

Keynote Speech by HRH Prince Michael of Kent

**delivered at the Opening Plenary of the International Transport Forum's
Summit on "Transport Safety and Security", Leipzig, 23 May 2018**

Dear Mr Augulis, President of the 2018 ITF Summit and Minister of Transport of Latvia,
Mr Scheuer, Federal Minister of Transport of Germany,
Mr Kim, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum,
Ministers, Distinguished guests,

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you at this important Ministerial Summit on transport safety and security. In countries around the globe transport is the great enabler. On ships, planes, trains, motor vehicles, bicycles, and on foot, people travel to work, to meet friends and family, and to explore the world. The precious freedom that mobility provides is in so much demand, and grows year on year.

This rising demand inevitably means greater challenges to manage both safety and security. Governments and all transport operators, public and private, share the responsibility. Together they face mounting pressures to prevent any harm of befalling people while they are on the move. Mobility exposes people to external risks such as crime and terrorism, or risks from internal failures in the transport system itself, such as road crashes.

The number of transport users, is growing and we are also seeing a qualitative change in demand. Today the public have reasonable and rising expectations for high levels of safety and security across all transport modes. They hope that their essential need for mobility will not be threatened by the risk of fatal or serious injury. Simply put they aspire to vision zero deaths and serious injuries for themselves and their loved ones.

In some transport sectors this goal is already established. Last year, aviation experienced its safest year in history. In a sector where fail-safe procedures have become standard practice, there were just 10 crashes involving commercial flights resulting in 44 fatalities. This contrasts with 3,500 people killed every day in our most dangerous transport mode; travelling on the road.

Some argue that the high safety performance of commercial aviation results from its characteristic structure as a closed system in which virtually all flight movements are subject to tracking and control. It is also a sector with high degrees of international co-ordination and co-operation. Roads, in contrast, are viewed as more chaotic; an open system with vast numbers of largely unregulated movements occurring simultaneously in diverse countries around the world.

Certainly, each mode has its own highly specific features. But, our world is changing fast and technological innovation is now making feasible levels of safety across all transport modes that were previously unimaginable. This Summit, for example, will be considering the advances in vehicle technology from advanced driver assistance systems towards driverless cars. Outside the conference hall today, the Global New

Car Assessment Programme is demonstrating versions of autonomous emergency braking that can help stop crashes from happening at all. These systems are already in operation and are increasingly likely to be a standard feature on all new cars sold across the OECD countries.

This afternoon I would especially like to focus on road safety, of three decades ago I established my Road Safety Awards to recognize advances in road traffic injury prevention. The awards began in the United Kingdom at a time when my country experienced more than five thousand fatalities every year. Today, with the consistent application of policies to make vehicles, roads, and road users safer, the UK now loses fewer than two thousand people killed in road crashes each year.

My awards are now fully international and over the years I have very much enjoyed meeting the diversity of winners around the world. These have included governments, research organisations, philanthropies, businesses and civil society groups all devoting their energies to saving lives on our roads.

In 2011 I created a special annual award for the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, and was pleased to present it in 2016 to the International Transport Forum. This was for their report entitled 'Zero Road Deaths and Serious Injuries; Leading a Paradigm Shift in Road Safety, and also in recognition of their outstanding research and recommendations over a number of years. In 2008, for example, the ITF published another important report entitled "Towards Zero Road Deaths: Ambitious Targets and a Safe Systems Approach". And whilst the ITF's reports may not always have the snappiest of titles, the quality of their research, based on input from governments and experts across the OECD countries is undeniable.

Both these ITF reports have been very influential, encouraging culprit countries to adopt best practice and move beyond the tendency to just blame the victim for road crashes. Instead, the ITF has been a leading advocate of the so called 'safe system' approach. This recognises that human error on our roads is inevitable, that the focus of injury prevention should be to keep crash forces within the physical tolerances of the human body, and that there is a shared responsibility to manage our road systems accordingly. The ITF's work shows that the application of these principles is best achieved through an integrated mix of policies for safe vehicles, safe roads and safe road users. Today, the world's best performing countries in road injury reduction all use variants of this safe system philosophy.

