

**Remarks prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
JASIC Government-Industry Seminar on Vehicle
Safety**

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Good morning. It is my great pleasure to return to Tokyo for this important Seminar. I have eagerly anticipated this visit and the opportunity to resume our conversations. As you know, at NHTSA we are focused on saving lives, preventing injuries, and reducing the economic costs due to road traffic crashes through education, research, safety standards, and enforcement activity.

The foundation of our efforts is a data-driven and research-oriented focus that touches on every aspect of driving safety. We envision, and are working to create, a new safety era that will revolve around safe vehicle designs and emerging technologies. While the Agency has worked on crashworthiness issues for over 40 years and will continue to have these as an area of focus, we recognize the future is in crash avoidance technologies and active safety. The best protection against a crash is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Dan Smith, NHTSA's Senior Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety, will speak about our work in both areas in more detail in his remarks.

While our agency regulates vehicle safety, we also address behavioral issues related to

driving—such as speeding, distraction, and driving drunk—since driver error is a factor in approximately 90 percent of crashes in the United States.

In recent years we have been pleased to report overall declines in U.S. highway traffic fatalities. Our latest data show that in 2010 US highway fatalities fell to 32,885, the lowest level since 1949, despite an estimated increase of nearly 21 billion miles traveled. Since 2005, fatalities have dropped 25 percent. And while the trend is very encouraging, for all of us at NHTSA the number of lives lost annually is still much too high. As we work on our core mission in saving lives and reducing injuries in the United States, we also are deeply committed to working internationally

with like-minded countries to reduce human suffering around the globe. Mr. Smith will discuss some of our efforts working with our international partners on Global Technical Regulations through the WP.29 process and NHTSA's commitment to harmonization and efforts to raise the bar of vehicle safety globally. But I would like to discuss some newer efforts on global road safety and the UN Decade for Action activities, and the efforts initiated within the Asian Pacific Economic Community (APEC) framework.

As we all know, traffic crashes in the developing countries claim the lives of nearly 1.3 million people every year, and injure 20-50 million more. Yet only 15 percent of countries have comprehensive laws that address the key risks

of speeding, drinking and driving, and the non-use of helmets, seat belts, and child restraints.

The 2009 the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety helped to focus the world's attention on this global crisis. It is now clear that data collection and analysis are the tools that can help us prevent traffic deaths in the developing world. And the nations that understand how to address road safety through systematic data-based methods—Japan, the United States, and countries of the European Union—are uniquely positioned to undertake this important work.

In 2010, NHTSA conducted a pilot training program to assist nations in implementing the types of data systems described in our new Data

System manual. Argentina, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, and Vietnam participated in the pilot. We are now using this experience to revise and develop a similar training event in Vietnam in Fall, 2012.

The purpose of the workshop will be to increase understanding of road traffic data systems and evaluation, and to impart the value of reliable and up-to-date data for policymakers.

Participants will learn to improve and strengthen the collection and evaluation of traffic and road safety data systems in their own economies.

They will also learn how to leverage data to develop and implement effective countermeasures and to develop and implement effective traffic safety policies.

While our work with the UN Decade effort looks to share best practices on some of the better researched traffic safety risks, I would like to discuss a phenomenon that is not new, but new technologies have certainly created challenges.

Distracted driving has emerged as a serious international problem with deadly consequences. In United States alone, 2010, more than 3,000 people lost their lives in crashes where distraction was a factor. Young people are especially vulnerable because their world is so thoroughly defined by mobile technologies and social connectivity.

The data are telling us that as technology evolves the potential for distraction in vehicles rises. We're seeing the rapid growth of new

dashboard and handheld infotainment systems in vehicles now that create dangerous levels of distraction. We know that drivers dialing a cell phone, texting, and surfing the Internet are diverting themselves from their primary responsibility: driving.

In response, NHTSA has developed an evaluative framework for in-vehicle technologies. We have offered specific guidance to U.S. automakers to help them develop electronic devices that provide the features consumers want—without interfering with the driver’s focus or sacrificing safety by distracting the driver’s attention.

Last month we held hearings on our proposed distracted driving guidelines across the United States and gathered responses from automakers and other stakeholders. We look forward to a collaborative solution that directly addresses the important interface between electronic devices and distraction.

Let me conclude by summarizing our efforts in completing one of President Obama's centerpiece initiatives: our effort to significantly increase the fuel efficiency of the U.S. vehicle fleet.

In July 2011, the President announced an historic agreement with 13 major automobile manufacturers to increase fuel economy to an estimated 54.5 miles per gallon equivalent for cars and light-duty trucks by Model Year 2025.

In partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHTSA is committed to this national goal, which will also conserve energy, help protect our environment, reduce our dependence on imported oil.

To reach this objective, NHTSA and EPA have developed the first-ever national program that harmonized fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2012 through 2016.

Under those standards, we estimate that passenger cars and light trucks will be required, on average, to increase from 27.6 miles per gallon in 2011 to 34.1 miles per gallon in 2016. The impact of this increased fuel efficiency is significant because light-duty vehicles are

responsible for about 60 percent of U.S. transportation petroleum consumption.

NHTSA has been working closely on the proposed fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions standards through the model year 2025 to ensure that the standards we proposed will be achievable, cost-effective, and preserve consumer choice.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I would like to ask Mr. Smith for his remarks, and upon concluding, we will both be happy to take some questions.