



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**HONOURABLE LESTER 'MIKE' HENRY, CD, MP
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND MINING
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND MINING**

AT

**THE 5th INTERNATIONAL ROAD FEDERATION CARIBBEAN REGIONAL
CONGRESS**

HILTON ROSE HALL SPA & HOTEL, MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA

May 18-20, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Patrick Sankey, President of the International Road Federation, Mr. Esteban Salinas, Director, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs of the International Road Federation, Dr. Alwin Hales, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Mining, Mr. E G Hunter, CEO National Works Agency, Dr. Janine Dawkins, Chief Technical Director in the Ministry of Transport and Mining, Mrs. Paula Fletcher, Executive Director of the National Road Safety Council, Mr. Clifford Blake, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Calvin Allen, Senior Superintendent of Police in charge of Police Traffic Headquarters, Distinguished Guests, Members of the Media, ladies and gentlemen GOOD MORNING.

The Ministry of Transport and Mining welcomes the International Road Federation hosting their 5th Caribbean Regional Congress right here in our beautiful city of Montego Bay. Permit me to express my gratitude on behalf of all Caribbean people for this Congress being held in our Region since 2012. I look forward to its continuation until 2030, in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This Congress is fully aware of the prevailing road safety, road construction and road transport issues that we are grappling with here in the Caribbean. Undoubtedly, we must correct these in accordance with the tenets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

May I therefore commit my Ministry's support to the continued development of the Region's road transportation architecture in accordance with Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which posits that we should:

“by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations: women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons”.

I am therefore asking the IRF to commit to hosting this Caribbean Congress up until 2030, thus giving the region a platform from which to develop its road safety construction, maintenance and design architecture and its road transport systems. This Congress is the only one for the Region and your commitment to this task is greatly appreciated.

Indeed, your continued support is very crucial and critical, as the Region seeks to enhance its road transport systems.

The next four years will be very challenging for the Caribbean, as we take steps to ensure that our road fatalities are reduced in accordance with dictates of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety.

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/255 of March 2010, proclaimed 2011-2020 ‘**The Decade of Action for Road Safety**’. The Government of Jamaica began the quest to ensure that our Road Safety Apparatus undergoes improvements in accordance with the five pillars, namely:

- Road Safety Management;
- Safer Roads and Mobility;
- Safer Vehicles;
- Safer Road Users; and
- Post-Crash Response.

We have made significant progress in the area of Road Safety Management by ensuring that Road Safety targets are set and that there exists a National Road Safety Council, which is chaired by Our Prime Minister, The Most Honourable, Andrew Holness.

It is important for Caribbean countries, such as Jamaica to make a profound impact in reducing road traffic injuries, crashes and fatalities.

However, in order to achieve this feat, the issue of a Sustainable Road Safety Funding is very crucial, given that the implementation of many of these road safety measures are extremely costly. I therefore could think of no greater forum than this, to call for a designated ***“Road Safety Fund for Caribbean Countries”***.

This will ensure that we will be able to implement the road safety measures that would arrest the prevalence of traffic crashes. This fund will ensure that the Region puts in place the requisite Road Safety Management processes, which exists in the SUN Road Safety Nations:

- Sweden;
- United Kingdom; and
- Netherlands.

Recent statistics have shown that approximately 1.3 million persons die annually on the global road network. This is a frightening figure and its totally unacceptable. We make profound and extended efforts efforts to

ensure that airline safety is enhanced; these same efforts should also be made to dramatically reduce road traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities.

We should be working assiduously to ensure that the **Safe Systems Approach** is implemented in developing countries. This road safety methodology is geared towards ensuring that we have safer vehicles, safer roads and roadsides and safe traffic speed. These techniques need to be operating in equilibrium or else the effects of traffic crashes will be felt severely.

As a nation, we are very cognizant of the need to ensure that we provide our population with safer roads and mobility. By virtue of that, during the period 2011-2015, Jamaica embarked on a Programme with the *Inter-American Development Bank* to improve Jamaica's Road Safety capacity, especially in the areas of road safety inspection and audit.

