

Training "The Media's Role in Reporting Transport Issues, including Road Safety"

EU Delegation Tanzania – Umoja House – Dar es Salaam 21/07/2015

Opening remarks by Gianluca AZZONI, Charge d'Affaires a.i

Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, Johansen Kahatamo,

Representative of the Ministry of Works, Transport and Finance (NAO),

Dear Journalists participants,

Habari za asubuhi! I am pleased to welcome you today here at Umoja House for this workshop on the role of media in improving communication on transport issues, including road safety.

As you may know the European Union has a long history of support to Tanzania's transport sector, and particularly in the development of the road network. I should mention among the main projects the upgrading of the Mandela road in Dar es Salaam, some important Mwanza urban roads, the rehabilitation of part of the central corridor, and the construction of rehabilitation of hundreds kilometres of rural and feeder roads.

As you are aware the development of the road network has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the number of vehicles in Tanzania in recent years, and proportional increase in the number of accidents, traffic congestion and pollution in Dar and other major cities.

I am informed that in 2013, the total number of people reported killed in Tanzania's roads reached over 4000 for the first time according to Traffic Police figures, along with over 20000 reportedly road Traffic injured. This not only represents an intolerable human toll but also a heavy economic loss, that Tanzania cannot afford.

Pedestrians are at the greatest risk of being killed making up over 31% of all deaths in 2013. In 2007 the University of Dar es Salaam consulting Wind BICO estimated that the road crashes caused a loss of 3.4% of GDP each year. Something that Tanzania can ill afford.

A particularly important role can and should be played by the media. By changing the way the media communicate and report on transport and road safety issues journalists can have an impact on the way people think and the way they behave in the road, including vehicle drivers and Pedestrians alike. So today's training is meant to enhance journalists understanding of their potential role and to help them acquire the ability to play that role effectively.

This initiative is one in a series of road safety related events that the EU is supporting in cooperation with the non-profit organisation Amend, in and around this years' National Road Safety Week that is going to be held from 3 to 9 August.

In the run up to that week on 29 July a launch event will be held at the Kisutu and Ilala primary schools which will see their basic infrastructure improved (speed bumps, zebra crossing, road signs etc.) as part of the EU initiative. Road safety education will be taught in 8 primary schools in Dar and 2500 children will receive special reflector enhanced school bags so they can easily be seen by drivers while walking to and from school.

With this, I would like to conclude these short introductory remarks by thanking the Traffic Police, the BBC media service, the award winning journalists Mkinga Mkinga and Tom Bishop from Amend for their precious cooperation in making this initiative possible. I wish you all a very fruitfully day.

Asanteni.