



Tuesday 13 December 2016

**“WE KNOW WHAT TO DO TO REVERSE ROAD DEATHS:  
NOW WE MUST ACT ON THIS KNOWLEDGE”**

“Worldwide, 1.25 million people die on the roads every year and up to 50 million children, women, men are injured — many of them for life. Road crashes are the 8th leading cause of death globally, and the primary cause of death for young people aged 15-29, leaving millions of families in despair, wrecking entire communities and causing severe human and economic loss for nations. We must scale up our efforts to stop it, and we must do so fast.”

These are the words of Christian Friis Bach, Under Secretary General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Mr Bach delivered the 27<sup>th</sup> Westminster Lecture on Transport *Safety Global Goals for Sustainable Development* in the Houses of Parliament last night [12 December]. The evening opened with an introduction from Andrew Jones MP, Under Secretary of State for Transport. The event was attended by over 100 Parliamentarians and road safety experts from the UK and around the world, including Brazil, Tanzania, Egypt, Thailand, Nepal, Ukraine and Armenia. It was hosted by PACTS, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety.

“Six years ago, the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) set the ambitious goal of stabilising, then reversing the growing trend of road crash death and injury, thereby saving an estimated 5 million lives,” he said. “In the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals we promise to half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030.”

Mr Bach pointed out that we are still far from reversing the trend, and cannot hope to meet the goal without significantly stronger engagement. In the last three years 79 countries have experienced a decrease in the number of fatalities but 68 countries have seen an increase. Globally, the increase in deaths from road accidents has slowed down, despite more vehicles, numbers are far from declining.

“This is frustrating as we know what to do,” he said. “We know how to build safer vehicles; we know how to build safe roads; we know the benefits of advanced and consistent traffic rules and road signs in making roads safer. We also know that clear national road safety strategies containing goals and targets have proven successful in many countries around the world, when coupled with information campaigns to mobilise civil society and strengthened enforcement mechanisms.”

The United Nations General Assembly has explicitly recognised road safety as a global priority, with a stand-alone target to halve the number of road traffic deaths by 2020. A target on sustainable urban

transport in the Cities Goal was also approved. The UK has ratified these goals and is expected to play its part in achieving them – at home and internationally.

Andrew Jones MP, Under Secretary of State for Transport, has formally acknowledged the unacceptable risk posed to users to the UK's 50 most dangerous roads, and has announced a £175 million fund to work with local authorities to improve the 50 roads with the worst safety record.

David Davies, PACTS Executive Director, said: "The UK has often led the world on road safety research and innovation, including seat belts, junction designs, traffic calming and drug driving. But we can also learn from the experience of other nations. We need to work together to reduce the toll of road death and injury in the UK and globally."

**Further media information:**

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**About PACTS**

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is a registered charity. It supports the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Transport Safety. See <http://www.pacts.org.uk/>

**About Christian Friis Bach**

On 9 July 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Christian Friis Bach of Denmark as the next Executive Secretary of UNECE. Mr Bach came from a position as Member of the Danish Parliament and Head of the Parliamentarian Group for the Danish Social/Liberal Party. He previously served as Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation (2011-2013) and Special Advisor to the European Union Commission for the United Nations Global Sustainability Panel (2010-2011).

He is Honorary Professor of International Economics and Development at the University of Copenhagen (2009-2014) and has been Associate Professor in International Economics and Development Economics, the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (1999-2005).

Mr Bach holds a Ph.D. in International Economics (1996), a MSc in Agronomy (1992) from the Royal Danish Agricultural University in Copenhagen and a supplementary degree in Journalism from the Danish School of Media and Journalism. Born in 1966, Mr Bach is married and has three children. The family lives on a small farm outside of Copenhagen.

**About the Global Goals for Sustainable Development:**

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>