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**National Highway
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World Health Day – Greater New York Auto Show – Javits Center, New York City

by Tom Louizou, Region I Administrator



The NHTSA World Health Day public service message and unique logo was broadcast all day on the jumbo video billboard at One Times Square in New York City. The two-slide spot (world-wide traffic deaths/WHD logo) ran two times every hour and was seen by an estimated 1.5 million people. The message ran courtesy of Panasonic and NBC, who jointly control content on the sign at “America’s crossroads.”

April 7, 2004. New York, NY. Secretary Norman Mineta and NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge joined international leaders in Paris for the launch of World Health Day. Their special “Road Safety is No Accident” message was carried via satellite to over 400 members of the motor press and manufacturer corporate leaders in New York City attending the Greater New York Auto Dealers - International Motor Press Association (IMPA) breakfast. The Secretary and the Administrator emphasized the importance of sharing best practices among the world safety leaders and pledged to provide information on NHTSA’s role in our solution-based traffic safety model. Broadening partnerships and collaborative work between the public and private sectors will be the key for global success.

The Greater New York Auto Dealers Association honored Secretary Mineta and Administrator Runge for their ongoing leadership in the safety belt program. The Alliance of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers were event supporters.

An example of the comprehensive press coverage appeared in the New York Times on April 7: **Motor Vehicle-Related Deaths Will Increase, Study Predicts – Matthew L. Wald** <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/07/politics/07TRAF.html> **Plenary Session of the UN General Assembly – April 14.** ■

Secretary Mineta Addresses United Nations General Assembly

April 14, 2004. United Nations, NY. The United Nations held a special plenary session of the General Assembly dedicated to a discussion of the global road safety crisis. Twenty-seven speakers noted the rapid rise in road traffic injuries around the world, especially the rising toll in developing countries. Introductory speakers included Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchet; Dr. Lee Jong-Wook, Director General of the World Health Organization; and Yousef Bin Alwai Bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Oman, who introduced the resolution on the road safety crisis.



Secretary Mineta addresses the Plenary Session of the UN General Assembly on Global Road Safety: A Shared Responsibility.



Caption: WHO Director Etienne Krug, Dr. Runge, and Secretary Mineta at the UN General Assembly.

Speaking for the U.S. at the UN meeting, Secretary Mineta recognized that the nature of road safety problems and solutions differ from country to country, but noted that we can all learn from each other and hoped that the special session of the General Assembly would mark the beginning of broad-based, international collaboration on road safety.

Following the session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on improving road safety globally. The resolution invited the World Health Organization, working in close cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, to act as a coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system. The resolution also requested that a report be submitted to the 60th Session of the United Nations in 2006. ■

The World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention emphasizes that road safety is a shared responsibility across many sectors and disciplines. It provides governments and other policy-makers, industry, non-governmental organizations, international agencies, and individuals with concrete recommendations for improving road safety:

1. Identify a lead governmental agency to guide national road traffic safety efforts.
2. Assess the problem, policies, institutional settings, and capacity for road traffic injury prevention.
3. Develop a national road safety strategy and plan of action.
4. Allocate financial and human resources to address the problem.
5. Implement specific interventions to reduce the problem and evaluate their impact.
6. Support development of national capacity and international cooperation. ■

Remarks of the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta Secretary of Transportation

New York Auto Show (Taped) • New York, NY (from Paris) • April 7, 2004 • 10 am

I want to thank Dr. Jeff Runge for his tireless efforts to make travel safer for all Americans.

And let me wish a good morning to all of you at this Opening Press Breakfast for the New York Auto Show.

We're speaking to you from Paris this morning, where I have joined President Jacques Chirac and other world leaders to kick off World Health Day.

While you may not have expected "world health" to be a topic of discussion at the New York Auto Show, the fact is that traffic fatalities are a leading killer in America... and around the world.

