



*Permanent Mission of*  
**Malaysia**  
*to the United Nations*

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**STATEMENT BY  
THE HONORABLE DR. WEE KA SIONG  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 60:  
GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY CRISIS**

**AT THE PLENARY OF THE 60TH SESSION OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
TUESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2005**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the World Health Organization (WHO) for presenting a thorough and comprehensive report on global road safety as well as the long list of recommendations therein. The report provides us with useful information especially on the activities that have been undertaken following the adoption of Res. 58/289 in April 2004. We are pleased to learn about the creation of the international road safety organization, which is known as the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. We are also encouraged by the participation of many UN agencies including UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Food Programme, the World Bank as well other non-governmental bodies and donors in the initiative which is reflective of the broad support and attention given to the need to tackle the question of road safety.

Mr. President,

2. It is indeed very disturbing to be reminded again that road traffic injuries continue to pose as a major public health problem and a leading cause of death for many countries, especially in the developing world. The fact that every year an average of 1.2 million people die and millions more are injured or disabled, mostly in urban areas of developing countries, should be a matter of grave concern to all of us. Such grim statistics definitely demands urgent attention and concerted effort by the international community to tackle and reverse the situation, as road traffic injuries, are largely preventable.

3. The destructive and multi-dimensional impact of deaths, injuries and disabilities on the economic and social well-being of our societies are well documented and need no further elaboration. The loss of any human life or disability caused by road traffic accidents, especially knowing that they are preventable, is hard to accept. It is more devastating to look beyond the statistic of death and injuries especially the traumatic and emotional impact of the loss of life or disability on family members of the victim. Road traffic accidents have generated enormous economic cost and placed a heavy burden on national health services, particularly those of developing countries.

Mr. President,

4. The Government of Malaysia attaches serious attention to the problem of road traffic death and injury. Road accident is one of the major causes of death and injury in Malaysia. Despite the many efforts undertaken by the government to enhance road safety, over 300,000 cases of road traffic accidents were reported in 2004 alone compared with 290,000 cases in 2003, at the average of 895 accident cases involved per day in 2004 throughout the country. These accidents have resulted in the lost of 6,000 lives last year. This phenomenon is said to consume an estimated sum of six billion Malaysian Ringgit or 1.5 billion dollars due to loss of productivity, medical costs, management costs, property damage and others. However, it was noted that the fatality rate from these accidents in 2004 have decreased to 17% compared to those in 2003. This was largely attributed to the Government's unwavering efforts and commitment towards addressing this problem in the interest of saving lives.

5. Malaysia has indeed taken serious efforts to improve road safety and to reduce fatalities. In 2004, the Government has made the issue of road safety a national agenda. Under this initiative and in order to give specific and focus attention to the question of road safety, a separate department known as the Department of Road Safety was established in September 2004 to address the road safety issue. This Department would scrutinize all the efforts and activities made by the Government agencies and NGOs in Malaysia and formulating strategies and recommendations aimed at reducing road traffic accidents.

6. At international and regional levels, Malaysia continues to be an active partner in the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) under the aegis of the World Bank, World Road Association, ASEAN Land Transport and Safety Committee, Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia and ASEAN Sub-Working Group of Road Transport and Road Safety.

Mr. President,

7. Malaysia welcomes the role of the United Nations especially the initiative of this august Assembly to relentlessly increase the awareness around the globe on the need to address road traffic fatalities as a global public health and development problem. We support the involvement of the regional commissions as well as other international agencies to address the issue of road safety and assist national governments in instituting measures aiming at enhancing road safety in their respective country.

8. In this connection we support many of the recommendations presented in the report of the WHO to this Assembly, which we believe, would be able to contribute to the promotion of road safety, particularly in developing countries. We feel that the list of proposals and recommendations enumerated in the report were not exhaustive and therefore it would be useful for member states to continue to exchange ideas based on our own respective experiences in dealing with the issue of road safety in our own country. It is also important for the General Assembly to pay attention to addressing the question of providing financial resources as well as technical assistance to the countries in need of such assistance to enable them to develop the necessary infrastructure that could avoid or minimize road traffic accidents and for financing the necessary awareness campaign among the population on road safety. Such assistance we believe could possibly save millions of lives and prevent unnecessary injuries.

Mr. President,

9. Road safety is one of the most important issues that would continue to affect each and every of us in one way or another. However, unfortunately the issue in many instances has not been given adequate attention commensurate with the magnitude of the problem. Road traffic accidents are predictable and therefore preventable. In order to combat the problem, there needs to be close coordination and collaboration by using a holistic and integrated approach. Malaysia therefore wishes to reiterate that the UN should continue to play a major role in addressing this highly preventable but deadly public safety issue.

Thank you.