



World Health  
Organization

WHO Country Office

LESOTHO

## NEWSBRIEF — Launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety

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# Lesotho officially launched the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020



Staff of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport performing traditional dances during the event



The Honourable Minister of Public Works and Transport delivering his remarks

The Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in March 2010, was officially launched on May 11th at the Convention Center in Maseru, Lesotho. Road traffic accidents are major but neglected public health problems in Lesotho. During the last five years, 2006-2010, 1,593 people lost their lives on Lesotho roads. The Lesotho Decade of Action covers critical areas for action, from enhancing roads and vehicles to improving the behaviors of drivers.

Participants in the event included the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Transport, the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), Representatives from Ministry of Education, Senior officers from the World Health Organization (WHO), Members of the Diplomatic corps, Representatives from International Organizations, members of civil society, the media and the wider community.



Dr E. Aceng, TB/HIV Country Office delivering a speech on behalf of the WHO Representative



Traditional songs were performed during the event

Speeches and presentations were delivered during the event by different stakeholders and government institutions, including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education, the Police Commissioner, a member of the Lesotho City Council among others. These speeches were complemented by traditional performances and dances.

Dr Aceng Esther, on behalf of WHO Representative, Dr J. Mufunda, said that road traffic crashes are public health and development crisis, which deserve attention and demand collective action. *"The situation is alarming, as are projections for the future. During recent decades, the yearly number of road traffic deaths has increased dramatically, and this trend is expected to continue"* said Dr E. Aceng, reading out the speech of the WHO Director General. *"The plan for the Decade was developed with WHO support. This commitment will continue as we work together to strengthen preventive programmes, improve trauma care, and monitor the progress achieved"*, concluded Dr. Aceng.

The day concluded with the official launch of the Lesotho decade of action for road safety by the Hon. Minister of Public Work and Transport, Mr. Tsele Chakela. Mr. Chakela emphasized that road safety is a key and urgent issue that may undermine the economic and social development of the country. The formulation of the Lesotho Decade of Action for Road safety is a step in the right direction to reduce the socio-economic impact of road traffic accidents. Furthermore, he recognized and acknowledged the collaboration with the MOHSW, WHO and other stakeholders as vital in the effort to improve road safety in the country.

WHO will continue support the government of Lesotho in this noble effort to reduce the level of fatalities and injuries in the country.