

**LAUNCH ISSUE** A TRAFFIC TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION

*page 58 18/33*

# VISION ZERO

INTERNATIONAL

2009

# SAFER AT ANY SPEED?

Making vehicles and highways safer through the application of advanced design and technology

# Foreword

» The *Vision Zero International 2009* report provides an important overview of the ways in which we can tackle the global road deaths epidemic. Road traffic fatalities/injuries are one of the world's most destructive – yet least reported – health emergencies. This epidemic of road injury takes the lives of 1.3 million people and injures hundreds of thousands worldwide each year. It strikes hardest at the poor and the vulnerable, and is particularly savage with the young – a child is killed or injured on the roads every minute. Road traffic deaths are now the number one global killer of 10-24 year olds.

The Commission for Global Road Safety and its groundbreaking Make Roads Safe campaign has made the case for urgent and sustained global action to address this growing problem. At the UN in 2008, member governments of the General Assembly agreed to convene a Ministerial level summit on global road safety. This will take place in Moscow during November 2009 and will mark a key opportunity to make progress on the issue. For too long,



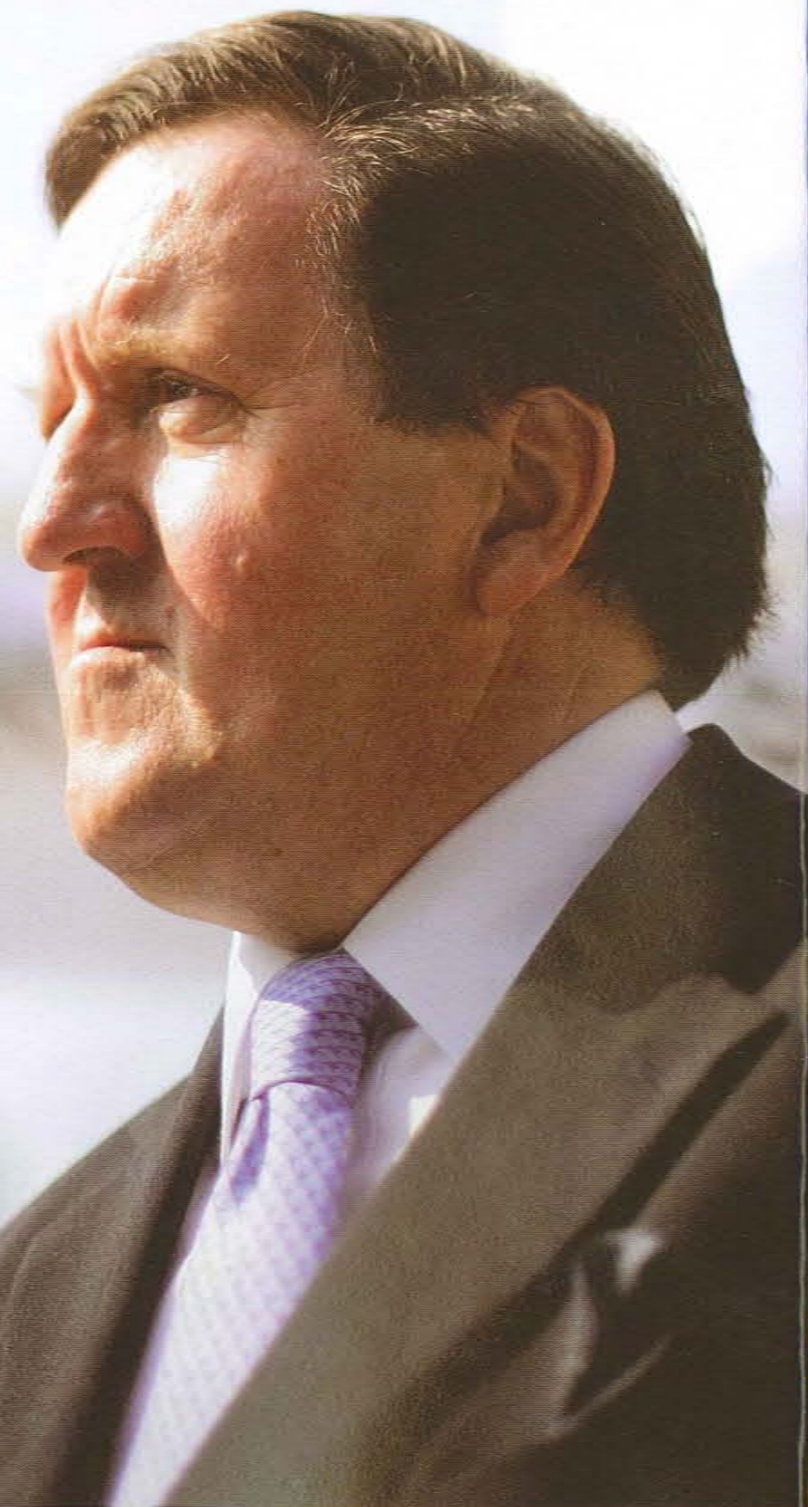
as an international community, we have allowed carnage to take place on our roads and merely held up our hands as if it were not our problem and there was nothing we could do.

