

## **Statement by Floor Lieshout, YOURS - Youth for Road Safety**

### **First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety**

President Medvedev, honourable ministers, distinguished guests, my fellow youth delegates,

Statistics show that if I die next week, among all possible causes of death, a traffic crash is the most likely. As a native of the Netherlands - one of the safest countries in the world - I am still more likely to die from a road crash than from any other cause. My peers - in particular young men like myself - from many other countries of the world face an even greater risk of dying on the road.

Globally, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for young people. Every day more than 1000 young lives are ended and thousands more young people are injured on the world's roads. Unfortunately, many young people are also implicated in the causes of these tragedies, particularly as drivers. In most regions of the world these numbers will continue to rise, if urgent action is not taken now.

This is why we young people have mobilized and taken the decision to be part of the solution. Yesterday we met with enthusiastic and committed youth leaders from all regions of the world. I am honoured to speak on their behalf and on behalf of so many young people.

In 2007 the First World Youth Assembly for Road Safety was organized by the World Health Organization and the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. More than 400 young people from over 100 countries addressed road safety. After the Assembly they returned home to meet with ministers in their countries, flag the issue in national media and launch road safety campaigns.

During the World Youth Assembly the youth delegates expressed a strong wish for the creation of a global youth NGO for road safety. We have been able to work steadily this past year towards the launch of this NGO, named YOURS - Youth for Road Safety. I am very happy to announce that YOURS will formally start its activities next month as the international road safety NGO of and for young people.

YOURS' mission is to keep young people safe on the world's roads. It will do so through advocacy, networking and building capacities.

Young people have so much to offer. We invite you to make use of our skills, our determination and our boundless energy. This combined with your wisdom and experience make us powerful allies.

I would like to personally thank Ministers who are already supporting youth-led initiatives in their countries and who have invited youth to participate in road safety policymaking. And I would like to encourage Ministers who have not yet reached out to young people to do so.

I invite you to take the opportunity to talk directly with the 25 youth delegates who are here today. You can recognize us by this pin with the YOURS traffic-light logo. We are at your service and hope that you too are at ours.

Finally, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak today and express our strong support for the idea of a Decade of Action for Road Safety. You can count on us to play our part.

We call upon you, the leaders of the world, to make real the commitments you will initiate during the course of these two days together. We urge action over words.

Thank you.