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Global road safety crisis

Letter dated 25 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit for circulation to the States Members of the United Nations a document on the implementation of the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General, prepared on the basis of the experience of the Russian Federation in building capacities in the field of road safety (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 60.

(Signed) Andrey **Denisov**

Annex to the letter dated 25 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information concerning the implementation of the provisions of resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General

The problem of ensuring safety on the roads has now acquired threatening proportions. Indeed, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan characterized the current situation in the world as a global crisis. The activities of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and sixtieth sessions demonstrated the readiness of the international community to tackle this problem. This was also reflected in the special resolutions adopted at these sessions. The resolutions were adopted following the preparation of reports by the Secretary-General proposing a range of measures to address the global crisis.

The Russian Federation fully supported the United Nations initiative. The head of the Road Safety Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs made a statement to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session concerning the role of legal sanctions in tackling the road safety problem.

These events marked a new phase in the development of a national policy aimed at enhancing road safety and based on specific recommendations of the United Nations.

Pursuant to these recommendations, large-scale awareness-raising is being undertaken in the Russian Federation in support of national campaigns to promote patterns of law-abiding conduct among road users. Thus, in 2003-2005, a number of activities were conducted, drawing the attention of government bodies and local communities to this problem. The following are just a few examples.

In 2004, the Russian Federation participated in the Fourth Road Safety Week, organized by the World Health Organization and devoted to combating aggressive driving behaviour. During the Fourth Week, the Russian Federation chaired a seminar at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on problems related to aggressiveness on the road, which was addressed by the head of the Road Safety Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the context of the seminar, the Russian Federation organized a thematic exhibition, which received high praise from the Director of the Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The problems in this area were discussed in hearings in the Federation Council and State Duma of the Russian Federal Assembly. Based on the results of the hearings, appropriate recommendations were made to the government bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs organized a number of scientific and practical conferences, seminars and round tables, in which prominent political figures and well-known representatives of science, culture and sport took part, thus drawing attention to the problem of road safety among the widest sections of society.

Two international conferences, on “Traffic Planning and Road Safety in Large Cities” and “Road Safety Days in the Baltic Region”, were held in 2004 in Saint Petersburg. In 2005, the All-Russian Conference on Road Safety in the Russian Federation and the Ninth International Exhibition of Road Safety Equipment (Intersignaldor-trans-2005) took place in the context of the Traffic Safety Forum.

These events received wide publicity in the print and electronic media. Senior figures from the Ministry of Internal Affairs regularly take part in television and radio programmes and give their views in leading Russian newspapers and magazines. This, too, helps to promote a climate of public intolerance of traffic violations.

In order to foster good conduct on the roads and reduce aggressiveness among road users, the Road Safety Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in conjunction with the media, has conducted a number of socially significant initiatives.

The “Safe Crossing” initiative (Operation “Zebra”), aimed at encouraging good conduct among road users, was organized in Moscow with the support of the newspapers *Komsomolskaya pravda* and *Novye izvestia*. A similar initiative was conducted with the help of the editors of *Novaya gazeta*. Drivers who gave way to pedestrians at pedestrian crossings received prizes from the editors, and the names of the most polite drivers, along with their cars’ registration numbers, were published in the newspapers. In conjunction with the weekly *Argumenty i fakty*, the Road Safety Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs is implementing the “Rules of Life” initiative, the aim of which is to promote proactive measures against persons who violate road traffic rules, primarily by law-abiding road users.

In addition, initiatives aimed at improving the culture of conduct on the roads have been organized in virtually all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (in Chelyabinsk region, a professional skills contest for taxi drivers; in Yaroslavl region, a “Courtesy Lottery”, in which lottery tickets were presented to drivers who were especially courteous towards other road users). The “Autolady” competition for women drivers is particularly popular.

Efforts are continuously under way to foster safe habits among the youngest road users. An all-Russian contest for young traffic inspectors “Safe Wheels” is held each year. In 2004, the State Motor Licensing and Inspection Department revived the traditional all-Russian rally for young traffic inspectors, which took place at the Orlënok All-Russian Children’s Centre (Krasnodar territory).

Such activities create an atmosphere conducive to the implementation of other measures aimed at improving road safety and based on the recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly.

For example, Member States are invited to establish a lead agency, on a national level, on road safety and to develop a national action plan to reduce road traffic injuries.

On 15 November 2005, at the initiative and with the participation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Presidium of the State Council of the Russian Federation held a meeting on the situation with respect to road safety and measures to enhance government action in that area. Based on the outcome of the meeting, the

President of the Russian Federation Mr. Vladimir Putin instructed the Government and federal executive bodies to take a number of measures to reduce the accident rate.

The Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation was instructed to establish by 1 February 2006 a government commission on road safety. Currently, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for coordinating the activities of federal executive bodies and executive bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the area of road safety, in accordance with Government decision No. 567 of 19 October 2004.

A draft federal special-purpose programme “Improving road safety, 2006-2012” has been developed, providing for the reduction of the number of road traffic deaths in the Russian Federation by a factor of 1.5 by 2012. The draft programme is in the process of being approved by the Government.

The amendments introduced to articles 12.8 and 12.26 of the Code of Administrative Offences in 2004 and 2005, which increased the penalties for driving while intoxicated and refusing to submit to a medical test for intoxication, have been an effective means of reducing one of the main risk factors identified in the resolutions and reports, namely, driving under the influence of alcohol.

The call to address the risk factor of non-use of child restraints was taken into account in drafting Government decision No. 767 of 14 December 2005, which introduced appropriate amendments to the road traffic rules of the Russian Federation.

In response to the invitation to Member States to pass road traffic laws stipulating action against other risk factors (excessive speed, non-use of safety belts and helmets), a range of draft laws has been introduced in the State Duma of the Russian Federal Assembly, proposing to increase the administrative penalties for the corresponding traffic violations and to establish liability for systematic violations.