We should not be tolerating

deaths or injuries on the road in the way that we do now. A philosophy that argues that every road death is unacceptable is now guiding the road safety policies of countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden. The approach is to adopt a 'Safe System' strategy – not to look at any one aspect of road safety in isolation, but to connect all the elements holistically. We must have safe vehicles at safe speeds, driving on safe roads where pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users are protected. Other transport sectors have worked to this 'Vision Zero' principle for decades and road transport should adopt the same philosophy. The Safe Systems approach can and should guide the policies of any and every country.

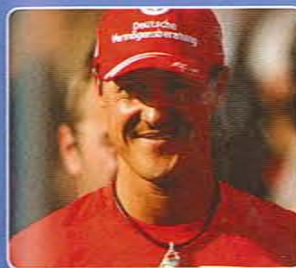
As the Make Roads Safe campaign has successfully argued, we can act and we can curb the daily death toll taking place on the roads around the world. Now we want to see a decade of sustained global action taking place between the years 2010-2020 to implement these solutions. We have an opportunity to make a breakthrough on road safety. We must take it.

**The Rt Hon Lord Robertson**  
of Port Ellen KT GCMG  
Chairman of the Commission  
for Global Road Safety



**CHOOSE  
ESC!**

## ESC: 3 letters to save your life



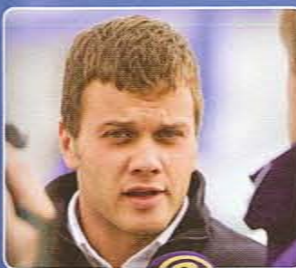
"You never know when a crash might happen so don't take chances. Make sure you choose ESC"

Michael Schumacher  
7-times FIA Formula 1  
World Champion



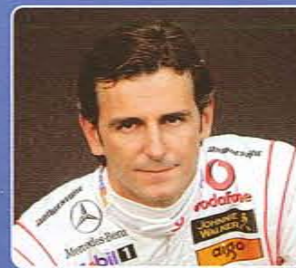
"ESC controls the movement of the car faster than any top racer in the world."

Sébastien Loeb  
5-times FIA Rally  
World Champion



"ESC helps regain control of the vehicle in a critical situation that may otherwise lead to an accident."

Marko Asmer  
Formula 1 driver



"When buying a car, ask for ESC and if it doesn't have it, don't buy the car."

Pedro de la Rosa  
Formula 1 driver

[www.chooseESC.eu](http://www.chooseESC.eu)



# Global warning

Former F1 motor racing champion Michael Schumacher – a seasoned road safety campaigner himself – issues a wake-up call to the international community

WORDS MICHAEL SCHUMACHER  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARMANDO FRANCA & SANG TAN

**R**oad traffic crashes now kill over 1.2 million people every year, with most of these fatalities occurring in developing countries.

They are already the number one cause of death worldwide for 15-19-year-olds and unless action is taken, the global road death toll is forecast to double by 2020. What is just as shocking as these grim statistics is the fact that we know that much of this tragic loss of life is preventable.