Even more sobering is the projection that, by 2020, traffic crashes are expected to be the third largest global killer – ahead of malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS.

One reason that the United States has been able to make the progress that Dr. Runge just spoke of is thanks to the

incredible safety advances built into the design of automobiles today, and into our highways.

Safety features that were science fiction a few years ago are on the road today... with even more to come. You'll have the opportunity to see many leading-edge safety features on display at this show.

Our progress also results from the focused efforts that NHTSA has led. And while the nature of the road safety problems can be very different in developed and developing countries, there is much to be learned from America's experiences over the last 40 years.

One of the most important lessons is that the increased mobility and productivity that transportation brings does not have to come at the price of sacrificing the safety of our citizens.

President Bush talks about the strength of America being the "heart and soul of the people."

We are a caring Nation, and we have always stepped up to share the benefits of our experience.

So even as we are redoubling our efforts to make travel safer on our own roads, the United States is committed to sharing its experience on this issue with the global community to help prevent roadway deaths and injuries.

We have an historic opportunity during the year ahead to focus the world's attention on saving lives. No other health crisis is so clearly curable, if only the world's leaders join together to educate each other and our citizens about how to stop the senseless deaths on our roads.

Thank you for your attention. Enjoy the show, and travel safely.

La Seguridad Vial no es Accidental Campaign

April 7, 2004. Puerto Rico. On World Health Day, the Puerto Rico Department of Health Secretary Johnny Rullan joined with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to launch a "La Seguridad Vial no es Accidental" campaign. The PAHO is the regional office of the World Health Organization for the Americas. Dr. Raul Castellanos and Governor's Representative Evan Gonzalez appeared on TV and radio throughout the day pledging to work hand in hand to reduce motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death for all Hispanics between the ages of 1 – 34.

Another island-wide initiative has the Traffic Safety Commission and the PAHO-WHO collaborating on the dissemination of a variety of community health and safety publications. Part of their traffic safety educational campaign for school children is the distribution of the "Monica" comic book. The book includes lessons for restraint use, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, and general community transportation safety. ■



Remarks of the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta Secretary of Transportation

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Road Safety (General Statement)

New York, NY • April 14, 2004 • 10 am

Mr. President [Julian Hunte of St. Lucia, President of the 58th General Assembly], distinguished delegates, and ladies and gentlemen: It is a great honor to have the opportunity to represent my country today as this distinguished body turns its attention to the critical issue of road traffic safety.

This is an issue about which my country cares deeply and passionately.

And I would like to commend Ambassador Al-Hinai [of Oman] for his leadership in bringing this issue to the forefront of the international agenda. Because road traffic safety is, indeed, a global problem.

We have heard this morning from the Secretary General of the United Nations [Kofi Annan] and the Director General of the World Health Organization [Dr. Lee Jong-Wook] about the magnitude of the challenge that we face.

More than one million human beings lose their lives *every year* because of traffic crashes. That is one million mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives who do not make it home.

Adding to the tragedy is the fact that so many of these deaths are preventable.

The costs are tremendous – in terms of human lives and pain and suffering, as well as economic costs and lost opportunities.

The United Nations estimates that the economic cost of road traffic injuries is enormous — 518-billion-dollars a

year. Imagine the additional pain and suffering that could be alleviated if our nations could instead invest those “lost” monies in education, health care, economic development, and transportation, and other pressing needs.

If we do nothing, however, then even more people will die needlessly. By the year 2020, the World Health Organization projects that traffic crashes will rank third among all contributors to the global burden of disease – ahead of malaria, ahead of tuberculosis, and ahead of HIV/AIDS.

But my message to you today is that we need not accept *morbidity* as the price of *mobility*... *anywhere* in the world.

Experience has shown that the increased freedom and productivity that transportation brings do not have to come at the price of the safety of our citizens.

