Decade of Action for Road Safety launched in Cuttack (India)

On the occasion of worldwide launching ceremonial of Decade of Action for Road Safety by United Nations, Forum for Prevention of Road Accidents (FPRA) in association with International Road Federation (IRF) India called a press meet here in Cuttack to brief the media about the objective of this decade.

Road traffic deaths and injuries take the lives of nearly 1.3 million people every year, and injure millions more. Over 90% of road traffic deaths and injuries occur in low-income and middle-income countries. Globally, road traffic crashes have become the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 years. Pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of motorized two-wheelers and their passengers (“vulnerable road users”) account for around 46% of global road traffic deaths. Over 90% of the world’s fatalities on the roads occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world’s registered vehicles.

In ten years, the World Health Organization predicts that this figure could rise significantly without increased action. The Decade of Action, officially proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2010 and supported by more than 60 governments, provides a unique opportunity for long-term action that can save millions of lives on the world’s roads.

Attending the meeting Mr. Raj Pal, Secretary, International Road Federation (IRF) India chapter said "The over-all objective of this global campaign is to halt the alarming rise of road accidents. As member state of the United Nations and a country with highest record of..."
road accidents, it is only proper that the India be actively involved in this undertaking," He further said that in India, 15 people die in road accidents every hour, making the country world No. 1 in road fatalities. This initiative could save millions of lives across the ten-year period. Mr. Pal discussed the objectives and activities of IRF and declared FPRA as its official partner for Orissa state.

Mr. Surendranath Samantary, Vice Chairman, Forum for Prevention of Road Accidents noted that according to recent Crime Branch report, total 9,362 accidents took place and 3,773 persons lost their lives and 11,510 persons were injured in Orissa during the year 2010. He said since last five years, FPRA is working for developing road safety programmes to increase knowledge, awareness and skills amongst all type of road users. Besides, education it is promotes advocacy on relevant issues in influencing, informing and assisting decision and policy makers.

Speaking to the press, Mr. Bikash Mohapatra, Founder Secretary, Forum for Prevention of Road Accidents said that road traffic injuries can be prevented. There is irrefutable evidence about what works to prevent road traffic deaths and injuries. Countries which have made the greatest gains in road safety have done so by involving all relevant sectors of society. Comprehensive legislation and enforcement around key factors such as drinking and driving, speeding and wearing seat-belts and helmets; safe roads and vehicles; and an effective emergency care system are key ingredients to success he pointed out.

Mr. Mohapatra called all stakeholders: policy-makers in governments, enforcement agencies, heads of private companies, representatives of the media and the NGO sector and celebrities to take responsibility and work together with them to reduce the number of people being killed on the roads via improved road safety planning, infrastructure improvements, increased education and awareness and the implementation of road traffic regulations.
Two road safety films “Ehsaas” and “Afsoos”, made by IRF were screened on the occasion. Both the films have been highly appreciated by the Commissionerate Police and will be projected in different film halls to create public awareness on anti-drunk driving and rescue of road accident victims.

Joint Secretary of the Forum, Ms. Minati Bindhani proposed vote of thanks and urged the press & media to report responsibly on road traffic crashes, using reports on crashes as an opportunity to address prevention.

Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in March 2010, the next ten years will be observed as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. It is aimed to provide a framework to countries and communities to increase action to save lives on the world’s roads.

Just over 40 media persons attended the meeting, representing O TV, E TV, S TV, Kamyab, Naxatra News, MBC TV, Kanak TV, Samaya, Prajatantra, Dharitri, Pragativadi, Anupam Bharat, Telegraph, Sambad, Khabara, Samaya, Samaj etc.

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