

## Robertson Leads Safety Commission



*Lord Robertson of Port Ellen.*

Former NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson will lead an international Commission established by the FIA Foundation to investigate the actions needed to improve global road traffic safety. The Commission on Global Road Safety aims to drastically reduce the 1.2 million deaths and 15 million serious injuries caused by road traffic crashes worldwide each year.

Robertson, former UK Secretary of State for Defence, heads the Commission which includes a member from each of the Group of Eight (G8) countries. He has a long history of involvement in road safety, having been founding Chairman of the Seatbelt Survivors Club, an organisation founded in the UK to campaign for compulsory seat belts in cars and a founder member of the UK All Party Parliamentary Action Committee on Transport Safety (PACTS).

The other Commissioners are the leading economist Dr John Llewellyn; senior French medic Professor Gerard Saillant; former F1 World Champion Michael Schumacher; President of the Bridgestone Corporation, Shigeo Watanabe; Mark Rosenberg, Director of the Taskforce for Child Survival and Development; Tayce Wakefield, a senior General Motors executive and chair of the Global Road Safety Initiative (GRSI); Andrey Kortunov, President of the New Eurasia Foundation; and Rosario Alessi, Chairman of the FIA Foundation.

Commenting on his new role, Lord Robertson said: "Global road safety barely features on the international political agenda, yet it is a vital missing piece of the sustainable development jigsaw. My Commission will publish a report highlighting the need for political leadership on this issue, and making recommendations for improved international cooperation on global road safety. It is hoped that our work will raise the profile of the issue and set an agenda for practical action to reduce global road traffic injuries".

The Commission for Global Road Safety, which will report in June 2006, will aim to put global road safety on the sustainable development agenda of the G8 countries. The Commission will propose an action plan to tackle the hidden epidemic which kills 3,000 people, including 500 children, every day. More than 80 per cent of these road deaths and injuries occur in developing countries, leading the United Nations General Assembly last October to call for concerted action by the international community.

Although road traffic injuries are the second leading cause of death worldwide (behind HIV/AIDS) for young men, and cost poor economies billions of dollars, there is very little funding available to developing countries for prevention. In the industrialised nations road deaths have fallen by more than half since the 1970s, as the result of safer roads, seat belt laws, drink driving enforcement and better vehicle design. In contrast, the developing economies of Africa, Latin America, and Asia are today experiencing rapid and steep increases in road casualties many of which are preventable. The Commission for Global Road Safety will examine how best to

reverse this trend and prevent the further 65% increase in road traffic deaths and injuries predicted by the World Health Organisation by 2020 if no action is taken.

The report and recommendations will be published on Thursday June 8, 2006. Copies of the report will be sent to the G8 Heads of Government in advance of the 2006 G8 summit in St Petersburg, Russia, in July 2006. It will also be submitted to the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration as part of the preparation of the 2007 UN Global Road Safety Week.