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## STATEMENT

# Response to Zambia's increased traffic accidents

**24<sup>th</sup> February, 2022:** Lusaka: Zambia has witnessed a wave of traffic accidents leading to huge losses of lives and serious injuries among her citizens. Since, the start of 2021, accidents deaths have increased suppressing those that occurred in 2020. Unfortunately, this same trend has continued in 2022, with no signs of changing. Citizens are tired and are demanding change.

For generations in this country we have prioritized cars, speed and capacity on our streets, over people, we need to a huge culture shift that puts safety first. Many roads are not designed to ensure safe travel at safe speeds for everyone, especially the most vulnerable road users. We've had way too much emphasis on the driver behaving safely, and not enough on the road itself.

Government urgently requires the collaboration of the entire road transport community (stakeholders) and with the Zambian people, to "lead a significant cultural shift that treats road deaths as unacceptable and preventable."

This will be done by addressing four key objectives: safer people, safer roads, safer speeds and post-crash care. We break down the key components of each objective below.

### **Safer People**

A great majority of serious and fatal crashes includes at least one human behavioral issue as a contributing factor. People not wearing seat belts, driving while impaired from alcohol and speeding are the three most persistent factors. Other factors include distraction, drug impairment and fatigue, contributing to thousands of fatal crashes each year. ZRST urges government to make the safety of all road users a top priority, with plans to leverage new funding for behavioral research, interventions, education, technical assistance and outreach working with all stakeholders.

### **Safer Roads**

Both the road designs and the environment surrounding the road system affect safety risks for drivers. It's important to note that these roads and streets were all built at different times and are in widely varying states of repair. ZRST urges government to focus on advancing infrastructure design and interventions that will significantly enhance safety on the road. Road design guidance and regulations should be updated to reflect best practices for implementing safer roads.

### **Safer Speeds**

According to the police and RTSA, "speeding has played a role in traffic deaths." To achieve safe speeds, ZRST urges government to implement a multi-faceted approach that will work to leverage road design, set safe speed limits, provide any necessary education and ensure proper enforcement.

## **Post-Crash Care**

While being proactive is a key to reducing driving-related fatalities, caring for people who have been involved in a crash is equally as important. Many of fatal crash victims do not arrive at a hospital for between one and two hours from the time of the crash. ZRST urges government to introduce first-aid certification for all public transport operators – drivers and conductors.

## **Indaba**

ZRST is also calling government to organize local meetings across the country to hear from the local people about the problems and solutions to road traffic accidents. So far, ZRST has suggested three meetings in Livingstone, Lusaka and Ndola.

In conclusion, road safety is morally and economically a sound investment, we urge government to use internationally accepted protocols and evidence based methods to save lives. /End

## **About Us**

The Zambia Road Safety Trust (ZRST), established in 2014, is a leading registered non-government road safety entity registration no: 101/0503/15. The Trust is a member of the Global Alliance of NGOs for road safety, seeks to create awareness on road safety issues in Zambia and contribute to reduce loss of life and injuries on Zambia's roads. The Trust is an operational NGO, meaning we plan and carry out boots-on-the-ground projects to accomplish our objectives. This requires a great deal of careful planning, communication, and local involvement for each project.

Our goal as an organization is to accomplish the following: To priorities safety of the most vulnerable road users, to advocate changes in national law to make roads, vehicles and drivers safer, to support the 50 percent reduction in road traffic injuries and death in line with UN decade of Action 2030 target.