



Paris, 7 April 2004

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2004

ROAD SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

THE CONTRIBUTION BY THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The world automobile industry, as represented by OICA – International Organisation of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers – continues to actively contribute to road safety improvements, as it has for many years. OICA consequently welcomes the dedication of the 2004 World Health Day to the issue of road safety.

Over several years, road traffic fatalities in the developed markets have shown a continuous downward trend, in spite of the increase in the number of vehicles and the distances travelled. This clearly demonstrates that modern vehicles have reached unprecedented levels of safety. Both active / primary safety, (the potential for a vehicle to avoid the accident) and passive / secondary safety (the protection of road users in the event of an accident) have contributed to this improvement.

The innovations of the automotive industry have substantially contributed to the 30 per cent decrease in fatalities observed in the developed countries since 1980.

Automobile manufacturers are clearly committed to supply the market with ever safer products and are continuously investing huge R&D resources, coupled with the best technical expertise, to provide further product improvements to their customers.

Through its Technical Committee and several Groups of Experts, OICA actively participates in the development of vehicle technical regulations, within the United Nations framework of the World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations (WP29). OICA is the accredited representative of the worldwide vehicle industry and provides the opportunity for the industry's expertise to help advance the evolution of vehicle regulations towards increased safety in a globally harmonised, cost-effective manner, making the most productive use of available resources.

Clearly, road safety worldwide will be best served if viewed from a global perspective. International harmonisation will help in ensuring that vehicles meet the same basic specifications worldwide and are equipped with the necessary features.

An example for this is the current development of a global technical regulation on pedestrian protection, such that vehicle fronts will be designed to minimise as far as possible the consequences of an accident involving a pedestrian. The vehicle industry is actively involved and fully participates in the development of this new regulation in combination with further active safety measures.

However, road safety is constituted by three pillars: the vehicle, the road user and the infrastructure. While industry is strongly committed to fully play its role, the other stakeholders have an extremely important share in the whole issue of road safety since all available studies demonstrate their overwhelming role in accident causation. Overall, around 95% of road accidents can be attributed to driver behaviour. Road construction and maintenance must follow the best international practice; traffic rules must be laid down and obeyed by the public at large, following education and enforcement campaigns.

It is only by a combination of efforts by all parties involved that road safety can be further improved and that mobility can remain sustainable.
