

Excerpts of Keynote Speech at the Official Opening of the Conference Plenary Session by:-

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO  
Patron, Commission for Global Road Safety  
Make Roads Safe Africa Conference,  
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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour to be able to address this important conference, and I would like to thank the Government of Tanzania and the Automobile Association of Tanzania for your hospitality and support here in Dar es Salaam, and for your commitment to road safety. I would also like to thank the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility and the UN Economic Commission for Africa for their part in organising this conference. The presence here of so many transport ministers, and of government officials and NGOs from across Africa, is testament to the growing recognition of the damage caused by road traffic injuries.

This awareness of the scale of the problem is generating momentum and a desire for action.....If we do nothing, global road deaths are predicted to increase to around 1.9 million by 2020. Our Commission is calling for action to reduce by half this predicted increase.....But as you will know, it is not enough just to issue communiqués announcing targets. Ambition must be backed by action.....Political will is also a prerequisite.....

Sharing knowledge and learning from successes are vital for building sustainable road safety programmes in any country. This was also the motivation for my decision to establish my International Road Safety Awards. My Awards recognise innovation and reward success and most importantly they help to communicate these ideas to a wider audience, spreading knowledge and awareness of what works in road safety. I am therefore delighted that here today are three new winners of my awards; each very different but each an example of what can be done to make roads safer. Later this evening I will be presenting awards to these deserving winners, but for now I would like to congratulate Chevron for its international commitment shown through its Arrive Alive Programme and the Fleet Forum on its road safety programme targeting UN and NGO vehicle fleets. I would also like to commend Casey Marengé whose Chariots of Destiny organization has achieved so much to raise awareness in Kenya and further afield.

The lesson we have learnt is that economic development and progress, and increased motorisation, does not have to be accompanied by increased road fatalities.....Indeed, I believe that successfully tackling road injuries should be seen as key indicator of economic development.....

So I welcome the seriousness and determination with which you are addressing road safety at this high level conference. We face many challenges. But by sharing our knowledge and working together we will prevent many deaths and injuries and human tragedies in the years ahead and make Africa's roads safer for all.