

Welcome Message from Liu Xiaoming

Ladies and gentlemen,

Honored guests and colleagues,

Welcome to the ICTCT Extra workshop in Beijing. Today, I feel both happy and gratified, and my heartfelt thanks go to the distinguished scientists from all around the world, thank you for coming to share the knowledge, methodology, and also the consciousness and conscience of responsibility of traffic safety, especially to exchange mutually the theories and concepts with respect to the vulnerable road user. I would like to thank ICTCT and Transportation Research Center of Beijing University of Technology for supporting this event. I also appreciate the faculty members and staff of the conference for the laudable effort put in the organization of this workshop.

Beijing is facing a breath-taking development, as well as the traffic area. Its total highway mileage, nowadays, has surpassed over 20,000 kilometers. The motor vehicle ownership is near upon 3,000,000. By the end of 2010, the total length of metro network will achieve 270 kilometers.

Nevertheless, opportunities coexisting with challenges, we are simultaneously going to shoulder heavy responsibilities. In 2006, there were totally 89,455 people lost their lives in the Chinese 378,781 traffic accidents, among those people, pedestrians accounted for over 25%, road users riding non-motorized vehicles accounted for more than 17%, and the motorcyclists occupied approximately 20%. These figures highlight the severity of the risks for those road users lacking robust protection and also obviously not offered adequate priority within traffic system.

Now let's take a close look to Beijing's traffic safety situation. In 2006, almost 1500 people were killed due to traffic accidents in Beijing Municipal Area with 15 million residents and travelers. Among them, more than 40% were pedestrians and cyclists, being analogous with traits of whole nation and even worse from the perspective of vulnerable, Beijing truly confronts serious threatens both to society and government.

Fighting against the traffic risks, soothing the roadway and traffic system still dominate the top priority of Beijing authorities essential duties, especially for the traffic operation and management entities like Beijing Municipal Committee of Communications (BMCC). For instance, the deliberated but controversial new law- Road Traffic Safety Law finally is proved to empower the vulnerable road users higher priority, more enforcement defense against the injure from vehicles. As another example, from 2004, a specific safety program named as "Highway Safety Countermeasure" was facilitated among the rural area of Beijing, the prominent hazardous region before, where plenty of safety facilities were established such as barriers, cushions, traffic signs and marks. Government and other institutions make a great effort to enforce training and publicity, especially to combat some severe issues, like drunk, fatigue or aggressive driving. The rudimental, but steady effectiveness has emerged. By official statistics, the fatalities in traffic accidents of 2006 significantly declined from 1631 of 2005 to the almost 1500 of 2006, among them, the fatalities related to alcohol using also decreased over 10%.

As you know, Beijing will honorably host the 2008 Olympics. As the traffic planning, construction and operation authority, BMCC is gearing up preparation to perfectly serve the guests all over world. Undoubtedly, the leading task is to keep the traffic safe. As a part of these efforts, Beijing is sweepingly altering traffic signs, from purely improving English notations to shift the whole layout into internationally conventional style, to make them more legible to foreign drivers. Meanwhile, if you have been to Beijing for several times, you must noticed much more people waiting in line at the bus stop, and also jay walkers were

relatively rare than before. BMCC did a lot of work to change the behavior of people, the toughest but the ultimate one in all the traffic safety therapies, and we will keep alert till we achieve our goal- the New Beijing, the New Olympics.

In my opinion, road user behavior, peculiarly the vulnerable road user behavior is diversified to a wide spectrum from country to country, and even from city to city owing to their unique socio-economic characteristics, level and the maturity of mobility, and even the tradition and culture. For example, Beijing is a city with over 2000 year history whereas its thorough mobility just was initiated couple of decades ago, that embody Beijing a very special group of drivers, pedestrians and cyclists who behave quite distinctively comparing people from other places of this world. To study those characteristics, their implications to the traffic crashes, and corresponding solutions is quite meaningful, profitable and also urgent.

We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen, instead of only waiting for them to happen! Let's make our best endeavor, employ our resourcefulness to defend the vulnerable road users, since they are part of us and we are also part of them!

Again, welcome to beautiful Beijing. I hope you will enjoy the talks today.

Sincerely,

Liu Xiaoming

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