



SAFER ACTIVE TRAVEL

Addressing a Global Blind Spot

The Fourth Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety is a critical moment to address the blind spot in national policies for safe walking and cycling. There is an urgent need to act at national and local levels to make these mobility options safe for the billions of people that walk and cycle every day.

- **Nearly 22 million people are killed or injured each year while walking and cycling.**
- **Most places where people routinely walk or cycle are not safe,** especially in low and middle income countries where the majority of all road deaths and injuries occur.
- **Only 15% of countries currently have safety for both people walking and people cycling in their national policies.**

Governments need to adopt the 6 key measures to eliminate the global blind spot and transform the safety of people walking + cycling.



Read more at
PathForWalkingCycling.com



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01 HOW SAFE ARE PEOPLE WHILE WALKING OR CYCLING?

- It is estimated that **21,700,744 people** are road crash casualties while walking or cycling every year.
- More than a quarter of all road deaths are people walking or cycling.
- Pedestrians represent **23% + cyclists 6%** of the 1.19 million annual road traffic deaths around the world.

Globally pedestrian deaths rose 3% and cyclists deaths 20% between 2010 and 2021.

However, there were significant variations across regions. For example, pedestrian deaths increased by 42% in the South-East Asia Region, and across Africa, the region with the highest fatality rates, pedestrians represent 33% of fatalities. Cyclist deaths rose 50% in the European Region, and by 88% in the Western Pacific Region where cyclists represent up to 15% of fatalities.

Road crashes remain the leading cause of death for children and young people aged 5-29.



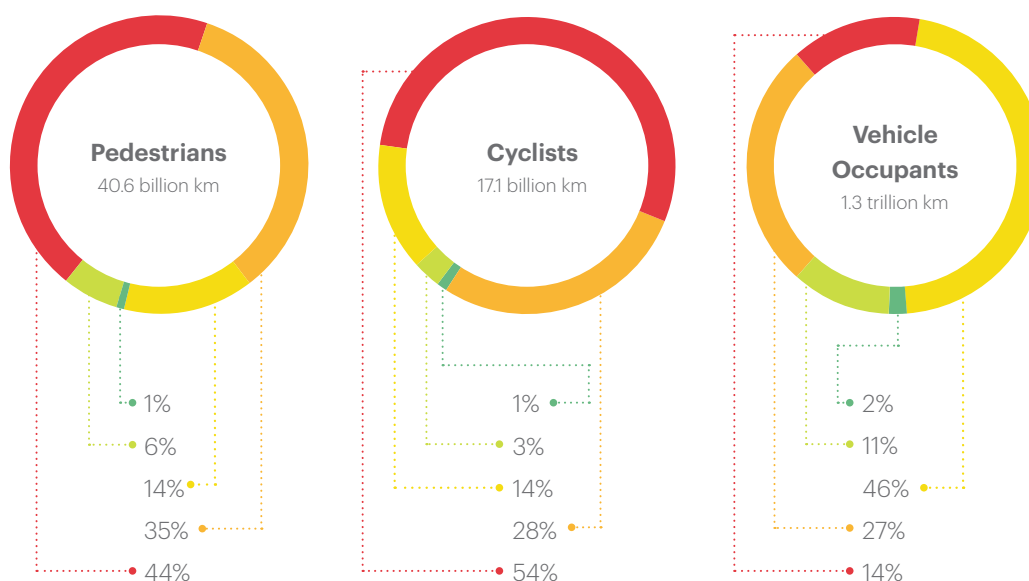
02 HOW SAFE ARE THE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE WALK + CYCLE?

The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) highlights that roads continue to be primarily built for motor vehicles. From the roads evaluated through the Programme, only 20% meet the basic safety standards for pedestrians. This means they lack dedicated footpaths, crossings and appropriate traffic speeds. For bike riders, only 0.2% of roads assessed have cycle lanes.

The global target, set in the WHO Global Action Plan for Road Safety, is to ensure at least 75% of the roads where people walk or cycle meet at least the 3-star minimum standard (where 1-star is least safe and 5-star the safest). This standard includes vehicle speed limits as well as infrastructure.

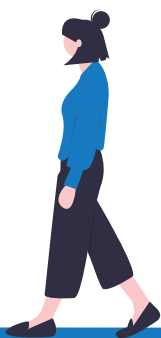
Higher speeds significantly increase the likelihood and severity of road crashes and reduces perceptions of safety that inform the decision to walk or cycle. WHO estimates that speed contributes to half of the road fatalities in low- and middle-income countries and a third of the road fatalities in high-income countries.

