

## **Event: World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (21<sup>st</sup> Nov 2021)**

Dear Colleagues,

I am privileged to be here today, to observe, the “**World – Day of Remembrance, for the Road Traffic Victims**”.

Since the adoption of this Day, following the **UN General Assembly Resolution**, a growing number of countries across the globe, are observing this day (**on the third Sunday of November each year**), in commemoration of the millions of lives lost or injured, due to **Road Traffic Accidents**, together with their families, friends and loved ones. It is also a Day, on which we express our sincere gratitude and appreciations, to the “**Emergency Service Providers**”, and reflect, on the tremendous burden and costs, of this continuing disaster, to families and communities world-wide.

The World Health Organization reports, that approximately 1.3 Million people, are killed every year, on the world’s roads, and about 50 Million people, suffer from non-fatal injuries. The WHO also reports, that more than 90% of road traffic accidents, occur in low and middle-income countries.

Road fatalities and injuries are **sudden, violent, and traumatic** events, and their impact is long-lasting, often permanent. Each year, millions of newly injured and bereaved people, from every corner of the world, are added to the countless millions of people, who are already suffering. The cumulative toll is truly tremendous.

The grief and distress, experienced by many people, is all the more greater, because many of the victims are young, and many of the crashes, could-have and should-have been prevented. The society’s response to road crash fatalities and injuries, and to the bereaved and injured victims, is often **inadequate, unsympathetic and inappropriate**, to a loss of life, or quality of life.

Therefore, this **Special World Remembrance Day**, is intended to respond, to the greater need of road crash victims, and for the public, to recognize their loss and suffering. It has also become an important tool, for governments, and for those who work to prevent crashes, or respond to the aftermath, since it offers, the opportunity to demonstrate, the enormous scale and impact, of road-crash deaths and injuries, and the urgent need for action.

This Day has also become an important tool, in the global efforts, to reduce road casualties. It offers an opportunity for drawing attention, to the scale of emotional and economic

devastation, caused by road crashes, and for giving due recognition, to the suffering of road-crash victims, and the work of **Support & Rescue Services**.

Here at home, according to our **eRaLIS** (e-Registration & Licensing Information System) of RSTA, as of October 2021, we have **117,748** registered **Motor Vehicles**, and **156,204 Driving License Holders**. From July 2019 to June 2020, there has been **1,208** Motor Vehicle Accidents in the country, of which **90** were fatal, and **692** were injured.

Road traffic injuries, cause considerable social and economic losses to individuals, their families and to the nation as a whole. The losses arise from the costs of treatment, as well as lost productivity for those killed or disabled by such injuries, and their family members, who need to take time-off work, to care for the injured. The analysis of road traffic accidents in Bhutan, through a study conducted by International Journal of **Injury Control and Safety Promotion** in 2018, concluded that the productivity loss due to such accidents, is around 1% of the National GDP. The social and economic impacts on health and development, due to road traffic accidents at the international level, have also gained momentum. These have called for strengthening, and enhancing road safety, and making specific recommendations for action.

To strengthen and enhance Road Safety in Bhutan, RSTA has initiated various activities such as; the **Vehicle Data Registry Cleaning, enhanced highway inspections, drugs and alcohol testing, on-board inspection of passenger buses, Pre-Departure Inspection and Post-Arrival Inspection for passenger buses**.

The Road Safety and Transport Regulations 1999, has been revised and updated, to meet the emerging needs of surface transport in the country, with particular emphasis on, improving road safety, service delivery, and enhancing efficiency of public transport services in the country.

While MoIC continues to explore various means and measures, to advocate for road safety, it makes sense to leverage on media, to **Disseminate Information**, and **Create Awareness**, given the reach and spontaneity of media. Creation of **Audio Visual Content**, on vehicle ownership transfer, road markings and traffic signs, are also an effective way that RSTA is pursuing, for sensitizing, creating awareness and reaching out to the general public, through mass media.

In conclusion, I would like to once again state that I am very happy to be amongst you, in today's observance, of the **"World – Day of Remembrance, for the Road Traffic Victims"**.

I wish everyone, **"Comfort & Safe Driving"**.

**TASHI DELEK!**