

International Road Assessment Programme Innovation Workshop

Monday 17 February 2020

Speech by Lord Robertson, Chairman, FIA Foundation

I would like to add my thanks to Tomas Eneroth for hosting and organising this 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety.

Sweden has long been the pre-eminent leader in road safety, in thought and action. Vision Zero is spreading across the world, although not nearly as rapidly as we would all like.

Now Sweden is offering leadership, friendship and great generosity in bringing us together this week in Stockholm.

We will spend some time this week looking back at the successes and failures of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety.

But the main objective this week must be to identify winning strategies for achieving this ambitious target of halving global road deaths within the next ten years.

iRAP has been one of the great success stories of the road safety decade. It has matured into a recognised global assessment standard.

It has maintained its ethos as a not-for-profit charity, with free-to-air assessment protocols.

It has built alliances with development banks, engaged with governments in more than 100 countries, and developed a key working relationship with the World Bank's Global Road Safety Facility, with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Most important, it has influenced road building and rehabilitation. More than 75 billion dollars' worth.

With safety upgrades to IRAP specifications in 49 countries.

IRAP will be integral to us reaching our health target of halving road deaths in the new Decade of Action for the SDGs.

It will be crucial to meeting the voluntary road safety targets, approved by UN member states, for safer road infrastructure.

So we must all do more.

I led the campaign that secured the first Global Ministerial Conference on road safety. This is my third such conference. I never envisaged that they would be glorified talk shops.

Yet, since the first, Moscow, Ministerial in 2009 at least 2 million children have died on the world's roads. One hundred million children have been injured.

Enough! This week let's have no more tolerance of platitudes from ministers who turn up here but turn off when they get back home.

And even less tolerance for the ministers who couldn't even be bothered to show up at all.

No more excuses.

We know the problem. Too many badly and dangerously designed roads, which don't meet the needs of all the people using them. We have the solutions – they are stored in IRAP's online system called Vida.

We're talking about human lives.

And iRAP's new Vaccines for Roads update contains many human stories, broken down by different categories of trauma: serious brain injury, fracture, amputation.

Please go to iRAP's website and read these powerful reminders that this work we are engaged in is not ultimately about engineering or statistics. It is about human flesh and blood.

We must all do more.

So I am pleased to announce, in what is possibly the first funding pledge of this important week, but I hope won't be the last, that the FIA Foundation's Board has agreed that IRAP will remain at the very heart of our programme over the next five years to 2025.

We commit to maintaining at least our annual core funding of one million euros over this period. And we fully intend that we will do more.

Later today, at our Child Health Initiative event, the FIA Foundation will join IRAP and FedEx to officially launch Star Rating for Schools.

After more than seven years of development, after beta-testing at more than 600 schools around the world, this life-saving application is ready for prime time.

There is no journey more important than the journey to school, and we look forward to working with IRAP and many partners, including the FIA clubs and some of the world's leading road safety and urban NGOs, to roll out Star Rating for Schools.

So we are doing our part for iRAP, but others must also step up and do more. If other donors - bilateral aid donors for example - could match our one million euro core funding per year it would much more than double iRAP's ability to operate effectively.

More free-to-air support for the rapidly expanding programme partners around the world;

More free-to-air support for the existing and innovative new products that are being used in more than 100 countries around the world

More regional teams to work side by side with all the partners needed to ensure a road is built and maintained to be safe for all road users

More support for developing country programmes and building the relationships that matter;

More expert training to increase home-grown road safety skills in transport and infrastructure departments;

More assessments completed, more roads and highways upgraded to the global standard;

More lives saved, more trauma prevented.

One million euros. For a development agency like SIDA or DFID that is pocket change. You could even club together.

Of course, I understand that there are grant and procurement rules that bind your hands. But excuses are easy. Finding a way through is hard. But it is necessary.

Because for the campaign to ensure minimum 3 star safety on our strategic networks around the world, doubling iRAP's core funding would be utterly transformational.

This is an Innovation Workshop. We have some of the best brains and some of the leading institutions in the global road safety community assembled.

We must take this opportunity to be innovative. To use our imagination. To come together in support of this great programme.

And we should remember that innovation doesn't have to mean complexity. The simplest thing, done for the first time, is innovative.

Like governments finding a way through their bureaucracy to match fund the FIA Foundation's core funding. We could agree to sit down and talk and try to get it done this week.

We all helped to build iRAP. This is an achievement that belongs to all of us.

So now we must face the challenge of realising its full potential. Our full potential. We have a tool in our hands that can save millions of lives between now and 2030.

Let's put it to work to make roads safe.