Star Ratings by distance travelled (km)



Legend: 1 Star (Red), 2 Star (Orange), 3 Star (Yellow), 4 Star (Light Green), 5 Star (Dark Green)

▲ Above: The Star Ratings by distance travelled
SOURCE: [iRAP Safety Insights Explorer, 2025](#)





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03 WHAT GOOD PRACTICES EXIST FOR ENABLING SAFE WALKING + CYCLING?

In 2023 only 15% of countries were found to have safety as an ambition for both people walking and people cycling.

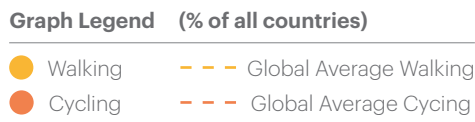
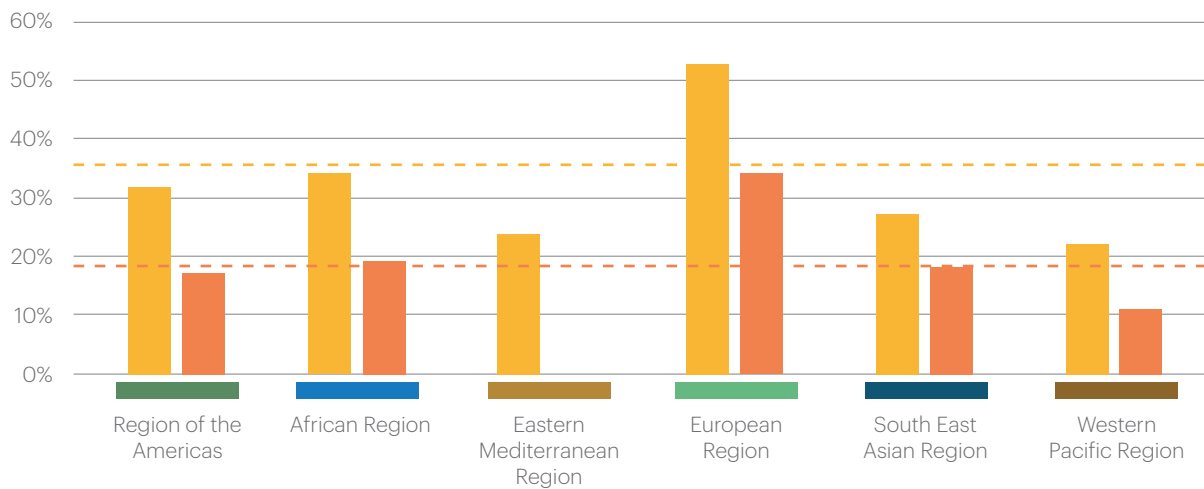
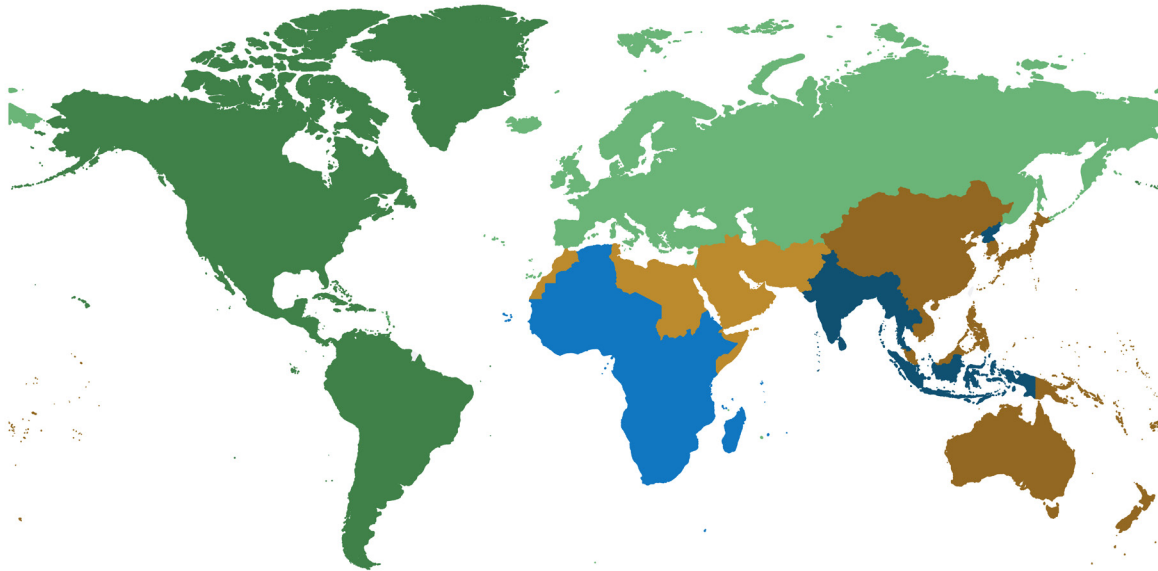
The 30 countries (15%) where improving the safety of people walking AND cycling was found to be an ambition in the PATH 2023 national policy review are: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Lichtenstein, Malawi, Norway, Portugal, Rwanda, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, UK, Uruguay and Zambia.

