



Republic of Uganda

UGANDA'S INTEREST IN AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE UN 1968 ROAD SAFETY CONVENTIONS

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By

Ronald Amanyire

Secretary, National Road Safety Council

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

UGANDA



Background



- Uganda is a land locked country in the East Africa region with a population of about 37 Million People.
- The Vehicle population is estimated at 1.8 Million including motorcycles.
- The Road Traffic Convention 1968 and the Convention on Road Signs and Signals 1968 were brought to our attention by the UNSG's Special Envoy for Road Safety in 2015
- At this time there was a process being undertaken for the review of the **Traffic and Road Safety, Act of 1998**
- At the same time there was a pending **Roads Bill** due for approval in Cabinet



Background Cont.



- The two 1968 Conventions became a point of reference for finalising both the Roads Bill and Prepared the Amendment to the Traffic and Road Safety Act.
- Most of us did not even know we are contracting parties to the 1949 Convention or indeed why certain provisions were the way they are in the existing Act.
- Road Markings and Road Signs were a huge problem and indeed consultants had been paid to develop road sign manuals when all they did was mostly “Copy & Paste” from the Convention on Road Signs and Signals



Importance of the Convention to Uganda



- The objective of: ***facilitating international road traffic and to increase road safety through the adoption of uniform traffic rules”*** and ***“recognizing that international uniformity of road signs, signals and symbols and of road markings is necessary in order to facilitate international road traffic and to increase road safety”*** are in line with Uganda’s strategic objectives such as:
 - Becoming the East Africa’s logistics hub which cannot happen without uniform traffic rules of foreign registered vehicles.
 - Improving Driving Standards with the expected increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic due Oil Extraction



Importance of Conventions to Uganda Cont.



- Dire need to improve the Road Safety Situation in the Country which has seen an almost year-on-year 10% increase in road fatalities
- Boosting of the huge tourism potential (to do away with road crash travel advisories issued by some countries to their citizen travelling to Uganda).
- Significant investment in road infrastructure currently taking place in the Country and to make all this upcoming infrastructure safe.
- Elimination of corruption from the highways due to foreign motorists not being aware of their rights and Police not knowing they have certain rights as per international law.



Importance of the Conventions Cont.



- Three of the countries neighbouring Uganda, that is: Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Rwanda drive on the right side of the road whereas Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania drive on the left side of the road.
- There must therefore be a clear understanding of the provisions in the Convention to facilitate traffic from these countries.
- This gap has previously manifested itself through tragic high fatality crashes
- Well controlled and managed traffic is a pre-requisite to a safe road environment



Progress towards Accession to the Convention



- A bill to amend the current Act (of 1998) was approved by Cabinet in December 2018
- This was the main point of reference by our Ministry and the legal drafting team in efforts to remove ambiguities
- A number of provisions are already included in the current Act such as recognition and admittance of foreign registered vehicles and foreign driving permits
- Most of the definitions in the current law and those that have been added in the amended law are all in line with the convention



Progress towards Accession to the Convention



- The Conventions together the 4 other Conventions as promoted by the UNSG's Special Envoy on Road Safety have now been submitted to Cabinet to approve accession (omnibus submission)
- Public consultations were completed
- Cabinet, if satisfied, will authorize the Minister of Foreign Affairs to deposit the instruments of accession **(No Parliamentary Approval required)**
- We shall keep the Secretariat updated on the progress of this process
- We thank the Office of the UNSG Special on Road Safety for their constant engagement on this matter



Way Forward



- There is still need for sensitizing stakeholders on the fact that the traffic rules and regulations passed in Uganda are not unique to Uganda but are internally accepted best practices for traffic and/or vehicles
- When promoting these conventions in African Countries, it is important first get some basic information about the existing domestic legislation so that they do not feel like “New Rules” are being introduced.
- The Benefits to Road Safety Improvement especially reduction of fatalities and serious injuries need to be emphasised



THANK YOU