

India Vision Zero

Safer Roads for Safer Cities

18th, 19th, 20th September 2016. Bhubaneswar, Odisha

WRI India Sustainable Cities presents India Vision Zero, a road safety forum to deliberate on challenges, opportunities, and solutions towards reducing road traffic fatalities in India. The first of these forums will be held from 18-20 September 2016 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, around the theme Safer Roads for Safer Cities.

With over 140,000 road traffic deaths annually, Indian roads rank as the most dangerous in the world. A majority of the victims are in the age group of 15 to 45 years, which not only puts a serious burden on their families, but also has a significant impact on the GDP of the country. In 2014, 45 percent of all road accidents and 39 percent of road fatalities in India took place in urban areas, even though cities make up for only 32 percent of the country's population. Various road safety initiatives have been implemented in India, with limited impact. One of the main reasons for the lack of success is that these initiatives are often not backed by strong institutional mechanisms, nor are they unified under a holistic strategy. As India continues to urbanise, it is clear that we need a comprehensive approach towards improving the safety of our roads.

Over the last few years, the Indian government has made a number of attempts to strengthen road legislation. Recently, the Union Cabinet approved amendments to the 1988 Motor Vehicle Act, which has now been tabled for discussion in Parliament. Many of these amendments are aimed at empowering the national, state, and local governments to strengthen institutional mechanisms and initiate comprehensive road safety strategies. India Vision Zero aims to complement this initiative by creating a forum for representatives from the Centre, States, cities and other stakeholders, such as civil society, media and sector experts, to convene on concerns, ideas and strategies for road safety reform in the country. India Vision Zero aims to create a coalition of informed stakeholders, committed on working towards the goal of zero road fatalities in the country.

Several countries have adopted a Vision Zero approach towards road safety, inspired by the concept that originated in Sweden in 1997, when their Government approved a bold objective of reducing road fatalities by 50 percent by 2020, and achieving zero road fatalities by 2050. The Vision Zero approach is based on the principle that human life must take priority over all other traffic challenges, such as congestion, speed, and road capacity. Vision Zero departs from conventional road safety thinking by advocating a joint responsibility for safety between road users and the roads and traffic authorities. It accepts that to some extent, human error is unavoidable, and that transportation systems need to be designed to ensure that such errors do not result in fatalities.

The expected participants at the India Vision Zero forum include key representatives from the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MORTH), Indian Roads Congress (IRC), State Transport Authorities, city Municipal Corporations and Police.

India Vision Zero is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. This forum is organised in partnership with the State Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited.