



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

27<sup>th</sup> Westminster Lecture on Transport Safety  
12<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Terrace Pavilion,  
Palace of Westminster, London

**Christian Friis Bach**

Executive Secretary & Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



27<sup>th</sup> Westminster Lecture  
on Transport Safety  
6<sup>th</sup> Lecture in the UN Decade  
of Action on Road Safety

***Road Safety and the Global Goals  
for Sustainable Development***

Delivered in the Terrace Pavilion, Palace of  
Westminster, London on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016

***Road Safety and the Global Goals for Sustainable  
Development***

## **The Speaker: Christian Friis Bach, Executive Secretary & Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**



On 9 July 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Mr 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.

Mr Christian Friis Bach was involved in the discussions of the Sustainable Development Goals from the outset (more than six years ago), first as Special Advisor to the EU Commissioner Connie Hedegaard in her role as member of the Global Sustainability Panel, and later as Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark. He chaired the EU Council during Rio+20 and was a member of the UN Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals. He continues his involvement with the Sustainable Development Goals as United Under-Secretary-General.

## Lecture transcript

I am very honoured to be here to address you in the 2016 Westminster Lecture on Transport Safety on Road Safety and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and thank you to the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, PACTS, for inviting me.

One of my most sad memories from when I was a child – growing up out in the countryside in Denmark and going to a very small school with only 48 children in total -- was when one of our friends, the son of one of our neighbours, got hit by a car. He survived but suffered from severe brain damage, never got to walk and talk properly, never returned to our small school.

Every day around in the world there are thousands of kids that are run down by a vehicle – 500 of them do not survive. Thousands more are severely injured – like – the boy from my school - and will suffer from their injuries the rest of their lives. It is devastating, we cannot allow it to happen.

You all know the numbers. Around 1.25 million people are killed, and around 50 million injured, in road traffic crashes every year which makes it one of the most pressing health emergencies and development issues of our time. It is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 29 – young people – like my children – full of hope and dreams and energy that suddenly see it all to disappear in a road crash.

Road crashes are the eighth leading cause of death globally. I am far from alone with my story from when I was a child. Almost every person knows someone who has been involved in a road crash.



*Introduction by Andrew Jones MP, Under Secretary of State for transport*

Beyond human suffering, road traffic deaths and injuries impose significant economic and financial losses to individuals and societies. Financial losses that are, in many countries, devastating because the families do not have adequate insurance coverage or safety nets, families may lose their only breadwinner and many families are left with very high health care bills. This hits the world's poor particularly hard.

Ninety percent of all road fatalities occur in developing countries. It is estimated that 12-70 million people are kept in poverty each year due to road traffic injuries and fatalities. The estimated economic loss from road crashes ranges from 3-6 % of GDP.

It is high time that we do more, that we do significantly more to avoid fatalities and injuries on our roads. And this is increasingly recognised by the international community – it is as our Chair tonight said it moving up the global agenda - and by the United Nations. In April 2004 the UN Member States first recognized the importance of road safety in UN General Assembly Resolution 58/289 from on “improving global road safety” and invited the World Health Organization, working in close cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, to act as coordinator on road safety issues across the United Nations system.



*Christian Friis Bach*

UN Member States further acknowledged the importance of road safety by agreeing on the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. And most recently, but importantly, the importance of road safety was recognized as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted in September 2015, where world leaders agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets including to halve the number of global deaths from road traffic accidents by 2020 and to make our cities safe and ensure safe transport systems to all.

This is the strongest and most visionary commitment we have ever seen. It is a historic achievement. And we only succeeded with the Sustainable Development Goals because we worked together in truly global partnership with the participation of governments, parliaments, civil society, the private sector, universities and citizens. I was privileged to be part of the process from the very beginning first as I worked for the EU as Special Advisor to the Commission on the Global Sustainability Panel, and later as Minister of Development while Denmark chaired the EU council during Rio+20 Conference in 2012. Here – and I do not wish to intervene in the debate on Brexit – the EU played a crucial role by standing together and pushing for the decision to negotiate a set of Sustainable Development Goals. And also for pushing for it to be done – not by governments alone - but in a multi-stakeholder process in what became the open-working group – a group with only 32 countries but filled with youth movements, human rights defenders, private companies, climate researchers and environment grassroots.

A room full of ideas, innovation, inspiration and engagement. This is how we achieved the historic vision expressed by the Sustainable Development Goals. And this is the spirit we must maintain when now moving to implement them.

And there is unfortunately a long way to go. The world is very far from being on track to achieve these goals. And when it comes to the goals and targets for road safety, there is even a significant risk that we will move in the wrong direction. A number of countries have seen an unprecedented deterioration in road safety. Over these first decades of the 21st century to the year 2030, the global vehicle fleet is projected to at least double, with more than half of these vehicles entering the roads of low and middle-income Countries. Without taking significant preventive measures in all UN regions and countries we will see many more people dying on our roads and many more serious injuries from road crashes.

There is a strong need and strong case to scale up our efforts to improve road safety. We need to increase attention at the highest political level – and this is why the work of The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is so important. This is why we strongly welcome the Global Forum for Road Safety Legislators. This is why we need strong commitments like the one by the British Government in the British Road Safety Statement: Working Together to Build a Safer Road System. This is why I am honoured to be with you today.

In UNECE we are more than ready to assist. Our Inland Transport Committee (ITC) has worked for nearly 70 years – we hope you will join us for the 70 year anniversary in late February in Geneva – it has worked to ensure that roads, vehicles and road users are as safe as possible by establishing the legal foundation for how traffic is organized across the world. And we are honoured and thankful that this work has been nominated to receive tomorrow Prince Michael International Road Safety Award.



*Christian Friis Bach*

The result is not less than 58 UN transport legal instruments and conventions covering a broad range of road safety issues such as road safety management, road signs and signals, internationally harmonized traffic rules, global vehicle regulations for safety, technical inspection of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods by road, road user behaviour, driving times and rest periods for professional drivers, and the mutual recognition of third party liability insurance.

So while many of you may not know UNECE it is one of the UN organisations that you are most in contact with every single day when you move on our roads. And although UNECE is not well known we are probably one of the best branded UN organisations in the world. If you look in the corner of all windows or wheels of all vehicles all over the world there is a capital E and a number, this E stands for Economic Commission for Europe – or as we say it today, the E stands for Excellence.

These are vehicle regulations – or vehicle standards – negotiated in the World Forum for Vehicle Regulations. And they have been essential to save lives. I remember when I joined UNECE 2 ½

years ago – the first new standard at that time that was just finalised was a standard for how you design the front end of a car. This is critically important for whether you can survive a road crash as a pedestrian. If the car hits you over the knee you will most likely be dragged under the car and get killed or severely injured. If the car hits you over the knee you will roll over the car and will have a larger chance of surviving. According to one study this small change in the design of a car was estimated to save 15 lives and avoid hundreds of serious injuries in Germany alone.

Other vehicle regulations are even more important. Electronic Stability Control on vehicles can reduce the likelihood of all fatal crashes by more than 40% according to studies. Automatic Breaking Systems can reduce it further. Airbags and proper seatbelts can save millions of drivers and passengers over the coming decades.

However, unfortunately many countries have not yet signed up to the key road safety conventions, they have not implemented the vehicle regulations and many vehicle producers do not install the key safety equipment in their cars.

Last year I joined David Ward and Global NCAP for a crash test in Landsberg done with the newly established Latin NCAP. The car which was tested looked totally identical to the same car we see on the roads here in the UK. It looked like a strong, safe car, like a four-wheel drive. However, it was not safe – and we know now it thanks to the very good work of Global NCAP and of Latin NCAP. If there had been real passengers in that car at the test most of them would have been killed. Because when many of these cars are produced for the market in Latin America, Africa or Asia most of the safety equipment is left out, there are only one airbag, no ESC or ABS and even the frame of the car is weakened. This kills people every day. And it could be avoided for just a small extra increase in the price of the car.

We are now – also in line with the initiative by Global NCAP - reaching out to all major vehicle producers in the world and we encourage them to join a new initiative to ensure that by 2018 or 2020 even 2025 every single car, every single vehicle, that they produce has the basic safety equipment installed, respects the key safety regulations. We hope they will agree and join this initiative. Together we can save lives.

And we also encourage all countries in the world to join the key road safety conventions and sign up to the vehicle regulations. And the good news is that more and more of them do. Just last week Malaysia - working with us and Global NCAP - and having ratified the 1958 UN Convention on vehicle regulations, announced that they will implement the regulation on ESC on all new cars from 2018 as the first ASEAN Country. This will save thousands of lives.

We are working towards a partnership with the Alliance of Road Safety NGOS, and with countries as India, to ensure that more countries implement the regulations for motorcycle helmets. Recent studies show appropriate helmets according to our regulation 22 can avoid more than 40% of motorcycle crash fatalities. And if we boost the use of these new light helmets significantly in huge markets as India we can create economies of scale, bring down production costs significantly, ensure safe and affordable helmets and save millions of lives in the coming decades. These are just examples.

We can make it happen. Since 2011, 28 governments have acceded to UN road safety conventions. Countries such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Moldova, Slovenia, Qatar, Tajikistan, Turkey and Viet Nam have joined. This proves that they are globally applicable and useful. However, it is going too slowly. We need many more countries to join.

