Recently one of my colleagues was involved in a collision between 3 motorbikes in which 3 people died. He was seriously injured but lucky to have escaped alive.

It was a stark reminder of the tragic toll of road accidents in Tanzania. Across the region they are a leading cause of death and injury of children and young people, and the number one killer of men in their early twenties.

Just last week we saw an appalling bus crash in Kenya in which 41 people lost their lives. That accident made headlines around the world. But the WHO estimates that the same number of people is being killed on the roads here in Tanzania every two days.

These accidents place a huge strain on overstretched health services. Poor people are particularly vulnerable. The loss of a breadwinner or ability to work can deny children the right to an education, accentuate poverty and act as a brake on economic development.

So the work you are doing to raise the profile of road traffic injuries, and the steps you are taking to reduce them are vitally important. I congratulate the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on its plans for a new lead agency for road safety. This is one of the most important foundations for success in driving down road traffic casualties.

The United Kingdom now has one of the best road safety records in the world, and road fatalities are at their lowest since records began back in the 1920s. But we have only achieved this after many decades of making mistakes. We have learnt the hard way that road safety requires constant innovation, vigilance, consistent awareness raising and police enforcement.

I am pleased that DFID, with other development partners, is actively supporting Tanzanian efforts to improve road safety. I congratulate the FIA Foundation and Amend for organising today’s Roundtable, and I wish the Tanzanian government and other important actors every success in this vital undertaking.