



Chairman: Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen KT. GCMG

**Speech by HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO
Patron, Commission for Global Road Safety**

Make Roads Safe report launch, Rome, 5th May 2009

Check against delivery

As Patron of the Commission for Global Road Safety I am delighted to welcome you to the launch of our new report: 'Make Roads Safe – A Decade of Action for Road Safety'.

It is my strong hope that this second report from the Commission can prove as influential as the first, published in 2006. That report proposed the first global Ministerial conference on road safety, subsequently approved by the UN General Assembly. This historic conference will be hosted in Moscow this November by the Government of the Russian Federation.

Our first report changed the terms of debate on road infrastructure safety, challenging the international development banks to meet their social commitment to ensure that all road investment is safe investment.

The World Bank has now convened a working group on this issue, and the presence here today of the Bank's Transport Director demonstrates the increasing seriousness with which road safety is being viewed within the multilateral lending institutions.

Our first report also made clear the vital connection between road safety and the wider sustainable development agenda. We argued strongly that if the world is serious about reducing childhood mortality, increasing access to education and health services, and improving developing economies, then the basic right of safe mobility cannot be ignored. This is a message that is now beginning to be recognised and accepted by policymakers.

Our new report builds on this progress and challenges the international community to take a further step by committing to a Decade of Action for Road Safety. Our chairman, Lord Robertson, will tell you more in a moment.

If we are to succeed in this ambitious objective it will require a concerted effort by all those who have a stake in safer roads: governments, international agencies, police, health professionals, civil society and the private sector. Community figureheads, be they in education or faith, can also play an important role.

This morning I had the great pleasure to present our new report to Cardinal Cheli, the minister responsible for road safety on behalf of the Vatican. He assured me of the Roman Catholic Church's recognition of the importance of road safety, not least because it is the priests, like the doctors and the police, who are in the front line when it comes to picking up the broken pieces of lives ruined by road injuries. By engaging with leaders of all faiths, and their congregations, we can do much to raise the profile of road safety and bring about the improvements we all seek.

In closing I commend the Commission's report to you, and look forward to continuing to work together with you all for safer roads.