## Early learning

In industrialised countries, we have learned a great deal about road casualty reduction. Our crash fatality rates have been falling for three decades, although – of course – we need to make even more progress. We have learned that action needs to be taken on three fronts simultaneously. We need safer motor vehicles, on safer roads, used by safer drivers. This approach has worked very successfully in countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK – which are among the best performing nations in terms of road

safety. The goal that we are striving for is 'Vision Zero' – in which we try to ensure that the consequences of road crashes are, as far as possible, not fatal.

In my racing career, I survived some very high-speed impacts. I am still alive today as a result of the sport's governing body designing a system where safety was the prime consideration – where the car, the track and the rules worked together to try to ensure that the inevitable crashes would not be fatal. This 'Vision Zero' approach may sound like science fiction, but increasingly it guides the policies of the governments with the most effective road safety performances in the world.

We have seen amazing progress in vehicle safety design. The latest cars have sophisticated crash protection systems using crumple zones, seatbelt pretensioners, airbags and head restraints to absorb the kinetic energy released in a crash. Consumers today expect cars to have achieved five stars in independent crash tests and manufacturers have responded to this demand. Now we are also benefiting from sophisticated crash-avoidance

Michael Schumacher speaks to the attendees at a 'Make Roads Safe' rally at the start of the first-ever UN Global Road Safety Week in April 2007



# “THE GREATEST ROAD SAFETY CHALLENGE THAT WE FACE TODAY IS IN THE DEVELOPING AND RAPIDLY MOTORISING NATIONS”

systems, as it is surely better to avoid a crash in the first place than to rely on occupant-protection systems alone.

## The safest option

The most important example of these technologies is the anti-skidding device, Electronic Stability Control (ESC). Experts believe ESC to be the most significant safety

invention since the seatbelt. Using on-board computer and braking systems to automatically correct dangerous understeer or oversteer, it restores a driver's control of the vehicle. Studies from around the world have shown the systems' effectiveness in reducing approximately 30% of single-car crashes, with a potential to save over 4,000 deaths in Europe and 5,000 deaths in the USA each year. The system will be mandatory in the USA by 2012 and the European Union also aims to have 100% use of ESC by the same year. In the meantime, I have been strongly supporting the message of the 'Choose ESC' campaign to urge all new car buyers to ensure that they have ESC on board.

Alongside these technology innovations, we also need investment in safer roads. Road design should be more 'self-explaining' to avoid driver

error and more 'forgiving' when a crash occurs. Innovative initiatives such as the International Road Assessment Programme are available to help improve road design. Last, but not least, we need responsible road users to always wear seatbelts in cars, helmets on motorbikes, to avoid inappropriate speed and never drink and drive. In short, we must basically always respect others, as we share our road space not just with other motor vehicles, but also vulnerable road users – pedestrians including children and bicycle riders.

The greatest road safety challenge we face today is in the developing and rapidly motorising nations. Today, road crashes kill on the scale of Malaria or Tuberculosis, yet the international community has not woken up to this horrific waste of life. Already, China and India each lose at least 100,000 people a year to road crashes. In Africa – which has the most dangerous roads in the world – the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 200,000 die each year, despite a relatively low level of motorisation. The worst affected are vulnerable road users, such as children, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. The cost of road injury to developing countries alone is estimated at up to US\$100 billion a year, equivalent to all of the overseas aid from donor governments – yet road safety is not recognised as a development priority.

I am delighted to serve as a member of the independent Commission for Global Road Safety, chaired by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen. In 2007, we published a report, *Make Roads Safe*, which identifies several priority actions to start to reverse the rise in road traffic injuries in low- and middle-income countries. First was a US\$300 million 10-year Action Plan for global road safety to catalyse sustainable road safety capacity and programmes in low- and middle-income countries. Second, we should ensure that 10% of road project costs funded by major donors should be allocated to safety improvements. At present, the World Bank and the regional development banks are investing some US\$4 billion a year in road construction, but without any systematic approach to road safety assessment. But if the 10% rule was applied, this would redirect US\$400 million of existing resources to improve the safety of road infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries, where the need is most acute. ◀



ABOVE: Schumacher demonstrates a seatbelt sled, which simulates the effects of low-speed frontal impacts  
RIGHT: At the launch of the 'Makes Roads Safe' campaign with HRH Prince Michael of Kent

