

24 April 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety**

Excellencies,
Youth Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, may I congratulate you all for having concluded such a successful Youth Assembly, and, thank all of those who participated at the many debates, and working groups over the past two days.

You have eloquently made the case that;

'ROAD SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT'.

I am delighted at the enthusiasm of the youth delegates who have attended from all over the world in recognition of this global problem.

I would also like to thank the World Health Organization, and, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for making this historic Youth Assembly possible.

Excellencies,

The momentum created around road safety over the last 3 years is unprecedented.

The General Assembly has passed a number of resolutions calling on Member States to implement the recommendations of the World Health Organization's 'World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention'.

And, because road traffic injuries cost more than one per cent of Gross National Product in developing countries; we have made the economic case for greater investment in road safety.

And, to raise awareness, we have called on Member States to mark the third Sunday in November, every year, as 'World Day of Remembrance' for road traffic victims.

Today's World Youth Assembly takes this issue to another level of action.

During the last couple of days you have all heard the scientific data; we know that road traffic crashes are THE leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 24.

And, that globally more than 1.2 million people die each year from traffic accidents.

These are shocking statistics, and cannot be ignored. We have a duty to remember all the innocent victims who have suffered.

They must not be forgotten.

It is therefore appropriate that hundreds of young people are in Geneva today to campaign on this important - health and development issue – during the very first United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

I support your call to action; and, your demands that the roads are made safer.

I also commend your commitment to lead by example; to travel safely when you are on the road, and to encourage your peers to do the same.

The Declaration you are about to adopt is an important statement. It is a catalyst – of that I am sure.

You - the Youth Ambassadors for Global Road Safety – can use it to push for greater attention to be paid to road safety within your own countries and worldwide.

Within the UN system, we must, and will continue to ensure this issue receives the attention it deserves.

I hope that through your campaign you can convince community leaders, the private sector, NGOs and civil society, celebrities and the media to take up the challenge and, act as role models for the cause.

You have the full support of the General Assembly. Together we can continue to work for safer roads.

Thank you very much and may I wish you all a safe journey home.