

Save The Nation



Save the Nation Association (SNA)
Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

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Press Release

The Hon Dagmawit Moges, Minister of Transport and Logistics

ADDIS ABABA.

Dear Hon Minister,

On behalf of Save the Nation-Road Safety for Ethiopia, (SNA) the nation's leading NGO for Road Safety I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to you on your appointment as Minister of Transport and Logistics.

We are thrilled to learn that you had been given this exciting opportunity to address the critical transport issues in our country. We would like to find an early opportunity to meet with you to discuss the potential synergies between the Ministry of Transport and ourselves with some of the initiatives to address the accident pandemic.

We firmly believe that the interventions from your office are the only way that we will be able to change the current situation.

Yours is not an easy task. But we know you fear nothing. Through this letter, we want to highlight some critical areas we believe need your attention.

Road Safety

Road safety remains one of the biggest problems facing our transport system. Road traffic accidents are ranked as the third-highest cause of death after HIV/AIDS and malaria in Ethiopia and are the second leading cause of death for people aged between five (5) and twenty (29). Annually, approximately 4,000 fatalities are recorded as a result of road traffic accidents in Ethiopia.

Further, injuries as a result of road traffic have become one of the significant causes of child morbidity and mortality. The bulk of accidents involving children are predictable and preventable, many involve children walking to and from school, playing in the streets, and young pedestrians. We admired the recent launching of Road Safety in the

Ethiopian Education Curriculum. In the past decade, our country has lost thousands of lives as a result of road accidents. This is a national crisis that requires massive attention, or thousands of people will certainly die in the next decade. And it requires a complete rethink on the way road safety is approached in Ethiopia.

Last year, 2020 was the end of the United Nations' Decade of Action for Road Safety. The campaign was to reduce by half the number of road deaths in countries. But the numbers show we have failed to achieve these goals. Not only did we not achieve them, for much of the period our numbers have gone in the wrong direction.

This, Minister, is a real challenge for you and your department, one which needs immediate attention. An additional incentive for dealing effectively with road safety comes from the Office of

road safety and contribute towards a reduction in road traffic injuries and fatalities.

The annual total cost of crashes in Ethiopia can be placed at around Hundred Million Birr. Yes, Million. It's a staggering amount of money that could be better used in schools, universities, healthcare facilities, or for job creation yet, as a country, road safety seems to be too much of an afterthought than a priority.

Pedestrian & cyclists Safety

Pedestrian & cyclists Safety Pedestrians account for 44% of all casualties and combined with pedal cyclists, non-motorized users account for almost two-thirds of all casualties. This is in line with expected levels identified in the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety (WHO 2018). We specifically note this number separately because it is so high. SNA is involved in education programs among school children and other vulnerable, improving road infrastructure, etc. More wide-reaching efforts are needed. Promote walking and cycling to reduce congestion and accidents by ensuring all roads have safe and wide footpaths and cycle paths. Our challenge to you is to push for a national campaign aimed at ensuring better pedestrian walkways and cycle paths (do not exist), and better education among our pedestrians (including small children) of pedestrian safety. This is not a whimsical suggestion. Such a campaign will have enormous benefits for our country.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement on Ethiopian roads remains splintered, uncoordinated, and largely ineffective. Proper, effective licensing of prospective drivers, a more comprehensive approach to rooting out corruption and bribery at vehicle testing centers, and better application of vehicle roadworthiness is a start. But the challenge here, Minister, is to utilize law enforcement officers around the country to police moving violations more effectively. Speeding, cell phone usage while driving, reckless and negligent road behavior, and disregarding other drivers, are among the main problems.

Speed limits

Speed limits the most important method to bring down accidents is strict enforcement of speed limits. 90 % of accidents can be avoided by strict enforcement of speed limits. Heavy penalties should be imposed on ALL those who cross speed limits. If this is strictly implemented, nobody will dare to go at high speed. While tamper-proof speed controllers/limiters be made mandatory for all heavy vehicles and buses.

Car-free day

The car-free day the car-free day is a temporary closure of streets to vehicle traffic which allows the public to engage in physical activities through running, walking, cycling, and more. Policy Makers, as well as city governments, may find in a car-free day rather simple programs to effectively promote physical activities in their communities. We are championing this initiative in Ethiopia, as one of the few countries in Africa. We are asking for your direct support to sustain this initiative.

Toll Road

Ensure that the money made from Toll Road is fully utilized for the construction and maintenance of roads.

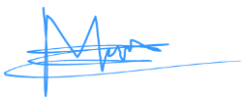
Transparency

Transparency is a very vital tool if we really want to succeed and bring the needed change for the country, as all of us fighting to decrease the road carnage all stakeholders should be seen with equal eyes and should be treated the same way by your administration especially from the civil society side.

We would urge you, Minister, to accept the hands reached out to you, as we have expertise, insights, and experiences which we know will be beneficial for all road users in our country. Minister, we have highlighted these areas for your consideration at the start of your administration. There are more. Issues around reliable, affordable, and effective safe public transport are one example. A lack of driver education programs in schools is another.

That being the case, we wish you and your department well with your future endeavors. We also take this opportunity to again commit ourselves to work alongside you to make our roads and transport system safer for all.

Yours truthfully,



Mesganaw Bimrew, Executive Director Save the Nation

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NOTE

Who We Are

Save the Nation STN is the nation's leading Road Safety Charity No: 3403 registered under the Ethiopian Government NGO and a member of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety.

- We provide road safety education in primary school and secondary schools
- We design and implement road safety improvements using iRAP star rating methodologies
- We develop cost-effective road safety programs to increase knowledge, awareness, and skills amongst Ethiopian road users.
- We promote a positive attitude towards enforcement laws and infuse a sense of courtesy and concern among road users.
- We reach out to the media, corporates, and the community to solicit their support to prevent colossal waste of human life on Ethiopian roads
- Advocate the government create political will and help improve the road safety situation in the country

Vision

The vision of the SNA is to match and exceed international Road Safety excellence consistent with the Safe System approach to free Ethiopia's roads from death and serious injury. Save the Nation seeks to reduce traffic injuries and deaths by creating public awareness, school training, and media outreach.