That said, 70 countries include commitments to safer walking (35%) and 39 countries include commitments to safer cycling (19%) in their national policies.

Generally, the regions with the highest numbers of people walking and cycling, and those with the greatest risk have the least visible commitments to making the experience safer.



% of countries with national policies found to have safety as an ambition for people walking or cycling by WHO regions.



Source Data: 2023 Report on National Policies for Walking and Cycling in all 197 UNFCCC countries. The research of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Walking Policy (NWP) and National Cycling Policy (NCP) was coordinated by the Partnership for Active Travel and Health (PATH). More information [PathForWalkingCycling.com](https://www.pathforwalkingandcycling.com)

04 ELIMINATE THE BLIND SPOT:

The needs of people walking and cycling need to be given much more attention in transport, health, climate and road safety plans and strategies to reach the global goal to halve road deaths and injuries by 2030.

Supporting the needs of people walking and cycling also contributes to the achievements of many Sustainable Development Goals, including those on poverty, health and well-being, education, economic growth, infrastructure, gender equity, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities, as well as being central to global climate targets in the Paris process for action on climate change.

Governments are invited to join the momentum for road safety policies to include effective actions for safe walking and cycling. Adopt these measures and apply them to reverse the global and regional trends and transform the safety of people walking and cycling.



- 1. Adopt tools that enable people to share the reality of their safe walking and cycling experiences** to steer the development of policy priorities, investment decisions and provide an affordable way to evaluate the impact of interventions.



- 2. Implement and enforce 30km/h and 20 mph zones** in the catchments of schools, public transport interchanges, workplaces, retail areas, health centres, parks and recreation areas and religious buildings and reduce speed in other areas where people walk and cycle as a quick win with an immediate impact for safe walking and cycling.



- 3. Connect active travel road safety policies** with climate, equity and health agendas and make a library of inspiring case studies available that have proven to deliver safe active travel outcomes.



- 4. Set specific targets and indicators** for safe walking and cycling and a common data collection standard for including walking and cycling in crash reports disaggregated by age, gender and ability.



- 5. Train relevant stakeholders, especially in low and middle income countries and the regional active travel partnerships** such as the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Partnership and Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility Partnership.



- 6. Commit to action and investment** as part of the UN Decade of Action on Sustainable Transport 2026-2035 and the 8th UN Global Road Safety Week campaign on Active Mobility (12-18 May 2025).



FURTHER INFORMATION

Click on the links below to view the complete documents online:

Pedestrian safety:

A road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners, 2nd edition

Cyclist safety:

an information resource for decision-makers and practitioners

Managing speed

Global status report on road safety 2023

Path Report downloads

Active travel
NDC template

National Policies
for Walking and Cycling in all 197 UNFCCC countries

Regional fact sheets
for Walking and Cycling in all 197 UNFCCC countries

Active Travel
National Case Study Actions

iRAP Tools download

Infrastructure Safety Management Tools





PATH is a coalition calling on governments and cities to make a real commitment to walking and cycling as a key solution to the climate, health and equity challenges which we face.

The PATH coalition seeks to unlock walking and cycling's potential to accelerate the achievement of climate goals and other sustainability benefits, through greater prioritisation and investment, including through national transport, health and environment strategies and through Nationally Determined Contributions and Voluntary National Reviews.

PATH is composed of more than 500 leading organisations in the sustainable mobility community who collaborate to promote walking and cycling. It is coordinated by a core group consisting of the FIA Foundation – who are funding the coordination work – Walk21, the European Cyclists' Federation and the UN Environment Programme.

This policy template was supported by the generous funding of The FIA Foundation. The FIA Foundation is an independent UK-registered charity, working closely with grant partners to shape projects and advocate to secure change in policy and practice. Our objective is safe and healthy journeys for all. Through partners with global reach, we are supporting safer vehicles and highways, clean air and electric cars and greater mobility access and inclusivity.

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