We consider these two road safety techniques to be of great importance, especially as we seek to ensure, that all future and present Road Infrastructure Projects are subjected to both road safety audit and inspection processes. This is a significant milestone, as we are presently executing these audits and inspections in accordance with contemporary road safety standards.

I use this opportunity to also encourage my Caribbean colleagues to ensure that all new and future Road Projects are subjected to this technique, as it is more cost efficient to correct the road safety deficiency during the construction period, rather than after the road has been completed.

It is our intention to obtain within the next five years, the following road safety expertise that will ensure that our roads are safer for all road users:

- Road Safety Costing and Evaluation;
- Road Safety Engineering; and
- Development of Road Designs Manual

Mr. Chairman, Jamaica embraces the Safer Vehicles Pillar to support for the harmonization of motor vehicles, thus ensuring that vehicles manufactured for the European and North American markets are of the same standards, when compared with those manufactured for use in the developing countries.

Presently, we are in dialogue with the Bureau of Standards and the International Traffic Accident Database to ensure that by 2020, Jamaica develops a Motor Vehicle Safety Standard, which is in accordance with the **Safe Systems Approach**.

Two Years ago Jamaica crafted a reformed Motor Vehicle Import Policy, but I can assure you all, that when we meet again in 2018, Jamaica would have developed its *Motor Vehicle Safety Standards*, which will ensure that motor vehicles that traverse the Jamaican road network are equipped with:

- Crumple zones: ensuring that crash energy does not reach the passenger cage of the vehicle quickly;
- Anti-lock braking System: ensuring that tyres are not locked;
- Electronic Stability Control: ensuring that when motorists are executing the corner maneuver, the probability of losing control is significantly reduced; and
- Airbags, both frontal and side impact: reducing the effect of the collision forces on the human body.

Ladies and Gentlemen it is clear that we need global assistance in developing our motor vehicle safety standard. Again, I use this opportunity to appeal to the International Road Federation to assist our Region, as we ensure that “*safer vehicles*” traverse the Jamaican road network.

Road safety is predicated on three fundamental components, namely:

- Vehicle;

- Human; and
- Environment.

It is the breakdown in just one of these components that has caused over 1.3 million people to be killed every year on a global scale and over 300 annually on the Jamaican road network. It therefore means that the vehicle manufacturers should be called upon to ensure that energy levels from a crash is not absorbed by the human body as our tolerance levels are extremely low.

The issue of Post-Crash Care is extremely important. Easy Access to emergency medical treatment makes a significant difference to survivability in case of a collision. This is an area where I believe, the International Road Federation could assist the Region to enhance.

While we are making strides in our ability to provide quality health care to victims of traffic crashes, global assistance in the form of ambulances, emergency response vehicles, and safety equipment to remove crash victims from motor vehicles would be greatly welcomed. I therefore appeal to the global community to assist the region in ensuring that we have the requisite equipment to respond better to the needs of all our crash victims.

We try to ensure that Crash Victims, once transported to the hospitals receive immediate medical treatment, because we embrace the “**Golden Hour Concept**”. Our doctors, nurses and fire officers have played a critical role in saving the lives of many crash victims and I know this is the same regionally.

In this regard, let me thank all health practitioners and fire officers for working tirelessly to save the lives of persons involved in traffic crashes.

By 2020 we intend to have **First Responder Units** establish across the counties at strategic locations, so that the local population can provide the requisite safe assistance to crash victims. This is in an effort to reduce serious injuries, which can arise if the crash victims are not properly removed and transported from the crash site.

During the period 2011-2015, Jamaica embarked on many road safety programmes, to help modify the behavior of road users. These programmes, addressed many issues, which are aligned to various risk factors in our traffic environment. These risk factors continue to cause over 300 persons to be killed annually on our nations road network. They include but are not limited to

- ✚ Speeding;

- ✚ Failure to keep traffic lane;

✚ Nonuse of protective devices:

- Helmet
- Child/restraint systems

- Seatbelts

✚ Pedestrian error;

✚ Fatigue Driving

✚ Distractions

✚ Road signs and markings

✚ Motorcyclist error

There has been continuous road safety awareness programmes to educate all road users to help reduce traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities. The effect of traffic collisions on the socio-economic fabric of our nation is tremendous.

