4. Convening intersectoral partnerships for safer roads

Road safety is a matter of serious concern in the Region. Every 95 seconds, a man, woman or child is killed on the Region’s roads, making road traffic injuries the leading cause of death for people between the age of 15 and 49 years.

Approximately one third of all fatal road traffic crashes in high-income countries – and up to one half in low- and middle-income countries – are related to speed. Therefore, the Fourth United Nations Global Road Safety Week, 8–14 May 2017, focused on managing speed.

Effective road safety requires a whole-of-government approach. The management of excessive and inappropriate speed must encompass strategies to build safer roads and vehicles, establish and enforce speed limits, and raise public awareness of the injury and negative environmental consequences of speeding.

Road Safety Week advocacy events and activities across the Western Pacific Region engaged stakeholders at all levels – national and local governments, international agencies, civil society organizations, private companies and the general public – to increase awareness of the magnitude and severity, as well as the preventability, of road traffic injuries. The regional launch of Road Safety Week was hosted by the Australian Government in Sydney on 7 May and included inspiring remarks from various dignitaries, such as the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Minister of Transport and the WHO Regional Director. The iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge was lit up in yellow to mark the launch of the campaign.

Intersectoral country consultations have also been convened as part of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for Violence and Injury Prevention in the Western Pacific (2016–2020). The consultations are a platform that can be used to strengthen coordinated collaborative action among various stakeholders not only for road safety but also for the prevention of drowning and interpersonal violence within a whole-of-government response that extends beyond ministries of health. ■