

**World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims
21 November 2010**

**Statement of the Director of the Department of
Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability
World Health Organization
Dr Etienne Krug**

On this World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, I have a thought for all those whose lives have been affected by road crashes and their tragic consequences. I have a special thought for Pius Njawe, a distinguished African journalist, who was killed in a road crash in the United States in July of this year.

Pius was known to many in his country and across the world as one of Africa's most staunch defenders of press freedom. We in the road safety community knew Pius as a fellow campaigner. He founded Jane and Justice, an NGO dedicated to the memory of his wife - whom he described as "the real hero". She tragically also died in a road crash eight years ago in their native Cameroon, due in large part to a lack of adequate emergency trauma care.

Pius is now among the nearly 1.3 million who will lose their lives on the world's roads this year. We are deeply saddened by his loss, yet we also remain hopeful.

Building on the success of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety held in late 2009, the United Nations General Assembly declared a first ever "Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020".

This is a unique opportunity for all of us which we need to embrace wholeheartedly. This Decade indeed needs to be a Decade of action. My hope is that all governments and relevant stakeholders will make public their plans for the Decade on 11 May 2011, the date set for its formal launch.

The Decade will focus first and foremost on preventing road traffic deaths and injuries by improving the safety of our roads and our vehicles; enhancing the behaviour of people on the roads; improving emergency services; and building capacities in all of these areas.

Those who have been directly affected by road traffic crashes and their families will have a vital role to play throughout the Decade. This annual World Day of Remembrance will offer a place for the voices of these victims and for their families. They guide us in all that we do.

My colleagues and I wish you a successful World Day of Remembrance.