The United States began focused efforts in the mid-1960s to make road travel safer. At that time, our country had a death rate of 5.5 fatalities for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

Since then, much has changed. The U.S. population has grown substantially, and the numbers of both cars and drivers on our roads have increased tremendously. Yet during this same period, we were able to cut the death rate by 72 percent – to 1.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

That is a truly astonishing accomplishment over a relatively short period of time.

But we know that we can do better. We *must* do better – 43,000 deaths a year in the United States is unacceptable. That is why President Bush’s Administration has established a goal to further reduce the traffic death rate by a third by the year 2008 – to one death per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

I take particular pride in our country’s record when it comes to protecting our most vulnerable citizens – our children.

In a single generation, the United States has dramatically reduced the number of child fatalities in traffic crashes; today, they are at an historic low.

The approach that we used to help protect our children is illustrative of our traffic safety strategy.

In 1966, we established *one single agency* within the National government focused on road traffic safety... and we gave it authority to act and a dedicated funding source to get the job done.

The agency began gathering *reliable data* on how safe our children were when riding in motor vehicles. We soon learned an important fact: More children were killed in highway crashes than by any disease.

Using the data, we were able to develop a comprehensive approach to reduce child fatalities.

Our engineers designed cars to better absorb impact and protect children in the event of a crash. They designed

car seats, and we educated parents on the importance of using them to keep their children safe, instead of allowing them to ride on a lap, on the floor, or in the back of a truck. We established standards for vehicle and child seat manufacturers, and our legislators passed child passenger safety laws to ensure that this very vulnerable segment of our society was protected.

And finally, our traffic safety agency has been working for 30 years to improve Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Systems so that crash victims are properly cared for after a crash.

We recognize that the nature of road safety problems differs from country to country, and so too must our solutions. Still, there is much we can learn from one another.

It is my sincere hope that today's session will mark the beginning of a broad-based and on-going international collaboration focused on all aspects of road traffic safety – the behavior of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians; vehicle safety; and the roadway environment.

And I am here today to declare that the United States stands ready to share its experience and expertise with the global community and to learn from other nations as we work together to prevent roadway deaths and injuries.

We will continue to work within the United Nations, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe's Working Parties 1 and 29, to exchange information on best practices and to develop recommendations for a comprehensive road injury prevention strategy addressing the vehicle, human behavior, and the infrastructure.

In a message to the international community on World Health Day 2004, our President, George W. Bush, expressed America's strong commitment "to traffic safety and to the goal of saving more lives throughout the world."

My colleagues, the time for action is now. Providence has given us an opportunity to change history. No other public health crisis is so clearly curable..., no other cause of death is so clearly preventable..., if only the world's leaders join together to educate each other and our citizens about how to stop the needless deaths on our roads.

That is the job before us. If we stand resolved to do our jobs... millions in our global family will be spared pain and heartache, and that is a goal worthy of all of our efforts. *Thank you.*

Special Thanks

The United States delegation participation in World Health Day and the UN General Assembly would not have been made possible without countless hours of preparations.

Special thanks go to members of the NHTSA team that worked on the myriad of activities in support of World Health Day: Julie Abraham, Aysha Ahmed, Marilena Amoni, Susan Gorcowski, Joan Harris, Martin Koubek, Tom Louizou, Isabelle Melese, Marti Miller and Maria Vegega.

Presidential Message on World Health Day

I'm pleased to send greetings to all those participating in World Health Day 2004. I appreciate the Government of France, and President **Chirac**, for hosting this event along with The World Health Organization. World Health Day 2004 is dedicated to improving road safety.

Each year nearly 1.2 million people around the world lose their lives in traffic accidents and millions more are seriously injured. In the United States traffic accidents remain the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 35. Road safety is a significant worldwide health issue.

I urge every nation to do its part to promote safety through public education, advances in road and vehicle engineering, and enforcement of traffic laws.

My Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta is working hard to prevent traffic fatalities in the United States, through measures such as increased use of safety belts, which saves countless lives. Today the death toll from traffic injuries is highest in developing countries and it continues to grow. As developing nations become more prosperous and more motorized, we must help them have access to the best safety measures available.

I thank you for bringing attention to this important global health issue. The American government shares your commitment to traffic safety and to the goal of saving more lives throughout the world. ■

World Traffic Safety Symposium

April 15th, 2004. New York, NY. In conjunction with World Health Day activities and the previous day's UN Resolution on road safety, the 14th annual World Traffic Safety Symposium focused on global solutions to our increasing traffic safety problems. Over 150 tri-state traffic safety leaders attended the Javits Center conference in New York City.

Sponsored by the Greater New York Auto Dealers Association and presented as part of the New York International Auto Show, this year's symposium featured taped remarks from President Bush and UN Ambassador from Oman, H.E. Faud al-Hinai. Dr. Etienne Krug, Director Injuries and Violence at the World Health Organization, gave the keynote address. His remarks described the huge public health and development problems of worldwide road crashes. The costs are enormous; especially to low and middle income countries were the majority of road fatalities

occur to pedestrians and transit users – people who will likely never own a vehicle. In Kenya for example, 42% of road deaths are pedestrians and 38% are public transit users. Recognizing that the challenges are great, Dr. Krug called for a systems approach and collaboration among all sectors.

Speakers representing international law enforcement agencies and a crash analyst who has developed software systems used around the globe to record and analyze car crashes joined him.

The symposium concluded with the presentation of the World Traffic Safety awards (recipients included Honda and Good Housekeeping) and the Traffic Safety Design Competition awards, open to a select number of colleges and universities throughout the Nation. This year's winners were from the University of Bridgeport, Penn State University, and North Carolina State University. ■



At the World Traffic Safety Symposium, WHO's Dr. Etienne Krug reviewed the significant elements of the five-year global plan to "keep death off our roads." Following these remarks, NHTSA Regional Administrator Tom Louizou (left) led a panel discussion.

UN Stakeholder Forum Addresses Challenge of Road Traffic Injuries



Pictured left to right: NHTSA Associate Administrator Marilena Amoni, Stephen Blount, CDC; Mark Rosenberg, UN Task force for Child Survival and Development; and Karla Gonzalez, Costa Rica.

April 15, 2004. UN, New York. A stakeholder forum on "Global Road Safety – A Shared Responsibility" was held to engage governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector, members of civil society, and other interested parties in a discussion on strategies for reducing the global burden of road traffic injuries.

Marilena Amoni, Associate Administrator for Program Development and Delivery participated in a panel discussion on "What Governments Can Do". Ms. Amoni reiterated NHTSA's traffic safety formula – a central agency with authority and resources, use of data to identify problems and track solutions, and a comprehensive approach addressing human, vehicle and environmental factors during each phase of the crash event and called on participants to work with the World Health Organization to coordinate information exchange on good road safety practices. ■

Secretary Mineta and NHTSA Administrator Runge Participate in World Health Day

April 7, 2004. Paris, France. The World Health Organization and the Government of France hosted a key event to celebrate World Health Day, release the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*, and kickoff a year of activities focused on reducing road traffic injuries. The event took place at the Centre de Conférences Internationales Kléber in Paris, France. Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of France; Dr. Lee Jong-Wook, WHO Director-General; and ministers of health and transportation, including U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta; and representatives from non-governmental organizations, participated in a high-level forum designed to draw attention to a global crisis. If action is not taken to reverse the trend, road traffic injuries are predicted to become the third largest contributor to the global disease burden by 2020, eclipsing HIV/AIDS.

Representing the United States, Secretary Mineta observed that over the past 40 years we (in the U.S.) have gained tremendous experience in road safety and offered to share our experience and approach for reducing traffic fatalities. Secretary Mineta emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach for addressing road safety, including providing authority and funding to a central agency, employing science-based approaches to identify solutions, and using data to identify specific problems and measure progress.

