

Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen KT, Chairman, FIA Foundation

Speech to FIA Foundation Annual General Meeting 2016, Hofburg, Vienna

It is my pleasure to open the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the FIA Foundation and to welcome all of our members and friends from around the world.

It has been my great privilege to Chair the Trustees of this remarkable Foundation for this, my first year, and I thank all who supported me in its enormously valuable work.

It has also been a huge responsibility for me as well. The work of the FIA Foundation is quite simple. It is about saving lives.

It is about tackling the nightmare numbers of human beings perishing on the roads of the world every single day.

It is about promoting the vaccines which can tackle this epidemic which robs families of wage earners, which makes a mockery of our aid budgets, which burdens and cripples our health systems and which fills graveyards and hospital beds across the planet. The vaccines to save children risking and too often losing life and limb, just to go to school.

And the vaccines are there. Better engineered roads, safer cars, using helmets and seatbelts, enforcing laws on speed and drink.

It is not expensive retroviral drug experiments or beta blocker inventions we are talking about, or mosquito nets , or even the fabled rocket science – it is simply about governments and car manufacturers and drivers and the police and pedestrians doing the right things – and doing them now.

I once led the world's most successful defence alliance and I know more than most people about the casualties of war and conflict.

It is a sad and bleak fact that the death toll on the world's roads today makes conflict casualties fade into insignificance. The world has committed vast resources, huge diplomatic efforts, expensive interventions and mighty global organisations to deal with conflict – and it has worked - with fewer conflicts in the world now than ever before.

At the same time so little, so late, and so reluctantly is being devoted to dealing with the death toll and the scale of human misery on the world's roads.

It is time that this contrast was brought to an end and this Foundation, working alongside the FIA Clubs, is playing its part in getting that change of mind set and getting action for safer roads.

One of the FIA Foundation's achievements over this last year has been, at long last, to get road safety onto the UN's development agenda.

This has been the first year of operation for the Sustainable Development Goals – the successor programme to the Millennium Development Goals.

Governments around the world are now deciding which of the 17 goals and 169 targets they should prioritise. So we have a narrow window of time in which to persuade them that road safety and clean mobility must be high on their agenda.

How then do we make the case?

By repeating again and again, wherever and whenever we can, that road crashes are the leading global cause of death for adolescents and young adults.

By highlighting the appalling fact that, in part because of vehicle pollution, 300 million children are breathing toxic air every day;

By showing the immense economic cost of dysfunctional transport systems, but also that solutions are available, now, to fix the problem;

By challenging everyone in power – from world leaders and government ministers to mayors and local police chiefs – to commit to action.

And this is what we are doing.

The FIA Foundation is doing it working as one part of a bigger team.

We are funding and supporting my friend and fellow Trustee Jean Todt in his UN Special Envoy role. Jean is taking the message out to leaders around the world, and this year has worked hard to create a process for establishing a much-needed UN Road Safety Fund. Jean's energy, high standing and global reputation has not only galvanised the UN but has enlisted a stellar group of global big-hitters to sign up to the High Level Panel on Road Safety.

The Foundation is supporting that Panel, and I am proud to be a member of the distinguished group Jean has persuaded to join.

We are working closely with the World Health Organization to deliver their new 'Save Lives' communication package and to develop new global road safety indicators;

We are leading a new effort to promote safe and healthy journeys to school, tackling road safety and air pollution, with partners including UNICEF, Save the Children and the UN Environment Programme;

We are supporting dozens of FIA clubs, every year, through the FIA Road Safety Grant Programme and our motor sport safety grants to ASNs. I look forward to

hearing more about some of these projects and achievements later in the meeting.

We are funding cutting edge motor sport safety research. Just last week the innovation of a high speed camera, developed by the Global Institute and deployed this season in F1, was recognised with an international 'Technology of the Year' motor sport award. You'll hear more at the FIA Institute meeting which follows ours.

And as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change has come in to force, our Global Fuel Economy Initiative is now working with more than sixty countries to improve fuel efficiency. This is vital for the climate and improving air quality, but can also save money for motorists every time they fill up at the pump.

However, success in raising the political commitment and financing necessary to achieve the Global Goals will depend on the quality of the solutions on offer. Serious donors only invest in serious programmes, with provable or proven results.

Results like those demonstrated by IRAP, which conservatively estimates that 16,000 deaths and serious injuries have been directly prevented through its work this year.

Results from Latin NCAP, which this year forced Nissan in Mexico to cancel production of one its best-selling cars, because NCAP crash tests have shown that it is a zero star killer.

Results from a motorcycle helmet project co-funded with the US Government in Cambodia where – in the last two years – more than 330 children involved in recorded crashes have been saved from head injury because they were wearing helmets.

This is what we do, this is the work your Foundation supports.

Real people, real lives saved, real injuries prevented or reduced.

I hope you are as proud of these results and achievements as I am.

And, as I said at the beginning, we are making this progress as part of a team.

The Foundation can't do everything on its own, nor should it. We don't try to.

Nor can the FIA, or the UN agencies, or the many expert NGOs and researchers we work alongside and support.

But together, pooling resources and ideas and expertise, we can all make a real difference.

Your clubs are at the heart of this effort. And we are supporting you. Through the FIA grant programme; through your involvement in iRAP around the world and the NCAPs we support in Latin America and Asia. With the crash tests conducted at ADAC's Landsberg facility. Through our partnership over the years on advocacy and campaigning in so many countries.

And the same is true for the motor sport clubs. In fact, we are now providing more funding for motor sport safety from our annual budget – for ASNs and research combined - than ever before: Four million euros a year.

We can't replace the scale of the unique, one-off windfall of the Motor Sport Safety Development Fund. But I strongly believe we are playing our part, as the Foundation has done for each of the last fifteen years.

I am proud that, last year, my fellow trustees gave me the honour and responsibility of becoming the Foundation's chairman. I follow my distinguished predecessors Tim Keown; Carlos Macaya, who we sadly lost this year; and Rosario Alessi, our Honorary Chairman, who am I delighted is attending today.

I want to pay a tribute to my fellow Trustees who come from all over the world to contribute to our invaluable work. They are a great source of support, advice and commitment. We are also lucky to have our two wonderful ambassadors, Michelle Yeoh and Zoleka Mandela, who do so much for the cause.

I would also like to put on record my thanks, with those of the other Trustees, for the work of our small, hard working and extremely talented staff. For them to have achieved so much over the short life of the Foundation and to be still driving to achieve more, is a tribute to their passion for our life saving work. We are fortunate indeed.

All of us hold or have held this position in trust; in trust to the legacy the FIA intended when it generously established the Foundation in 2001; in trust to the duties and legal obligations placed upon us as a public charity; in trust to the people we seek to serve and protect – from a small child walking along a dusty road to school in safety, to the new World Champion completing his final lap – in safety.

So I thank all of you for your collaboration and support, and look forward to an interesting and constructive Annual General Meeting.

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