Presently, Jamaica has a Reformed Road Traffic Act before the Houses of Parliament, which will enhance the road safety regime of the nation state. This new Act will govern the manner in which commercial freight and transport vehicles operate in the traffic environment. We are ensuring that they are not hazardous.

Our data reveals that drivers of motor car are involved in most of the traffic crashes here. While drivers of heavy vehicles are involved in crashes, it is minute, when compared with the other modes of transportation. We have a robust Public Education Campaign, in which significant efforts are being made to ensure that all road users are aware of road safety practices.

The Government along with the Private Sector has invested heavily in this Programme in both Primary and Secondary Schools. However, the Government has gone further to establish a *Driver Education Programme in Secondary Schools. This is* to ensure, that the next generation of drivers, are properly equipped for the traffic environment.

In 1999, Jamaica enacted a Protective Devices Legislation, which mandates the use of seatbelts, helmets and child restraint systems. These are in accordance with the British Standard, American Standard, Japanese Standard and European Standard.

They are being enforced by law enforcement, but we continue to have persons operating in the traffic environment without the requisite protective devices.

For example, of the 44 motorcyclists killed so far this year, only one was wearing a helmet. It is also clear that this category of road user, who is vulnerable, is in need of serious attention as they have, for the first time in over twenty years become the most killed road user. I use this opportunity to highlight the fact that most of the motor-cyclists killed were not attired in the requisite safety gadgets, such as:

- ✚ Helmets;
- ✚ Motorcycle jackets;
- ✚ Safety gloves;
- ✚ Elbow and knee pads

These will go a far way in reducing the levels of injuries that they will sustain in a traffic crash. We are presently working on improving the Motorcycle Regime, by ensuring that they are provided with the requisite training prior to their acquisition of a driver's license.

This will ensure that they are not able to operate this vehicle without being aware of the rules and regulations, turning, cornering and braking maneuvers.

I have noticed that a component of your Programme will deal with motorcycle safety. Let me assure you that the intelligence garnered will be used in the Caribbean Region.

Since January this year, my Ministry, has been meeting with the motorcycle communities in Western Jamaica, in an effort to ensure that they are aware that they are at risk and the most killed road user in motor vehicle crashes.

The World Health Organization says motorcyclists have overtaken pedestrians as the most killed road user. The situation has been on our doorsteps in Jamaica from last year.

I am profoundly happy that the International Road Federation has incorporated “**Motorcycle Safety**” in its slate of activities for this congress. It is a critical plank as we highlight the importance of practicing proper road etiquette.

The Ministry of Transport and Mining is fully committed to the implementation of the five Pillars of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020. Let me assure the nation, that we will do all we can to ensure that all gaps in our road safety architecture are closed. Already, Jamaica has made fundamental strides in improving the road architecture.

This improvement was deliberately made to ensure that our operations are in alignment with the Global Road Safety Action.

Critical steps have been taken and we expect by the end of this year, Jamaica will have a Modernized Road Traffic Act which will address some profound road safety issues, namely:

- ✚ Tyre Safety;
- ✚ Distracted Driving;
- ✚ Graduated Licensing System; and
- ✚ Demerit Points System

To my Caribbean colleagues, I say, let us work assiduously to arrest the carnage on roads in the region.

Jamaica will always continue to join the Caribbean Region in enhancing the safety of all road users that traverse the Caribbean road network. Let's all stay close to each other and share our road safety expertise. It is untenable that over 1.3 million persons are being killed annually on the roads internationally and up to 50 million persons being injured in traffic crashes. Individually we all have the power to correct this scourge.

Motor vehicle collisions undoubtedly disrupt the region's socio-economic fabric, as funds that should be used for developmental programmes are

being diverted to treat victims of traffic crashes, which can be prevented. Please help me inoculate our population with the vaccine of safety envisaged by the World Health Organization.

Thank you all for coming to our beautiful Island a third time for the Congress and I do hope you will leave with valuable road safety intelligence, as the programme lineup is very stellar. I wish you all a safe trip back home and when we meet again in 2018, let us all report a massive reduction in road traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities.

Ladies and gentlemen please have a productive and enjoyable conference. Again I thank you and may God continue to bless our region.