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2019 Asia Pacific Road Safety Seminar – Wrap up

On October 29 and 30 in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), supported by the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) and ASEAN NCAP, hosted the 11th Asia Pacific Road Safety Seminar, whose focus was on *Road Safety Leadership in the Asia Pacific Region*.

The Seminar was attended by 186 participants from 26 countries and was structured around two-days of stimulating capacity building workshops, keynote addresses, high-level panel discussions, and plenary sessions. It brought together representatives of governments, international and local institutions, development banks, UN agencies, and private sector organisations active in the region.

The main objectives of the Seminar were to:

- Raise awareness of key road safety issues in Asia and in the Pacific.
- Provide capacity building opportunities to participants on evidence-based good practice in road safety.
- Stimulate discussion relating to the post-2020 agenda.
- Identify avenues for multi-sector contribution towards the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Develop networks to support information, good practice and knowledge sharing.
- Promote the work of all partners within Asian and Pacific countries.

In the opening session of the Seminar, Y. Bhg Dato' Sayed A. Rahman bin Sayed Mohd, Secretary General of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society and Mr. Xavier Castellanos, Regional Director of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) welcomed the guests and participants highlighting the importance of engaging in road safety work stressing how this is “a crisis touching every single one of us”. In their addresses they both shared a

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common vision that this crisis cannot be tackled by a single agency and that to achieve change we need to work together, in concert.

Dr Siti Zaharah Ishak, Director General of MIROS, underlined how road safety is both “a health and development issue” that needs to be tackled through a holistic approach inclusive all elements of the Safe System.

Intervening via video, the United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety and President of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), Mr Jean Todt, welcomed the participants to the Seminar and reiterated the crucial importance of road safety leadership in the sustainable decrease of road crash fatalities worldwide.

Following this, representatives from United Nations ESCAP, Asian Development Bank, the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, GRSP and ASEAN NCAP gave plenary addresses focusing on the opportunities and challenges faced by road safety practitioners in the region. Their presentations also showcased practices as well as regional and international frameworks of reference for road safety leadership. These were finalised with a presentation from Prudence Foundation showcasing their Safe STEPS road safety campaign, which has been developed with the IFRC and technical guidance from GRSP.

The Seminar continued with three, concurrently running workshops focusing on safer roads for motorcyclists (facilitated by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRap), sustainable youth mobility, and collaborative approaches in road safety. These workshops gave more insights in specific areas of interests, where participants had the opportunity to discuss with experts and practitioners from organisations such as the FIA Foundation, Asia Injury Prevention Foundation, ADB Youth for Asia, Save the Children, eDriving and others

At the end of the workshops, the Malaysian Minister of Transport, YB Anthony Loke Siew Fook, addressed the whole assembly reiterating his Ministry's strong commitment to road safety in

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Malaysia and formally launched the MyRAP programme along with iRap and MIROS. He congratulated GRSP, MIROS and ASEAN NCAP for the partnership approach to holding the seminar stating that he felt it would “provoke new ideas and create strong partnerships to move forward the road safety agenda in Asia and the Pacific.”

On the second day, participants benefitted from a panel discussion focusing on ways to promote greater Government engagement in road safety for the post-2020 agenda. Panelists

from World Health Organisation (WHO), Vital Strategies, the World Bank and the Malaysian Government’s Road Safety Department (JKJR) explored issues such as funding allocation, awareness raising, legislative action, mandatory road safety requirements and education, and they initiated an active discussion with participants on these and other related issued. Participants then enjoyed a field trip and guided tour of MIROS where they had the opportunity to experience the road safety simulation laboratory, the ASEAN NCAP lab and understand the innovative data systems used within Malaysia to track road safety progress.

During the two days, the 2019 Asia Pacific Road Safety Seminar helped strengthen the networks between road safety stakeholders in the region and provided a platform for knowledge transfer between countries and communities sharing common challenges. It also restated, in the words of Dave Cliff, CEO of GRSP, that road safety is “a scandal of tolerance” —no other crisis claiming 3700 lives every day worldwide is as tolerated as road crashes. But he finished on a positive image: “in our everyday work we have to focus on the actions, on the administrative minutiae required by our role. We have to move through that, but we need to have our goal, that none should be killed in the road traffic system, as our ultimate aim. And with that clear in mind come back to our day-to-day tasks and work to achieve that goal.”.

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