And apart from ensuring that we implement the current conventions and regulations we must speed up our efforts to create the conventions and regulations for the future. With intelligent transport systems – where vehicles can communicate with each other, with the infrastructure and with other road-users, we can improve road safety even further and save more lives. We can develop a fascinating and promising and safe transport future. But to allow this to happen we must intensify our cooperation to share the necessary regulation. And this is not easy. We face complex regulatory challenges when developing transport conventions, as the Vienna Convention on Traffic Rules that have to deal with both horse-driven carriages and self-driving vehicles. We face difficult challenges, also related to liabilities, who will be responsible if an accident happens if there is no long a driver in control of the car – will it be owner, the car company, the software company or the network company? There are challenges related to privacy and data-sharing across borders if we are to develop transboundary intelligent transport solutions. We face very difficult ethical questions if it is no longer a person but a computer programme, designed by a software company, who will take the crucial and life-determining decisions on whether for instance, if an accident is unavoidable, the car shall drive into and potentially kill a pedestrian or whether it shall crash the car into a wall and kill the driver. We will now beforehand – because the decision will be embodied into a computer programme.

These are difficult challenges and we can only solve them together. So we really encourage you all to come to Geneva, to the Inland Transport Committee, where we together with the International Telecommunication Union to enable and ensure the appropriate regulation to allow this safe, sustainable, intelligent transport future to happen – and to allow it to bring us further important steps towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and halving the number of fatalities and injuries on our roads.

And then, finally, I encourage you to help us to mobilise the necessary funding. We hear the encouraging news on the Safer Roads Fund here in the UK. While road safety is increasingly recognised as a key sustainable development issue, it is not adequately funded at local, national and global levels. There are only few bilateral donors, most notably DFID, United Kingdom; SIDA, Sweden and USAID, United States that have provided funding for road safety activities. Similarly, there are only limited international funding initiatives. The major contributors are the World Bank, with its Global Road Safety Facility, other Multilateral Development Banks, the FIA Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies and other emerging private sector contributors.

The total current annual grant funding for road safety ranges in the hundreds of millions of dollars. However, to reach the road safety targets – and half the number of fatalities - is estimated that we need \$260 billion of additional financing in low and middle-income countries over the coming decade.

Most of this funding must come from countries themselves. However, we need catalytic grant funding to make it happen. It is estimated that we need \$770 million of additional grant funding annually over the coming decade to leverage the needed \$260 billion for road safety investments. But it is a very, very good investment. If we achieved this we can over the next decade save 5 million lives and avert 50 million serious injuries. For each and every \$100 million we can:

- leverage \$3.4 billion of country and city road safety investment;
- save 64,000 lives; and
- avert 640,000 serious injuries.

Recognizing this considerable need for funding, the UN General Assembly adopted in April 2016 resolution 70/260 that “requests the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of establishing, from voluntary contributions, a Road Safety Trust Fund.” And based on this we have – working with UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt, WHO and a number of other organisations – just launched the very first proposal for the establishment of a UN Road Safety Fund for consultation.

The UN Road Safety Fund should help us to, in line with the Global Plan for the Decade, build road safety management capacity, improve safety of road infrastructure, develop the safety of vehicles, enhance the behaviour of road users and improve post-crash response and care.

We know that it will be difficult to raise US\$ 770 million annually from governments alone, so together with the FIA High-Level Panel we have explored opportunities for innovative funding. We hope we can convince vehicle producers to give just 5 dollars for each car they sell, and tire producers to give just 5 cents for each tire they sell. We hope we can convince the insurance industry to contribute given the benefits achieved through a reduction in road crashes. Perhaps we can get a voluntary levies on used cars that are exported to developing countries. We can build innovative new financing instruments such as development impact bonds and a social impact investment and use new web-based micro-fundraising ideas. But we cannot do it alone. The idea behind a new UN Road Safety Fund is also to use it – in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals – to build a global multi-stakeholder partnership for road safety. We hope you will join us.



*Left to Right: David Ward, Towards Zero Foundation, Barry Sheerman MP, Christian Friis Bach, Jim Fitzpatrick MP*

And we need some countries to take the lead and ensure that the fund is established and that these innovative funding mechanisms and new partnerships are developed. We hope the UK will be one of these countries.

Halving the number of fatalities from road crashes seems to be an almost impossible target. But it is not. We know how to do it. Safe vehicles, safe roads, safe drivers and post-crash care. If you look at the numbers you will find

that numerous countries have managed to do it. UK being one of the world leaders. Several countries have indeed halved the number of fatalities and injuries in around a decade. It is fantastic. If we did it on a global scale more than half a million citizens would avoid being killed every year. This is the population of the cities of Liverpool or Manchester. And millions and millions of people would not lose a close family member or a good friend. It can be done.

And if we do it, and do it together, would also be a tribute to and a recognition of all those who have been killed or have suffered severe injuries from road crashes. Including the boy from my school.

Thank you.

## Previous Westminster Lectures on Transport Safety

The Westminster Lecture is an annual event in which leaders in transport safety address topics of concern to practitioners, researchers and policy makers in the field. It is organised by PACTS.

- 26<sup>th</sup> Ruth Sutherland, Chief Executive, Samaritans  
*Working Together to Reduce Suicide in Transport*
- 25<sup>th</sup> Tony Bliss, Global Road Safety Advisor, Monash University Accident and Research Centre, Australia  
*Road Safety in the 21st Century: Public Expectations of Government*
- 24<sup>th</sup> Dr Rob Hunter, Head of Flight Safety, BALPA  
*Staying Awake, Staying Alive: The problem of fatigue in the transport sector*
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Jeanne Breen, OBE, FRSA, MCIHT, Jeanne Breen Consulting  
*Managing for Ambitious Road Safety Results*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Dr Jillian Anable, Centre for Transport Research, University of Aberdeen  
*More haste, less speed: changing behaviour for safety and sustainability*
- 21<sup>st</sup> Danny Dorling, Professor of Human Geography, University of Sheffield  
*Roads, casualties and public health: the open sewers of the 21st century?*
- 20<sup>th</sup> Fred Wegman, Managing Director, SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research, The Netherlands  
*Putting People at the Centre: How to Improve Road Safety in the 21st Century*
- 19<sup>th</sup> Professor Oliver Carsten, University of Leeds  
*Technology: Curse or Cure?*
- 18<sup>th</sup> Professor James Reason CBE, Emeritus Professor, University of Manchester  
*Recurrent patterns in transport accidents: Conditions and causes*
- 17<sup>th</sup> Professor Phil Goodwin, Professor of Transport Policy at the Centre for Transport and Society, UWE Bristol, Emeritus Professor at University College London  
*Determination and Denial: The Paradox of Safety Research and Traffic Policy*
- 16<sup>th</sup> Professor Ronan Lyons, Professor for Public Health, University of Wales at Swansea  
*Connecting Public Health and Transport Safety*
- 15<sup>th</sup> Professor Helen Muir, Director, Cranfield Institute for Safety, Risk and Reliability  
*In times of crisis how do passengers react?*

- 14<sup>th</sup> Professor David Begg, Chairman, Commission for Integrated Transport  
*Transport Safety and Integration: putting the two together*
- 13<sup>th</sup> Mr Ken Smart, CBE, Chief Inspector, Air Accidents Investigation Branch  
*Transport Accident Investigations: a question of trust*
- 12<sup>th</sup> Professor Richard Allsop, Centre for Transport Studies, UCL  
*Road Safety: Britain in Europe*
- 11<sup>th</sup> Dr Rod Kimber, Director of Science and Engineering, TRL  
*2010: Getting there in one piece*
- 10<sup>th</sup> Simon Folkard D.SC, Department of Psychology, University of Wales at Swansea  
*Transport: Rhythm and Blues*
- 9<sup>th</sup> Dr Dianne Parker, University of Manchester  
*The social psychology of driver behaviour: is it time to put our foot down?*
- 8<sup>th</sup> Professor Frank McKenna, Department of Psychology, Reading University  
*Death by Accident: the psychology of human error*
- 7<sup>th</sup> Mr Stefan Nillson, Director, Automotive Safety Centre, Volvo  
*A Holistic View on Automotive Safety*
- 6<sup>th</sup> Sir Alastair Morton, Co-chairman, Eurotunnel  
*There is no such thing as perfect safety in transport, but life is life, however you travel*
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dr Leonard Evans, Principal Research Scientist, GM R&D Centre  
*Traffic Safety Measures, Driver Behaviour Responses and Surprising Outcomes*
- 4<sup>th</sup> Mr Brian O'Neil, President, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety  
*Progress in Transport Safety: the US experience*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mr Robert Coleman, Director General, DG VII, European Commission  
*Transport Safety and the EC*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr Ian Johnston, Executive Director, Australian Road Research Board  
*Effective strategies for transport safety: an Australian's perspective*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Dr Jan C. Tetlow, Secretary General, European Conference of Ministers of Transport  
*Transport Safety: European cooperation for the 90's*



The 27<sup>th</sup> Westminster Lecture on Transport Safety was made possible by the generous support of



6<sup>th</sup> Lecture in UN  
Decade of Action on  
Road Safety



## 27<sup>th</sup> Westminster Lecture on Transport Safety

Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety  
Clutha House  
10 Storey's Gate  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 3AY

Telephone: 0207 222 7732

[www.pacts.org.uk](http://www.pacts.org.uk)

@pacts



ISSN 1740-0368

Published December 2016