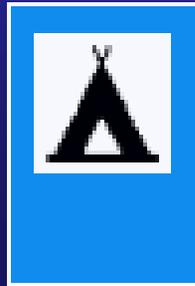
REGULATORY SIGNS

circular, white or yellow background with a red border



INFORMATIVE SIGNS

rectangular, blue or green background, bearing a white or yellow rectangle with sign



Other components covered

- Traffic light signals
- Road markings
- Signs for road works
- Light signals for level crossings.

Regional choices

- Where the Convention offers a choice of signs which can be used
- Inscriptions intended to make a sign or symbol more explicit may be in the national language.

Administration and updating of the Conventions

- The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) manages the Conventions and meets twice a year in Geneva
- The Conventions are only amended every 5 – 10 years
- African Contracting Parties are sent the proposed amendments before they enter into force

Administration and updating of the Conventions

- UNECE's EXCOM agreed that non-UNECE countries may participate in Working Parties as full members

Recent amendments to the Conventions

28 March 2006

- New measures to enhance the safety and mobility of cyclists
- The use of handheld mobile phones is prohibited
- Visibility and legibility of signs has been improved
- Greater harmonization of domestic driving permits has been introduced.

Other issues to be considered

- Drivers' working hours and rest periods
- Controlled access to the profession of road transport operator.



Thank you for your attention
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