

## Observation of Launching of Bhutan's Commitment to Decade for Road Safety (2011 – 2020)



*26<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Royal Institute of Health Sciences, Thimphu*

The road safety promotion is a multi-sector and multidisciplinary approach. The effective way of improving the road safety deals with road engineering, effective road safety education for the communities, law enforcement and effective management of post crash events. Owing to the wide scope of interventions, road safety responses were not vigorous enough and were fragmented among the major players so far. The Decade of Action for road safety (2011- 2020) is the initiative to fulfill Bhutan's commitment to improving the road safety following the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/64/255)<sup>1</sup> in 2010 proclaiming the decade of action for road safety 2011 - 2020.

A series of meetings were conducted with formation of multisectoral committee among the relevant stake holders. Activities were conducted by the multisectoral stakeholders to observe the commitment for the Decade Launch Day such as the traffic police during nationwide road patrol conducted on April 28, 2011; observed that there were 61 violations out of 4062 vehicles checked by the traffic police in 12 divisional regions in the country. Of these violations, unlicensed driving (12/61) and carrying extra passengers (12/61) were the leading violations. Extrapolation from the above findings, there could be 801 total violations, 499 unlicensed drivers and 157 vehicles carrying extra passenger among the registered vehicles in the country. Road safety violations appear to be rampant on Bhutanese roads. The Road Safety & Transport Authority (RSTA) conducted inspection of passengers, buses taxis & private vehicles in the four regions from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The total of 1026 numbers of vehicles was checked and 229 vehicles were penalized for unlicensed driving, over loading, excess passengers, lack of proper documents and registration certificates.

The observation of Launch Decade Day for road Safety (2011-2020) was formally launched on 26<sup>th</sup> May at the Royal Institute of Health Sciences. The chief guest for the Launch Decade Day for Road safety was His Excellency Nanda Lal Rai, Minister for Information & Communication Ministry. Various international organisation such as World Health Organisation(WHO), (UNDP) United Nations Development Program, United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF), Save the Children(SCF), other ministries and agencies (Department of Roads, Road Safety and Transport Authority(RSTA) ,Policy and Planning Division of Ministry of Information &



Communication, city corporation, medias, insurance companies(RICBL), school students(Yangchenphu Higher Secondary School, Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School, Changzamtog Lower Secondary school) and student trainees from the Royal Institute of Health Sciences participated actively during the launch.

The Chief Guest highlighted on the importance of collective efforts required from all relevant stakeholders, such as media, insurance companies, private sectors besides RSTA, Traffic Police and health sector in promoting road safety in order to achieve decade of action for Bhutan. He affirmed that the Decade of Action must be implemented with priority to prevent deaths, disability due to road traffic crashes. The international



agencies could support financially for development of road safety promotion through the decade. A short skit on causes and effects of road accidents and sharing of views by school students actively involved in traffic control management in their respective school environment.

The WHO Representative Dr. Nani Nair read out the message of Regional Director SEAR WHO and communicated that WHO will play a key role throughout the Decade and provide overall coordination, technical support to countries for prevention, data collection and emergency trauma care.



The Royal Government of Bhutan's commitment to Decade of Road safety (2011-2020) was launch to mark the occasion. The Decade of Action for Road Safety envisions building an excellent, well-coordinated and well funded road safety system contributing to minimum rate of road crashes, minimum loss of lives and minimum hospitalization due to road crashes. The goal will be to reduce deaths by two thirds and half the road traffic crashes by 2020. The tentative objectives for the Decade of Action for Road Safety are as follows:

- Improve the level of unsafe behaviors among road users
- Improve road engineering and vehicle safety
- Improve post crash responses and medical management in road traffic crashes
- Build greater evidence and scientific information on road safety system in Bhutan

The leading stakeholders for implementing the Decade of Action for Road Safety will be: Road Safety and Transport Authority (RSTA) under Ministry of Information and Communications, Department of Road (DOR), Department of Urban Development & Engineering Services (DUDES) under Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Royal Bhutan Police (Traffic), Department of Public Health (DOPH), Department of Medical services (DMS) under Ministry of Health Thromdeys, and Ministry of Education. The multi-sectoral strategic frame work to implement the Decade of Action for Road Safety has already been initiated. The key stakeholders are developing the plan of action for the decade. The action plans would include tentative cost estimates so that realistic fund allocations can be granted by the Royal Government of Bhutan and other donor agencies for implementation of the plans for road safety for the Decade.

On behalf of the multisectoral stakeholders, the Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health coordinated the launching of the Decade of Action. The WHO provided financial support of US\$ 5500 for the launching of the Royal Government of Bhutan's Commitment to the Decade of Action for Road safety (2011-2020).