

Articles about the First UN Global Road Safety Week

Agence France Presse (AFP)

EU, UN, campaigners back UN conference on road 'violence'

April 23, 2007

EU Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot and UN officials on Monday gave wholehearted support to the idea of a United Nations ministerial conference on the global death toll from "road violence."

Barrot warned that without concerted action, road accidents, which kill about 40 young people a minute, would fast become the third cause of death in the world.

"That implies the United Nations should organise a conference, especially since it's about eradicating a form of violence," the European Commission vice president said.

"In some way you can say that road violence is just as dramatic as a military conflict, with the number of deaths and injuries," he told journalists.

Nearly 1.2 million people die in road traffic collisions every year and up to 50 million are injured, especially in low- and middle-income countries, yet many of the accidents are preventable, according to the United Nations.

"More than 90 percent of road accidents are caused by human behaviour," said Jose Capel Ferrer, head of the UN Economic Commission for Europe's transport division.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and German motor racing legend Michael Schumacher had earlier teamed up at the start of Global Road Safety Week in London to back the calls from campaigners for a UN conference.

"Road crashes kill on the scale of malaria or tuberculosis, yet the international community has not woken up to this horrific waste of life," seven-time Formula One champion Schumacher said.

World Health Organisation official Etienne Krug said in Geneva that a meeting of all ministers involved could boost awareness and action for safer road equipment, helmets for all motorcyclists and seatbelts in cars, as well as against speeding and drink-driving.

The WHO estimates that more than 1,000 young people die each day after being hit by a vehicle or involved in a collision, making it the top cause of death for 10 to 24-year-olds.

"It's the equivalent of the massacre of several schools a day," Krug remarked, bemoaning the "fatalism" that surrounded the issue.

Nelly Ghusanyi, a 21-year-old Lebanese campaigner heading a UN youth assembly on road safety here this week, urged decision-makers to involve young people in their work, saying it made them more responsible.

"I think a global ministerial conference for transport might be beneficial because there isn't one right now. It's about time that we had some young people attending all the meetings," she said.

Barrot said the European Commission would release an annual "scorecard" on road safety for each of EU member nations on Friday.

The UN pointed to a bigger problem further east.

"The situation is particularly dramatic in eastern Europe and central Asia. The number of people killed in that region is 10 times the EU-15," Capel-Ferrer said, referring to the European Union before enlargement in 2004.

Canada NewsWire

Canada's New Government Highlights the Importance of Global Road Safety Week

April 23, 2007

Today marks the beginning of the first ever Global Road Safety Week, focusing on young road users.

"Road safety is about taking action to prevent fatalities and injuries, and it is everyone's responsibility," said the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. "Global Road Safety Week is a great opportunity to raise awareness about the leading factors and impacts of road traffic fatalities and injuries, and to promote action toward prevention."

Annually, there are over 1.2 million people killed and another 50 million injured in traffic collisions worldwide. More than 40 per cent of them are under 26 years of age. Road traffic injuries are the second leading cause of death for people in this age group. Young men are nearly three times more likely to be killed or injured on the roads than young women.

"Canada's New Government is committed to improving safety on Canadian roads by working with our safety partners in support of Road Safety Vision 2010, which targets a 30 per cent reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2010," added Minister Cannon.

In recognition of Global Road Safety Week, Jennifer Heatley of Halifax, Nova Scotia; Candace Salmon of Maugerville, New Brunswick; Jonathan Beauvais of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec; Nicole Lacroix of Barrie, Ontario; Morgan Slater of Etobicoke, Ontario; Natalie Rouskov of Toronto, Ontario; Duane Ironstand of Shortdale, Manitoba and William Hui of Vancouver, British Columbia are attending the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety in Geneva, Switzerland on April 23rd and 24th, 2007. All delegates are Canadian youth between the ages of 22 and 26. Among other activities, these delegates will discuss and adopt a road safety declaration expected to be presented to the United Nations. They will also attend the Canadian Road Safety Youth Conference in Montreal from June 6th to 8th, to help engage other young Canadians in improving road safety in their communities.

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Press Association Newsfile

YOUNG DRIVERS `THINK THEY ARE SAFER'

BYLINE: Peter Woodman, PA Transport Correspondent

April 23, 2007

Most young drivers think they are safer than older motorists on the roads even though road crashes are the number one killer of those in their teens and 20s in the UK, it was revealed today.

As many as 55% of drivers aged 17-24 reckoned they were safer than most while behind the wheel, a survey by breakdown company Green Flag and road safety charity Brake found.

Just 1% of young drivers said they were more dangerous than most on the roads.

The survey found that 69% of all people said there should be restrictions on young drivers such as curfews and limits on the number of young passengers allowed in a car.

A second survey by Green Flag found that almost a third of drivers aged 17-24 knew someone who took illegal drugs and frequently drove. Worryingly, almost a third had been a passenger in a car when they knew the driver had taken illegal drugs.

