

Honourable ministers, distinguished guests, my fellow youth delegates, friends,

Today's generation of young people is the largest ever in our history. Over 3 billion people – nearly half of the world's population – are under the age of 25. Almost 90% of all young people live in low and middle-income countries. Of these young people, more than 1000 die every day on the world's roads. Tens of thousands more are injured.

It was rewarding for me to see yesterday the overwhelming response to our side event on road safety for children and youth. Your participation demonstrates that we, the youth, have been recognized at the global level as an important stakeholder.

Nevertheless the real world looks a bit different from this conference and the international road safety community in which YOURS and its network of youth champions operate.

Road traffic injuries have been the leading killer of young people worldwide for over a decade, so why are we, the youth, so often not included in preventing these tragedies?

Our system is failing us. Our policy makers are failing us. And yet, we have little say. We are often ignored.

Just telling youth what to do, and how and when to do it, is never going to be an effective approach. Saying to youth "I don't need to hear your views" is not really engaging them. Is it?

Young people have a right to be adequately informed, consulted and empowered to contribute to preventing road traffic injuries. After all, this is the biggest threat to our lives. Youth themselves have a vital role to help saving lives on the world's roads.

Back in Moscow, at the birth of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, the first ever global youth movement for road safety was launched. Since then thousands of young people have been empowered worldwide. Now we, the youth, are asking for your help.

We know that we can tackle this global road safety crisis by inspiring and empowering young people from around the world. Together we can take action as positive agents of change in our communities.

Young people can do so much to contribute. Is there any group better placed to act as role models, lead peer education, raise awareness, mobilize communities and advocate for change?

The world has five years to deliver the most ambitious safety target ever set: to halve road deaths globally.

We need a revolution for action on road safety. Surely we must look to young people to lead and energize this revolution. Therefore, we insist on meaningful youth participation to be built in to (inter-) national, regional and local road safety strategies and action plans. That means involving young people from the start.

You the international community, you the governments of the world: You can partner with us to kick start real change.

Look through our eyes and see our potential. Imagine the power of youth as initiators, peer-to-peer communicators and implementers of good road safety practices and leadership.

There has been a lot of talk during this conference of the need for action. We've spent two days saying how we need to innovate for faster change. And do you know what? We've not just been saying this for two days. We've been saying it for 10 years.

My son Jasper was born just ten weeks ago. As things stand, I will bring him up in an unsafe world. And I ask myself, will he be able to play, walk and cycle safely? Or will he grow up in a world where he faces an unacceptable risk on the road? Are we going to continue this business as usual? Or will we all take the responsibility to shape the future that all our young people deserve and want?

We have the Brasilia Declaration before us. It is a manifesto for real action. On behalf of the youth around the world, I urge you to make a real commitment to this Declaration.

You have the power to decide. Will this Declaration sit on the shelf, or will it act as tipping point. Go back to your countries and make the decision: a nice visit to Brazil and a load of empty promises or renewed energy and a sense of urgency to translate the words into real and lasting action to save lives.

Ladies and gentlemen. You can count on us to play our part and to continue our journey: advocating for youth and road safety issues, inspiring youth to join our cause and to empower youth to take road safety action.

We ask you to play your part. Join us, stand with us and let's unleash the power of children and youth. No more delay, and no more excuses. Let's build a better future for all our young people, for all of us and for the generations to come.

I thank you very much. Obrigado