

A campaign initiated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and FIBA



Supported by the Turkish Basketball Federation, the Spanish Basketball Federation and the Turkish National Police



Statement by Mr. Ján Kubiš

Executive Secretary

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Delivered at the press conference

launching the communication campaign on road safety during the

2010 FIBA Basketball World Championship in Turkey

Geneva, 26 August 2010

11 a.m.

On behalf of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, I should like to welcome you all to this gathering launching the communication campaign on road safety during the 2010 FIBA Basketball World Championship, which will be held in Turkey from 28 August to 12 September 2010.

I am very pleased and honored with the presence of his Excellency Ambassador Oguz DEMIRALP, on behalf of the Turkish Government, and of Mr. Patrick BAUMANN, General Secretary of FIBA.

The communication campaign on road safety we are launching today together with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), under the motto "We play and drive by the rules", is organized with the support of the Turkish Basketball Federation (TBF) and the Turkish National Police (TNP).

As you may be aware, every year some 1.3 million people die as a result of road traffic crashes worldwide. This is more than 3,500 deaths each day! Road traffic injuries are the leading causes of death for children and young people aged 5 - 29 years. In addition, on average 20 to 50 million people sustain non-fatal injuries from road traffic crashes each year. These injuries are a significant cause of disabilities worldwide.

But these are not accidents. They are events that can be prevented through daily action and awareness raising.

Improving road safety worldwide is vital for society and a top priority for the United Nations. The need for action to improve global road safety has been acknowledged by several resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, including the one of 2 March 2010, proclaiming 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action on road safety.

UNECE pioneered road safety activities in the United Nations system in the course of the last 60 years. Our work focuses on improving road safety through developing and updating legal instruments aimed at internationally harmonized traffic regulations, construction and technical inspection of vehicles, as well as for the transport of dangerous goods.

These regulations have assisted member States all over the world to harmonize and enforce traffic rules and measures, produce safe and clean road vehicles, reduce the risk of accidents with dangerous goods and hazardous materials and ensure that only safe and well maintained vehicles and competent drivers are allowed to participate in traffic. Moreover, transport infrastructure agreements developed under UNECE auspices, have given Europe coherent pan-European and safer road transport networks.

These conventions and agreements are real contributors to improved road safety and promotion of global actions in a systemic and proactive way. Many countries around the world have become Contracting Parties to them and benefit from their implementation.

The aim of this campaign, “We play and drive by the rules”, is to engage society, and especially the young people, players, or basketball fans, in this cause, and to encourage respect for the rules on the road, as well as on the court. The campaign includes video clips with famous basketball players, which will be broadcast in the arenas during the games and on the television channels. Information booths will also be displayed in the arenas in the four cities hosting the games. A Declaration for road safety will be displayed in the arenas to invite the players of the various teams to join the campaign and declare: “We play and drive by the rules”.

This is not the first time that the Basketball community teams up with UNECE in raising awareness on road safety. A declaration on “Team Work and Fair Play on the Basketball Court and on our Roads” was signed by the Greek basketball national team champions in Halkida, Greece, in June 2009, and the “Respect of the rules” declaration signed by FIBA, UNECE and the Polish Government in Katowice, Poland, in September 2009, on the occasion of the Eurobasket 2009 tournament.

We are therefore, grateful to the leadership of the European and international basketball community for appreciating the importance of road safety and for supporting our efforts to enhance road safety awareness and spreading the road safety message. With this opportunity, I should like to thank FIBA and Mr. Baumann, for the warm support of this initiative and for all the efforts they have made for this campaign. Our gratitude also goes to the Turkish National Police, a constant and active participant in the work of the UNECE's Road Safety Forum, the WP.1, and the Turkish Basketball Federation for teaming up with us in this important endeavor.

We hope that this joint campaign at the FIBA Basketball World Championship 2010 will contribute to spread the road safety message across the world and save lives. I kindly ask you to support our efforts by commutating the news, as widely as possible.

- - - -