Philippa Naylor, spokeswoman for Green Flag, said: "The research shows that young drivers do have a tendency to think they are safe drivers even though the statistics show they are more at risk.

"As the first UN Global Road Safety Week launches today, it's an opportune time for road users of all ages across the world to think about driving more carefully and reducing the number of needless deaths on the roads."

Jools Townsend, head of education at Brake, said: "We hope Global Road Safety Week will help highlight the impact of road casualties around the world and the need for urgent action.

"Nationally and internationally, the issue of road safety has been on the back burner for far too long. It is high time UK and world leaders made making roads safe a top priority."

To support the safety week, the Institute of Advanced Motorists Motoring Trust has produced a guide on child road safety.

Neil Greig, the trust's assistant director, said: "The statistics show clearly the dangers to children of starting a new journey pattern - by changing school, for example - or a new mode of travel as they progress from walking to cycling to driving."

The trust added that although the number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents in Britain each year has halved since 1990, the road toll remains high.

About 550 children will lose their lives this year - 400 of them from the most vulnerable 16 to 19 age group, where casualties have hardly reduced since 1994, the trust said.

Xinhua News Agency

Road traffic collisions major obstacle to development: UN chief

April 23, 2007

Road traffic collisions, which kill nearly 1.2 million people and injure millions more every year worldwide, are an important obstacle to development, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Monday.

In a message issued on the occasion of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week which starts Monday, Ban said road traffic collisions, in addition to their devastating human impact, also place an enormous strain on a country's health care system, and on the national economy in general.

On average road traffic injuries cost low- and middle-income countries more than one percent of gross national product, he said.

"For all these reasons, road traffic injuries are an important obstacle to development," he said.

Because prevention measures require political will and financial investments in efforts targeting young people, decisions to improve road safety need to be made at the highest levels of government, the secretary-general said.

The First United Nations Global Road Safety Week was called for in a resolution on improving global road safety passed by the UN General Assembly in October 2005.

The theme for the week-long program will be "young road users." Young people constitute a major group at risk of death, injury and disability on the road, with nearly 400,000 people between the ages of 10 and 24 killed around the world each year.

The Guardian (London)

Comment & Debate: One every 30 seconds: Road traffic crashes have become a major global killer. We need action to halt this disastrous toll

April 23, 2007

BYLINE: Michael Schumacher

Each year 1.2 million people are killed in road traffic crashes worldwide, most of them in developing countries. By 2020 the total could have doubled. Worst affected are children, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Road accidents are the number one killer of 10- to 25-year-olds.

Yet much of this loss of life is preventable. In the industrialised countries, road casualties have been falling for three decades. We are becoming ever more sophisticated in designing road safety systems. We expect crumple zones, air bags and electronic stability control. We expect road users to wear seat belts or helmets and to avoid excessive speed and drink driving.

Yet on the streets of south-east Asia, South America and Africa, road crashes kill on the scale of malaria or tuberculosis. China and India each lose at least 100,000 people a year to road crashes. In Africa, the World Health Organisation estimates that 200,000 die each year. The cost of road injury to developing countries is estimated at up to \$100bn a year - equivalent to all overseas aid from donor governments.

At last, the United Nations has begun to address the issue, and today is the start of the first UN global road safety week. The World Bank has established a global road safety facility and, together with the WHO, is working to reduce road traffic injuries. But the high-level political commitment and financial resources to give global road safety the attention it deserves are missing.

That is why I am delighted to be a member of the independent Commission for Global Road Safety, chaired by Lord Robertson. Our report, *Make Roads Safe*, recommends action to cut injuries in developing countries, including a \$300m 10-year programme to develop road safety skills, a 10% minimum spend on safety in aid-funded road projects, and a UN ministerial conference.

Prompted by the Make Poverty History campaign, the G8 leaders of the major industrialised countries have committed themselves to doubling aid and improving Africa's road infrastructure. Fewer than 20% of roads in sub-Saharan Africa are paved, and the Commission for Africa recommended that at least 90,000 miles of new roads are needed. But roads built to transport goods as fast as possible, designed to the cheapest specification without safety in mind, will make the world's most dangerous road network worse. The roads built to make poverty history must be safe.

African transport ministers have adopted a target of halving the continent's road traffic fatalities by 2015. To support this goal, road safety organisations have set up the Make

Roads Safe campaign, with a petition calling on the UN to give road safety the profile and priority it deserves. Tony Blair has already given his strong support.

There are reasons to be optimistic. In the industrialised nations, we have demonstrated over 30 years that we can reduce road deaths, even as traffic levels grow. In my racing career, I survived some very high-speed impacts. I am still alive because the sport's governing body designed a system where safety is the prime consideration. The car, the track and the rules are geared towards ensuring that crashes will not be fatal. This "vision zero" approach increasingly guides the policies of those countries with the most effective road safety performance.

In the end, it comes down to how many road fatalities we are prepared to accept. Today, we tolerate one every 30 seconds. The better alternative is to take action to make roads safe.

Michael Schumacher is a member of the Commission for Global Road Safety. He won 91 grands prix and was world champion seven times. The Make Roads Safe petition is at www.makeroadssafe.org

Xinhua News Agency

Road safety walk held in Pakistani capital to mark Global Road Safety Week

April 23, 2007

Road Safety Walk was held here Monday to mark the United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

As the theme of this year's Global Road Safety Week is "Young Road Users", Pakistan's National Highways and Motorway police organized the walk with an aim to create awareness among people, particularly the young drivers about road safety measures and ensure accident-free Pakistan.

Students of various schools, special children, representatives of non-governmental organizations, Islamabad police, motorway police and people from all walks of life participated in the walk.

They were holding banners and placards inscribed with slogans like "safe roadways safe Pakistan", "road safety is everybody's responsibility", "accidents hurt, safety doesn't," "don't exceed the speed limit," "don't use mobile phones while driving" and "observe others right of way".

Addressing the participants at the culminating point, Federal Minister for Communication Shamim Siddique said that consequences of accidents were very harming.

"The accident not only affects the victim but disturbs the life of the whole family," he added. The official APP news agency quoted Siddique as saying that National Highways and Motorway police would set up driving institutes throughout the country to ensure standard driving learning facilities, adding that standard driving and fitness of vehicle were helpful to reduce the number of accidents in the country.

He said that a chain of programs would be organized during the weeklong event, adding that special seminars would be held in other Pakistani cities like Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi to spread awareness about traffic rules and measures to prevent accidents.

Speaking on the occasion, Inspector General Motorway Police, Muhammad Riffat Pasha said, "Accidents claim as many as 7,000 lives every year and hurt more than 225,000 people in the country."

He said that the traffic police was determined take every possible measure to reduce number of accidents in the country and ensure accident-free Pakistan.

On the occasion, the traffic police distributed pamphlets and booklets among school children to educate them about traffic rules as well as causes and consequences of road accidents.

United Press International (UPI)

U.N. launches global road safety week

GENEVA, Switzerland, April 24

The United Nations is drawing attention to the estimated 1.2 million people who are killed every year in road accidents. The United Nations launched the first Global Safety Week this week, in which 400 young people from more than 100 countries at the World Health Organization's Geneva, Switzerland, headquarters called for more political will to tackle road safety.

"Because prevention measures require political will and financial investments in efforts targeting young people, decisions to improve road safety need to be made at the highest levels of government," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said.

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death worldwide among young people aged 10 to 24 years and each year nearly 400,000 people under 25 die on the world's roads, according to a report by WHO.

Most of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, where most of the fatalities involve pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and those using public transport, the report said.

"On average, road traffic injuries cost low and middle-income countries more than 1 percent of their gross national product," Ban said.

The U.N. event, which began Monday, will lead to the creation of a global network of young road safety ambassadors who intend to raise awareness at an international level.

"Focusing on youth is very appropriate. Youth has the energy and persuasive power needed to help address what we know is the biggest killer worldwide of people aged 10-24 years," WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said.

To mark the first U.N. Global Safety Week, hundreds of events are being organized around the world.

Australian Broadcastings Corporation (ABC) TRANSCRIPT

Road accidents biggest killer of youth worldwide

REPORTERS: Rafael Epstein

April 24, 2007

TONY EASTLEY: It's the leading cause of death around the world for people aged between 10 and 24.

It's not a lack of food, bad water, or a disease like malaria. It's motor vehicle accidents.

While the World Bank and other agencies are spending \$5 billion a year building roads in many poor countries, lobby groups say they're overlooking some safety issues and it's costing lives.

Europe Correspondent, Rafael Epstein reports.

RAFAEL EPSTEIN: A thousand young people under the age of 25 now die every day on the roads. Half of them are less than nine years old.

The Commission for Global Road Safety is the charity arm of the world body that runs Formula One racing. It's been part of the push behind the UN's first Global Road Safety Week. The Commission says donors who give money for roads fail to make sure they include simple things like barriers to separate pedestrians and road traffic.

They also want roundabouts, which they claim are 70 times safer than intersections, and only a little more expensive.

Dr Etienne Krug is Director of Violence and Injury prevention at the World Health Organisation.

ETIENNE KRUG: The leading cause of death in the world now for young people aged 10 to 24 is road traffic crashes.

The highest rates we found are in Africa. When we compare the rates of death in Europe and North America for young people, we find that half of the young people there killed are young drivers.

In Africa half of the young people killed on the roads are five to nine years olds, young children who are playing on the road, who are going to school, who are going to the market or fetching water or wood are being killed on the road.

RAFAEL EPSTEIN: Africa has the most dangerous roads with a fatality rate of 28.3 people per 100,000.

The economic cost, \$7.5 billion. The cost of road injury to developing countries is estimated by the Commission to be at up to \$120 billion a year. They say that's equivalent to all overseas aid from donor governments.

ETIENNE KRUG: Because more and more new roads are being built, new vehicles are being imported, new people are taking to the road in their new cars and this is development, this is good, but it is not matched with safety measures at all.

RAFAEL EPSTEIN: The Commission want \$36 million each year spent on road safety skills, and a 10 per cent minimum for safety measures in aid-funded road projects.

With less than 1 in 5 of the roads in sub-Saharan Africa paved, and hundreds of thousands of kilometres of paved roads are now being proposed.

Former World Champion Formula One driver Michael Schumacher is on the board of the Commission.

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER: I'd like to use my fame, but much more my experience in order to cooperate.

People do trust in Formula One, I mean, we are known as the sort of best drivers on the planet and they would probably understand and accept that we know what we are talking about.

I mean, there's one thing to race a car on a designed track for it, it's another thing to drive it on roads where children walk on the pedestrians.

RAFAEL EPSTEIN: Each year 1.2 million people are killed in road traffic crashes worldwide, most of them in developing countries. That number is projected to double by the year 2020. This is Rafael Epstein for *AM*.

Agence France Presse (AFP)

Jordan lost 900 lives to road accidents in 2006

April 24, 2007

Road accidents cost 900 lives and left 18,000 people injured in Jordan last year, with young children the main victims, official figures showed on Tuesday, as the UN marks a Global Road Safety Week.

The statistics from the kingdom's national centre for forensic medicine said more than 98,000 road accidents were registered last year, averaging one every five minutes and a death every 10 hours.

"The country is losing 700,000 dinars (100,000 dollars) a day from accidents," it said in a report which found that children between the ages of one and five accounted for the largest number of casualties.

Health Minister Saad al-Kharbacha said the findings amounted to a "disaster" for Jordan, which ranks second only behind Egypt in the Arab world for the number of road accidents.

In 2002, the latest year for which figures are available, 1.2 million people of all ages died on the road around the world -- including 1,000 young people per day -- and between 20 and 50 million were injured, according to the UN.

Associated Newspapers (Daily Mail)

A terrible toll

April 24, 2007

CARNAGE among young drivers and passengers on Scotland's roads is rising at an alarming rate, with deaths so far this year 40 per cent higher than in 2005.

To date, 32 drivers and passengers under 24 have died in 2007, without taking account of horrific injuries suffered by others. Yet, among the population as a whole, the death toll on the roads is at an historic low.

Behind every one of these statistics lies a human tragedy. Last week we published the harrowing account of a father's experience, losing his young daughter in a road accident. The further tragedy is that many of these fatalities are avoidable. The problem is that young people feel themselves to be immortal: death and disability are for the bumbling elderly, not for youngsters at the peak of their powers.

Drug abuse is often a contributory problem: surveys have shown nearly a third of drivers aged 17-24 knew someone who took illegal drugs and frequently drove and that almost a third had been in a car driven by somebody who had taken drugs.

Young drivers must be appealed to, in an adult way, to reconsider their behaviour on the roads. Scottish police chiefs deserve public support in their UN Global Road Safety Week campaign. We cannot tolerate this terrible loss of young lives any longer.

The Mirror

BLAIR: GREATEST THREAT TO THE WORLD IS BAD DRIVING

April 24, 2007

BYLINE: BY BOB ROBERTS, DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

BAD driving kills 1.2million people a year and is a bigger danger to the world than war or disease, Tony Blair said yesterday.

A thousand young people around the globe die every day in crashes and only Aids kills more young men. In the UK, 70 children are killed or seriously injured every week.

Oxfam says around a million have died in conflicts since 2001. The Prime Minister teamed up with ex-Formula 1 racing champion Michael Schumacher to call for action on the shocking death toll.

Mr Blair, speaking at the start of the UN global road safety week, said: "Every minute of every day a child is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads.

"Road crashes are the second leading cause of death for young men after HIV/Aids and in some African countries more than 70 per cent of those killed on the roads are young breadwinners. It is becoming clear that road injury has a serious impact on the wider development goals we're all trying to achieve."

Schumacher said: "Road crashes kill on the scale of malaria or tuberculosis."

Both men called for a UN conference to work out a strategy for cutting road deaths, which could involve British driving instructors being sent to the Third World to improve training.

The Pakistan Newswire

UN- (1.2m people kill every year due to road mishaps)

April 24, 2007

As many as 1.2 million people killed worldwide every year, and injure millions more due to road traffic collisions, says UN press release issued here Monday. Global Road Safety Week (23-29 April) was designated by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/5 of 26 October 2005.

The proposal was put forth by the Economic Commission for Europe to host the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, in Geneva, in April 2007, targeted at young road users, including young drivers. It also invited the WHO to organize jointly a second road safety stakeholders forum in Geneva as part of Global Road Safety Week, to continue work begun at the first forum held at United Nations Headquarters in 2004.

The UN Secretary-General issued the following message on this Day: This First United Nations Global Road Safety Week dedicated to young road users is platform for improving safety for the hundreds of millions of young people who travel the worlds roads every day. Since World Health Day 2004, and subsequent discussions in the United Nations General Assembly, Governments and their partners have paid increased attention to road safety. But there is still much progress to be made.

Road traffic collisions kill nearly 1.2 million people worldwide every year, and injure millions more. They are the leading cause of death for people aged 10 to 24 years, with devastating impact on families and communities. Road traffic deaths and injuries also place an enormous strain on a countrys health care system, and on the national economy in general.

In regions where young people constitute a major part of the population, the problem is even more acute. On average, road traffic injuries cost low- and middle-income countries between more than one per cent of Gross National Product. For all these reasons, road traffic injuries

are an important obstacle to development. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition that road traffic injuries can be prevented.

A number of countries have shown that by taking action on drink-driving, speeding, use of helmets and seat-belts, and increasing the visibility of pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, a significant number of lives can be saved and resources spared, even as motorization continues to rise. The United Nations Road Safety Collaboration has addressed these issues as priorities.

Because prevention measures require political will and financial investments in efforts targeting young people, decisions to improve road safety need to be made at the highest levels of Government. Beyond government ministries of transport, health and education, many others have a role to play: parents and guardians, educators, community and business leaders, automobile associations, insurers and vehicle manufacturers, celebrities and the media, survivors of road traffic crashes and their families.

Road safety will not happen by accident. Through the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety the key global event of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week and hundreds of other events being hosted around the world, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Regional Commissions and their partners are giving a voice to young people. Let us listen to their advice. And let us improve safety on the world's roads, for their sake and for ours.

Africa News (AllAfrica, Inc)

Gambia; Road Safety Campaign Launched

April 25, 2007

The Gambian government, in collaboration with Shell Marketing (Gambia) Ltd, World Health Organisation (WHO), and other stakeholders, last Monday April 23, launched the Global Road Safety campaign at a ceremony held at July 22nd Square in Banjul.

The campaign is part of a series of activities marking the commemoration of the United Nations Global Road Safety week. The theme of this year's campaign is "Road safety for young users, drive to live."

Ousman Sonko, Secretary of State for the Interior, who deputised for President Yahya Jammeh, the Gambian leader at the launch spoke about the commitment of The Gambia government in improving road safety in the country.

SoS Sonko described road accidents as amongst the major causes of death in the world and in Africa, in particular. He revealed plans for The Gambia government to institute a National Commission on Road Safety (NCRS) which, according to him, will be mandated to address road safety related issues in the interest of sustainable national development.

The Interior SoS spoke at length on numerous measures that need to be put in place in order to reduce incidences of road accidents, killing innocent road users.

He equally decried reckless driving, especially the use of mobile phones while driving, unqualified drivers, alcoholism or drunkenness while driving, etc.

Alhaji Omar Taal, Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Department of State for Health and Social Welfare, who deputised for SoS Tamsir Mbowe, described road safety as a matter that should not be treated in isolation, noting that everyone has to be a stakeholder in the issue. He expressed concern about the impact of road accidents on the socio-economic development of any country.

Julius Freeman, Chairman of Shell Marketing, The Gambia Ltd, and Country Representative, said Shell Marketing International will participate and contribute fully to the Global Road Safety Week and beyond.

"Over the next few weeks various activities will be organised to highlight some of the precautions that can be taken to reduce the incidences of road accidents, such as a workshop for students and a visit to the University of the Gambia (UTG) to engage future road users, organising defensive driving workshop for the License Department of the Gambia Police Force, customers of Shell Marketing and a visit to the road accident victims at the RVTH to see the impact that road crashes may have on our lives.

Mr Julius therefore calls for a change of attitude towards road safety by all and sundry.

Africa News (AllAfrica, Inc)

Botswana; Male Road Users At Risk

April 25, 2007

Young male pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, novice drivers and passengers are three times more likely to be killed or injured on the roads than young women, World Health Organisation (WHO) representative Dr Jean Alfazema Kalilani revealed on Monday.

She said this raises behavioural and gender issues. She added that road traffic accidents place a strain on the health system and other sectors of the economy through hospitalisations, rehabilitations, insurance claims, absenteeism from work and loss of family income.

Kalilani said the Global Road Safety Week which was launched on Monday is motivated by the fact that traffic accidents are the number two biggest killer of young people globally.

"Statistics indicate that globally, over 40 percent of all road traffic deaths occur among people aged five to 25 years. Sadly, around 85 percent of these occur in the low-income and middle-income countries," she said.

She stated that the Secretary General of United Nations Ban Ki-Moon has said that road traffic collisions kill nearly 1.2 million worldwide every year and injure millions more. Road traffic accidents is the leading cause of death of people aged between 10 to 24 years.

Kalilani however said that road safety campaigns are bearing fruit as exemplified by statistics from the Easter holidays.

At the launch of the campaign, the Minister of Works and Transport Lesego Motsumi said that the commemorations targeted road users, such as vehicle and cart owners, pedestrians and cyclists. She urged cyclists and motorists to use helmets and seatbelts. "It is mandatory to use helmets and seatbelts," she said.

Motsumi added that it is important to look after the young because they suffer the double tragedy of getting hurt in accidents and losing guardians.

She said her ministry is seriously looking into raising fees for people who violate the law by using cell phones while driving. She said perhaps a P2,000 fine would deter people from violating the law.

Motsumi said it is important for people to introspect and look at ways of curbing road traffic accidents instead of passing the buck.

Africa News (AllAfrica, Inc)

Uganda; WHO Wants Traffic Safety

April 25, 2007

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has asked the Government to enforce the use of helmets, seat belts and sensitise cyclists on respect for zebra crossings.

The appeal was made on Monday by the WHO country representative, George Melville, at the launch of the United Nations first global road safety week at their offices in Kampala.

The safety week is aimed at creating traffic awareness and curbing reckless driving. Melville noted that immediate action against traffic offences was needed since injuries resulting from them were increasingly becoming a major global public health and development problem.

He explained that 85% of deaths arising from traffic accidents were in developing countries. "This is the time for the low-income countries to take action. Inaction will mean an increase in road traffic deaths."

Melville said Uganda was spending sh300b annually on nursing victims of road accidents. He stated that the week's theme, 'The younger road users', targeted the younger population because traffic accidents were the second leading cause of death for people aged five to 25.

The state minister for primary health care, Emmanuel Otaala, appealed to the public to respect traffic rules. The campaign that ends tomorrow was punctuated with events like painting zebra-crossings, meetings for policy makers and a workshop for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Associated Press

Traffic crashes a concern for U.S. travelers abroad

April 25, 2007

BYLINE: By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press Writer

Driving down a sharp descent in the Tibetan mountains, Mian Chin knew she was in trouble when the brakes failed on her tour bus and she heard the driver declare in Mandarin Chinese, "We are going to die."

The white tour bus, with 25 people onboard last August, was picking up speed as it headed down the hillside, barreling toward a 90-degree turn in the road more than a quarter-mile away.

"I thought, 'Are we going to die like that?'" said Chin, 52, an atmospheric scientist who lives in suburban Washington.

But in a dramatic twist of fate, a herd of yaks happened to be crossing the road at the time. The bus slammed into more than a dozen of the oxen, slowing the vehicle down, before it collided with a retention wall. Beyond the unfortunate yaks, there were no serious injuries. Chin was treated for minor cuts and bruises.

Months later, Chin considers herself incredibly lucky. But new data being released this week highlights the perils of traffic safety for U.S. travelers abroad. Traffic crashes are the most common cause of non-natural deaths for American tourists, according to State Department data, more prominent than homicides, acts of terrorism or natural disasters.

Traffic crashes accounted for the deaths of 741 U.S. citizens traveling overseas from 2004-2006, or about one-third of the 2,364 deaths, according to an analysis of State Department data by the Make Roads Safe Campaign, an independent, nonprofit group funded by a

charitable foundation in the United Kingdom dedicated to reducing global traffic deaths and injuries.

The group said the figures could be understated because some families may not report the deaths to the State Department or some travelers may return for medical treatment and die in the United States. The report was issued Wednesday as part of the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

Automobile use has expanded rapidly in many parts of the world where transportation was once confined to bicycles. China, for example, is now the second-largest vehicle market in the world and passenger car sales grew 37 percent there last year.

Traffic safety experts say many American travelers overlook the dangers of road safety during their vacations and need to arrive at their destinations with more than just a packed suitcase, travel papers and vaccinations.

They should know about a country's road conditions, look into a travel company's safety record, avoid traveling at night and follow safety standards such as buckling up and not drinking and driving.

"Travelers indeed worry about malaria all the diseases they can contract. They worry about terrorism, they worry about hooliganism, they worry about people taking their things," said Rochelle Sobel, president of the Association for Safe International Road Travel. "And they don't worry about the single greatest cause of death."

Sobel started her organization after her 25-year-old son, Aron, was killed in a bus crash in Turkey just two weeks before his medical school graduation. Her association provides detailed reports on road conditions, dangerous highways and driver behavior for more than 150 countries.

Young adults can be particularly vulnerable. The World Health Organization reported last week that nearly 400,000 young people under 25 are killed in traffic crashes annually and car crashes are the leading cause of death worldwide for people ages 10 to 24.

At Michigan State University, which sent more than 2,700 students to 54 countries through its study abroad program last year, students receive information on road safety and are told to avoid late-night travel in countries with poor safety records or mountainous terrain. But convincing students of the potential risks months before they travel can be a challenge.

"They have a sense that they're kind of invincible and also, a lot of the safety measures that are in place here are simply taken for granted," said Julie Friend, a travel security analyst in the university's study abroad office. For tour groups, ensuring safety for travelers is helped by having strong relationships with drivers throughout the world. Mongol Global Tour Co. of Cypress, Calif., which conducts tours throughout the Pacific and Latin America, only hires drivers with the proper licensing and an in-depth knowledge of local regulations and customs, said Susie Oquist, who directs sales to the Mongol's South Pacific destinations.

Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr, the Make Roads Safe campaign's North American director and a co-author of the report, said the explosion of automobile sales in many developing countries and poor road conditions could endanger not only U.S. travelers but contribute to a larger epidemic of increased road fatalities worldwide.

Business Wire

One in Three American Deaths Overseas Due to Car Crashes According to New Study; Make Roads Safe Offers Tips for Travellers as Part of United Nation's First Global Road Safety Week, April 23-29

April 25, 2007

DISTRIBUTION: Community Desks; National Desks; Assignment Desks

Make Roads Safe - The Campaign for Global Road Safety, today released a first-of-its-kind analysis of State Department data that ranks road crashes as the leading cause of death for healthy Americans traveling abroad.

In observance of the first United Nation's Global Road Safety Week, April 23-29, Make Roads Safe released the report titled, "Road Crash Deaths of American Travelers: The Make Roads Safe Report; An Analysis of U.S. State Department Data on Unnatural Causes of Death to U.S. Citizens Abroad (2004-2006)". The report revealed that road traffic crashes cause twice as many deaths as each of the next greatest risks which were homicides and other accidents.

"When we travel, we protect ourselves with vaccines and we're careful about what we eat and drink, but the real hidden danger is being killed on the road," said Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr, North American Director of Make Roads Safe and author of the new report.

Today's report shows that nearly one-third of the reported deaths of healthy Americans overseas are due to traffic crashes. The majority of the deaths (77%) were in low- and middle-income countries. Among road crashes by type, the greatest number occurred in automobiles (73%) followed by motorcycles (12%), and pedestrians (7%).

"The death of Americans on roads overseas is just one symptom of the road crash epidemic around the world," added Dinh-Zarr. "This is a public health, transportation, and human rights issue. And we're not just talking about numbers - each death and injury has a devastating effect on a family so we need to act now or millions will suffer."

The non-profit Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) is one organization dedicated to preventing families from experiencing the pain of the death of a loved one on the road. "Our organization was founded in Aron's memory," said Rochelle Sobel who founded ASIRT after her 25 year-old son was killed in a crash while traveling in Turkey. "I hope that someday, due to all of our efforts, it will be a gentler world, a world in which all children return home safely."

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 1.2 million people are killed each year on the world's roads, with 43,000 deaths here in the U.S. Road crash deaths are expected to double in less than 15 years, with the majority of the burden in lower income countries.

"We have the tools to make roads safer," said Dr. Eugenia Rodrigues, Regional Advisor for Road Safety for the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, "from building safer road infrastructure such as pedestrian crosswalks and safer intersections to promoting seat belt and helmet use and reducing drinking and driving."

One of those individuals who traveled to Washington to tell his story is Mr. Ken Welch of Shreveport, LA. Welch has lived abroad and traveled the world extensively and was injured in a serious car crash in Vietnam. "I was broadsided at night at an intersection in Ho Chi Minh City by a speeding car with no headlights," recalls Welch. "I have seen many crashes occur in Asian countries involving Americans because they simply were not expecting a darkened car zooming through an unlit intersection at night."

To help protect travelers overseas, Make Roads Safe offers the following top five tips:

- 1) Plan Ahead - Know your route and method of transportation ahead of time;
- 2) Don't Travel at Night - Low visibility and differing driving customs (like lack of headlight use) greatly increase your risk of a crash;
- 3) Use Mass Transportation - Mass Transportation, especially trains and subways is generally safer than driving yourself in an unfamiliar environment;
- 4) Pay Attention to Traffic Patterns and Local Customs - Watch the local residents, especially as a pedestrian and at intersections and know the laws and customs before your trip, and

5) Follow the same safety rules you follow at home - Always wear your safety belt, never drink and drink and do not speed.

Make Roads Safe is a campaign involving safety advocates, physicians, engineers, parents, teachers, and others who are committed to saving lives on and around our highways. Today Make Roads Safe supporters are converging on Capitol Hill to share the findings of the new report at a Congressional Briefing about global road safety.

Also as part of Global Road Safety Week, Make Roads Safe is encouraging individuals and groups to sign a petition to the United Nations (UN) to raise awareness about road safety as an important global issue on the level of malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis and to put road safety on the UN's sustainability agenda. The goal is to obtain 1.2 million signatures or one signature for each of the 1.2 million road deaths per year. The petition will be presented to the UN at its next General Assembly later this year.

A full copy of the report, "Road Crash Deaths of American Travelers: The Make Roads Safe Report: An Analysis of U.S. State Department Data on Unnatural Causes of Death to U.S. Citizens Abroad (2004-2006)" is available at www.makeroadssafe.org/us.

The Press Trust of India

Youth from around the world call for road safety

April 25, 2007

A United Nations-sponsored gathering of young people from around the world has issued a global call to governments, schools, universities and the media to take action to improve road safety for youth who are more likely to be killed in accidents than any other cause.

Some 400 participants at the World Youth Assembly, a two-day event which concluded yesterday, issued a declaration urging young people to "stand up and participate in local, national and international road safety campaigns and programmes".

They pledged to set their own example for others by taking practical steps, from always wearing seat belts and motorcycle helmets to refraining from speeding or drunk driving.

The youth delegates, who came from at least 100 countries, also called on adults, "our heroes and our mentors" to create a "safe environment for us when we are on the road, and to serve as road models for safe traffic behaviour".

The World Youth Assembly was held as part of the first ever UN Global Road Safety Week and comes in the wake of a report released last week by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that road traffic crashes have become the leading cause of death for people aged between 10 and 24, with nearly 400,000 people in that age bracket killed every year and millions of others permanently disabled or injured.

In an address by video-link, General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa said there was an "unprecedented" global momentum now on road safety.

UK Newsquest Regional Press

Taking a lead in road safety

BYLINE: Gordon McCully

April 25, 2007

A Chorley primary school is joining a road safety campaign by teaming up with new friends in Africa.

St Chad's Catholic Primary, Blackburn Road, Whittle-le-Woods, is taking part in the project which is being launched as part of the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week from April 23-29.

As well as finding out more about life in another country and making new friends, the pupils will also share ideas to promote road safety and discuss the different problems they face in their communities. Jane Deacon, year four and five teacher at St Chad's, said: "This is a very exciting project and we are looking forward to forging these links as road safety is an issue that affects children in all countries.

"We hope that by talking about the issues our pupils will think about how they can stay safe on the roads." The scheme has been set up by Lancashire County Council's road safety group. Clare Farrer, deputy group leader for the group, said: "We are running other initiatives including a creative competition for schools, which we hope will raise awareness of road safety and help to create a legacy of safe thinking on the roads."

Road traffic crashes kill 3,000 people, including 500 children everyday, and the project aims to highlight these problems.

The project has been organised by the United Nations Regional Commission alongside the World Health Organisation.

If your school is interested in getting involved, call the Road Safety Group on 01772 531049 or email roadsafety@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Xinhua News Agency (China)

Myanmar takes part in UN road safety week movement

YANGON, April 26, 2007

Myanmar has been taking part in launching of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week Movement in response to the UN call for reducing traffic accidents to prevent increasing loss of human resources and property.

The movement, which is organized by the Yangon Division Traffic Rules Enforcement Committee and will last until the end of this week, includes upgrading of roads, putting up of posters, and organizing demonstration of traffic rules.

Educative activities for road users are also being carried out at busy traffic points with pamphlets on traffic rules being distributed to the public.

During the week-long campaign, some newly-built roads in Yangon are being put into service to mark the movement.

According to Thursday's state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar, the government formed the Traffic Rules Enforcement Committee in 1989 and since then the committee has been giving educative talks and taking action against violation of traffic rules.

Meanwhile, under a special program covering states and divisions and including Yangon, Myanmar has cut down the number of untrained traffic police force members by 500, according to the Home Ministry.

Over 200 well-trained traffic police force members will be appointed by August this year to substitute the untrained ones.

The country now has more than 80,000 police force members, of whom only a few thousands are dealing with traffic, mostly assigned in traffic-congested major cities such as Yangon and Mandalay, according to official statistics.

Other statistics show that more than 1,000 people lost their lives annually in recent years in Myanmar due to car accidents. The yearly loss due to such accidents amounted to a value of about 94 billion Kyats (about 72.3 million US dollars), according to the Committee for Smooth and Secured Transport of Yangon division.

The statistics also indicate that over 100 car accidents occur in Yangon with over 10 people killed and over 300 injured monthly.

Meanwhile, the Myanmar police authorities have launched a car accident prevention campaign in Yangon since January last year to bring down death rate from such accidents and improve traffic flow and safety in the city.