The U.S. delegation to the World Health Day launch in Paris included NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge, who, together with Secretary Mineta, addressed attendees at the Greater New York Auto Show via satellite (see complete text, this issue.) ■

US-Mexico Border Bi-National Conference on Transportation Roadway Safety

April 14-15, 2004. South Padre Island, Texas. Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death and injury in the US-Mexico border region. At the US-Mexico Border Bi-National Conference on Transportation/Roadway Safety, NHTSA Region VI Administrator Georgia S. Chakiris spoke on NHTSA priority areas and how they supported the WHO's World Health Day objectives or creating Safer Roads.

The conference was an opportunity for both countries to collaborate in an effort to maintain the highest level of safety for the traveling public along US-Mexico border communities through a combination of behavioral traffic safety programs and traditional engineering approaches. The meeting also provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness about the health implications and societal costs of road traffic injuries to both the United States and Mexico.

The growing problem of alcohol, impaired driving and fatal crashes resulting from underage drinkers from the US crossing into Mexico, drinking heavily, then driving back into the United States also was discussed at length.

Bilingual Regional Program Manager Frank Marrero addressed conference participants on effective Latino outreach and implementation techniques, community-based programs, and other approaches for Hispanic traffic safety initiatives.

World Health Day 2004 Focuses on Road Traffic Injury Prevention

By Maria Vegega, Program Development and Delivery

Each year the World Health Organization (WHO) selects a different theme for World Health Day, celebrated each April 7, the anniversary of the founding of WHO. This year, for the first time in its history, WHO selected road traffic safety as the focus for World Health Day 2004, with the theme "Road Safety is No Accident," designed to emphasize that traffic injuries are preventable if governments and others take action.

Over the past several months, a team of NHTSA staff has worked with stakeholders within and outside of government to prepare for a series of events in celebration of World Health Day. NHTSA and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control led the U.S. government effort to orchestrate and participate in World Health Day 2004 events by promoting collaboration among the Departments of Education, State, Transportation, and NTSB, as well as with world health partners (WHO, Pan American Health Organization) and non-governmental stakeholders (e.g., Association for Safe International Road Travel, AAA, AASHTO, Ford, GM, Safe Kids, and many more). Other DOT modes participating in this effort included OST, FHWA and FMCSA. Both NHTSA and FHWA contributed funds and staff expertise to the development and dissemination of the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*.

The April 7 kickoff initiates a year of activities and events around the world focusing on road traffic safety and the implementation of the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*, which was unveiled on April 7 in Paris, France.

Pan American Health Organization Observes World Health Day

April 7, 2004. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) kicked off it's own World Health Day observation by inviting representatives of key organizations, including USDOT and the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to share their views on improving road safety in the Western Hemisphere. The World Health Organization (WHO) includes 191 member nations worldwide, and PAHO is the arm of the WHO for the Americas.

Acting Deputy Secretary Kirk Van Tine represented USDOT at the PAHO event, and alongside Claude Allen, Deputy Secretary of HHS, joined with PAHO Director Dr. Mirta Roses in signing a declaration pledging cooperation on the issue. Other key organizations participating and lending their support for PAHO's observation included the World Bank, the Organization of American States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, SAFEKIDS, MADD, the American Automobile Association, and several non-governmental organizations.

Ms. Heather Mills-McCartney (Wife of Paul McCartney) was on hand to receive the PAHO Champion of Health Award and to stir up a little press in the day's events. ■



Acting Deputy Secretary Kirk K. Van Tine, preparing to sign the declaration on Road Safety with Dr. Mirta Roses, PAHO Director and Claude Allen, HHS Deputy Secretary.



Heather Mills-McCartney (Wife of Paul McCartney) chats with PAHO Director Dr. Mirta Roses before receiving the PAHO champion of Health Award.

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World Health Day April 7, 2004



ROAD SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT