

Emergency update: Road safety in Namibia is a concern

UN Namibia: Namibia is regrettably one of the frontrunners in motor vehicle accident deaths per capita in the world. Death on the Roads, based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety 2015, found that there were 23.9 deaths per 100,000 residents in Namibia.

"Road safety in Namibia is definitely a matter of concern – if you look at it statistically and compare it globally," said Johnny Katzao, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Local Security Assistant for Namibia.

Katzao commends the Namibian Government for the maintenance of national roads in its attempt to protect its people, but states that due to drivers' negligence, this has become a double-edged sword.

"We have one of the best road infrastructures in Africa, and maintenance thereof, but this positive development is being misused by road users. Drivers are speeding on the roads which is causing fatalities," Katzao rationalises, urging all Namibians to seriously consider the importance of road safety.



Johnny Katzao, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Local Security Assistant for Namibia holds Goals 9 and 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to the 2016 Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVA) Annual Report, there were 4,076 crashes over the 2015/2016 year, which led to 8,890 injuries and 669 fatalities.

Katzao states that negligence has a significant correlation with road traffic accidents, as not adhering to speed limits, drinking whilst driving and choosing to drive in the dark has been associated with road accidents.

For this reason, Katzao urges drivers to adhere to speed limits, wear safety belts, abstain from alcohol use whilst driving and plan trips well in advance in order to drive with good visibility and avoid calamities.

Katzao also emphasises that passengers should take an active role in ensuring that drivers are obeying laws stating, "Passengers share equal responsibility in ensuring that drivers are adhering to required driving laws."

With a focus on lowering negligence and altering the mind-sets of drivers in Namibia, Katzao is confident that road safety in Namibia will improve and accidents on the roads will lower tremendously.

Road safety is on the agenda for the UN. The Fourth UN Global Road Safety Week, coordinated by the UN Road Safety Collaboration under the World Health Organization (WHO), will be held from 8-14 May 2017. Under the theme "Save Lives: #SlowDown", the Week will focus on speed and what can be done to address this key risk factor for road traffic accidents.