

6th GRSP Africa Road Safety Event (2017) – Wrap Up

The Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) has met for the sixth time in Africa to discuss road safety on the continent, and ways to meet the fast-approaching UN Sustainable Development Goal target on road deaths. The UN SDG target is to halve deaths by 2020.

Held from 23-24 October in Cape Town, the Africa Road Safety 2017 seminar sought to share successes and results from across Africa towards achieving the targets. It brought together role-players from governments, institutions, industry, and civil society partners from several African countries. The Seminar provided opportunity for delegates to participate in 5 breakaway workshops on various road safety topics including effective data management, traffic policing and the involvement of private sector and communities.



Dave Cliff, CEO GRSP, Andrew Bradley, Head of Group Risk, Nestle, and Jean-Pierre Krause, Head of Risk Engineering, Zurich set the challenges for the Insurance for Safer Roads initiative

Speaking at the opening of the event, the United Nations Special Envoy for road safety and President of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), Mr. Jean Todt, said there is a need for concerted and renewed efforts to halve the deaths on roads by 2020.

“Too many lives are lost on the roads on this great continent. Globally, 1.25 million people die on the world’s roads and one fifth of those fatalities are accounted for here in Africa. ... the continent suffers from the highest road traffic fatality rate than any other region – despite having less than five percent of the world’s registered vehicles,” he noted.

Mr. Todt further noted that halving the fatality rate may look like an impossible mission, but that he firmly believes the tide can be turned with the right level of political commitment and investment.

Citing France as an example, he said 18000 people died on the country’s roads each year in the early 1970s before road safety became a national priority. It took more than 40 years for the annual road fatality figure to drop to 3268 in 2013.

“The turnaround is a result of improvements on the key pillars which are outlined in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action, and the African Road Safety Action Plan: a focus on safer roads, vehicles,

and road users; improved post-crash care, and stronger road safety governance including the enforcement of strong legislation,” he said.

Apart from this, Mr. Todt said it is vital to improve how road safety data is collected, managed and reported on the continent.

He noted that reliable data will help to monitor the progress being made towards national, regional, and global goals. He said this is vital to be confident in assessments on how close countries are to achieving the UN SDG targets.

Also speaking at the event on behalf of the Minister of Transport, was Mr. Chris Hlabisa, Deputy Director-General: Road Transport, at the Department of Transport. Mr. Hlabisa noted that government alone was not responsible for road safety in South Africa.

“The Department holds the firm belief that road safety is not something government does for the people, but is what government does with the people,” he said, noting, “...the strategy (government’s National Road Safety Strategy, adopted by the Cabinet in March) is based on the notion that road safety is everyone’s responsibility. However, it recognises that government must take the lead in the effort to make roads safer and secure”.

Mr Hlabisa further noted that government’s road safety efforts exist to ensure there is a reduction in road deaths, and that the decrease of road deaths is rapid and recognisable in order for the country to meet the international goals laid out by the UN Decade of Action, and to meet the goals of the National Development Plan by 2030.

“Against this background we continue to renew our Road Safety energies and efforts as a country, and to work even closer together with external stakeholders. This year, one of our focal areas to progress road safety is the strengthening of partnerships with the various sectors of our society. For us, this creates a central point to interface and work with all our stakeholders in a collaborated manner in fighting road carnage,” he said

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