

## Oman Leads Road Safety Drive



*David Ward, FIA Foundation Director-General, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Issa al Harthy, Minister of Transport and Communications in Oman, Dr Waheed al Karusi, Chief of Orthopaedics in Oman.*

Oman continues to lead the drive to promote road safety in the Middle East. As part of its latest efforts in this area the Sultanate of Oman joined up with the FIA Foundation to sponsor a two day workshop on the "Implementation of Good Practices in Road Traffic Safety".

The workshop, held in Muscat, Oman at the end of November 2005, was organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), which includes 13 nations from the Middle East. It was attended by senior transport ministry officials and road safety experts from all 13 ESCWA nations, including Oman's Minister of Transport and Communications, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Issa al Harthy.

Together they explored examples of good practice in areas such as data collection, road safety plans and behavioural campaigns to promote seat belt use. Dr Waheed al Karusi, Chief of Orthopaedics in Oman, highlighted the worsening trend of road traffic accidents worldwide. He said: "These were not accidents but avoidable crashes that can be prevented if the right policies are put in place."

ESCWA's Bassam Anani provided an overview of the road safety situation in the Middle East which like other parts of

Asia is deteriorating as levels of motorisation rapidly increase. The workshop concluded with the adoption of recommendations for ESCWA Member States to consider and with an agreement to maintain a regional dialogue on road safety good practice in future.

FIA Foundation Director General David Ward applauded the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman to promote global road safety. He said: "It is no small achievement to put a new subject on the agenda of the international community but Oman has done this. The Sultanate's sponsorship of a series of UN General Assembly resolutions has resulted in major progress on road safety; the creation of a UN Road Safety Collaboration; publication of best practice manuals; and the creation of a new World Bank Global Road Safety Facility. All of these important developments have come about because of the initiative and leadership of the Sultanate of Oman."