The challenge now is to encourage more countries to adopt similarly effective policies. It is worrying that recently progress has seemed to stall. The UN Decade of Action was launched in 2011 with the aim to "stabilize and then reduce" the level of road fatalities. The results so far have not been as good as expected. Today, all we can say that there has been some stabilization but not yet any significant reduction. In 2015, Heads of Government adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals with a target to halve road deaths and injuries by 2020. Unfortunately, it is clear now that this will not be achieved. Worse still, if present trends continue, the World Bank has forecast that by 2030 another 21.7 million deaths and 875.7 million injuries will occur on the world's roads. To accept such an appalling human tragedy really cannot be an option.

Last month I was pleased to represent the United Kingdom in the UN General Assembly during an important debate on improving global road safety. The new resolution adopted on April 12th sets the stage for a new level of global commitment to road injury prevention. Member States accepted an offer from the Government of Sweden to host a Third High Level Global Ministerial Meeting on Road Safety in 2020.

They endorsed new performance targets for key road safety risk factors linked to the World Health Organization's Save LIVES policy package, and agreed to establish a new road safety trust fund.

These are important decisions taken as we reach the close of the UN Decade of Action, but they must serve as an urgent call to move beyond business as usual. In New York I also had the opportunity to speak to the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and there I proposed three complimentary initiatives that I believe will be needed if we are to meet the aim of the UN General Assembly to achieve a substantial improvement in global road safety.

First, we need to establish a new UN road safety target to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030. This will reinvigorate the road safety ambition of the SDGs and provide a framework for accountability and action. The serious risk is that, without a new casualty reduction target, the road safety performance of UN Member States will be weakly measured and consequently poorly managed. I was pleased to see that last week the European Commission proposed such a 2030 target for the European Union and I hope that the UN will follow this promising example. It would certainly be a good outcome for the forthcoming 3rd Global Ministerial Meeting in Sweden to endorse a new target for 2030.

Second, we need to mobilise new resources to finance road injury prevention programmes. Here I would like again here to pay tribute to the efforts of Jean Todt, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy and the Secretariat of the UNECE for their tireless efforts to launch the new UN Road Safety Trust Fund. Compared with other major health epidemics like HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis, road safety is very poorly funded. Apart from the excellent examples of the Bloomberg Philanthropies and the FIA Foundation, there are simply too few donors in this field. I am pleased that the UK has been a long-standing contributor to the World Bank's Global Road Safety Facility, but now is the time for other countries to come forward and become new donors to the cause.

Third we need much stronger political commitment to road safety. We know that the countries with the best road safety performance have benefitted from strong and sustained political support. In that context I was glad that UN General Assembly last month acknowledged the key role of legislators in passing effective road safety policies and laws, and allocating budgetary support. I am also pleased that the Towards Zero Foundation, of which I am patron, has established the Global Network for Road Safety Legislators. With support from the World Health Organization and Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Global Network aims to encourage parliamentarians to share best practice in road safety legislation and policies. Political engagement like this will be a 'sine qua non' of effective road injury prevention in the decade to 2030.

My three-point plan, to set a new UN target for 2030, to boost funding, and to increase political commitment for road safety, is inter-related. A target is needed to measure performance, funds are needed for effectiveness, and political commitment is needed for action. All three are about leadership. The ITF Summit is a unique forum where Transport Ministers can demonstrate leadership and I am very grateful for this opportunity to address you and to make this request. In your discussions here in Leipzig today, and in your Ministerial roles back home, please keep in mind what is at stake between now and 2030. Think of the lives that will be lost, the families shattered, and the tragic waste from another twenty million or more road fatalities. We know that we can do better than this. So many of these road traffic deaths are avoidable Let us do our utmost to prevent them. Thank you very much.

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