

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Road transport takes too high a toll in terms of human lives and suffering, and I can assure you that OICA, representing the global auto industry, finds this totally unacceptable and strongly supports improvements.

Road safety is however not an easy task. There are multiple factors to be considered. There is of course the question of the quality of the vehicles, but also the infrastructures (and this is not restricted to the road only!), the traffic conditions, the traffic rules and their enforcement, the road user behaviour, etcetera. In addition to that, every single of these factors may be radically different from country to country.

We therefore all recognise that an integrated, safe-system approach is needed, without trying to single out individual factors.

With the publication, end of October 2019, of the OICA manifesto on road safety, we wanted to stress the industry strong collective commitment to road safety.

We however must recognise that vehicle manufacturers have no say in many of the factors that I mentioned. But the auto industry has a major responsibility in terms of vehicle safety. Manufacturers do have a responsibility in offering safe and affordable vehicles to the public and we also recognise that sometimes we need a little push, because we do not necessarily control all elements of the equation.

We have published this manifesto in an effort to better explain where we stand, and we have also handed it over officially in October 2019 to Mr Jean Todt in his capacity of Special Envoy of the UN secretary General on Road Safety. And I take the opportunity to thank Mr Jean Todt for his strong commitment and guidance. I consider that his original call to the auto industry was a welcome wake-up call: his initiatives were so to say a soft, but nevertheless a compelling push to the manufacturers to get their acts together. I also recognise that not everything is perfect yet, and that further improvements are needed.

Therefore, and in order to ensure that all manufacturers present on the markets are placed on a level playing field in a spirit of free and open competition, we will help governments to put in place the necessary legislation, whenever it is today inadequate or even non existing.

Our goal is that the law will require all new vehicles to meet some minimum levels of safety; this is totally in line with goal 12 of the Stockholm declaration; it even further clarifies that goal since we define in detail the recommended levels that should be put in place as a minimum in order to be considered as the “appropriate levels of safety performance”.

We have recently appointed our own Special Envoy, Mr Jonnaert, formerly of the European Automobile Manufacturers Association ACEA. He will put the OICA expertise at the service of the States and assist various countries to implement in their legislation the minimum safety requirements.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I know that some other NGOs have strongly attacked our initiative, considering it is not enough, whether in terms of content or in terms of implementation timing. Everyone has the right of an opinion, but we however prefer an open and constructive dialogue. The OICA manifesto is to be seen as “a common foundation”, laying down a level playing field for all actors, and on which each specific market can build its own levels of safety; this will not prevent individual initiatives from going further and/or quicker.

We recognise our responsibility, but we also need help and cooperation to achieve the goals of the Stockholm declaration.

Thank you for your attention