

**Speech by Dr Grahaeme Henderson, Managing Director, Brunei Shell Petroleum,  
at the launch of the “Tell-A-Friend” Road Safety Campaign, 17 April 2008**

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Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Datu Kerma Setia Dato Paduka Seri Awang Zainuddin bin Jalani, Commissioner of the Royal Brunei Police Force

Senior Officials from Government Departments,

Our Contractors, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Selamat pagi* and a very good morning to you. On behalf of Brunei Shell Petroleum I am delighted to welcome you to the launch of the ‘Tell-A-Friend’ Road Safety Campaign.

I would like to especially thank our Guest of Honour, Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Zainuddin, for giving us his strong backing for this initiative. Thank you Pehin.

The Government of Brunei Darussalam has taken proactive steps to reduce the number of accidents on our roads. The National Road Safety Council has committed a great deal of resources and undertaken campaigns to deal with this serious problem. Various Government agencies are doing all they can too. The Police, along with the Land Transport Department, have been at the forefront of this work, by increasing enforcement and surveillance on the roads.

But still, we continue to hear of terrible road accidents almost every day.

Our hearts go out to the victims. We sympathize deeply with the families and friends of those affected.

But the painful truth is that there are people out there who are getting hurt on our roads. Every accident is one too many. Each accident is a disaster, causing physical pain and emotional suffering to the victims and their loved ones. Families often lose their breadwinners and sometimes children are made orphans. These are the real, awful, long-term consequences of road accidents, which the numbers do not tell.

As a husband and father of three children, I personally feel a huge obligation to prevent road accidents. I know that everyone in Brunei Shell Petroleum feels the same equal obligation and, indeed, everyone in Brunei Darussalam feels likewise. We all want to reduce road accidents.

The question is, what more can be done? I recall the words of Her Royal Highness Princess Masna at the launch of the United Nations Global Road Safety Week last year, and I quote, “Reducing road accidents should be everyone’s responsibility.”

So the real question should be, what more can we, you and I, and everyone of us do, whether car drivers, cyclists, passengers, or pedestrians? How can we make road safety “everyone’s responsibility”?

Reaching out to people, and sharing and reinforcing the road safety message in a deep and personal way, is the main objective of the “Tell-A-Friend” campaign.

The earlier two phases of the National Road Safety Campaign focused firstly on building awareness, and secondly enforcement. “Tell-A-Friend” is the third phase and is all about capturing the hearts and minds of people close to us. It is about sinking the road safety message deeper within ourselves, by sharing this with our family and friends, so that we make a personal commitment and visible change to become safer drivers.

The “Tell-A-Friend” campaign is being launched in Brunei Shell Petroleum and our contractors’ community. However, we are hopeful that it will be extended to further support the Government’s efforts to embed the road safety message and safe driving habits among a widening community of road users throughout the Nation.

One lesson we have learned from our experience during the awareness-building and enforcement phases, is that improving road safety standards has got a lot to do with changing habits and attitudes. This is never easy, but it can be done. It requires very strong commitment from everyone, right from the top, combined with a sustained effort.

One example in Brunei Shell Petroleum is our success with the wearing of seat belts among the 10,000 BSP and contractor employees. We have managed to increase compliance to the wearing of seat belts from as low as 40 percent about two years ago, to nearly 100 percent today.

No magic formula. Just sheer hard work, regular spot checks, regular educational campaigns, and very important, leadership by example. We make sure all directors and managers, including myself, put on their seat belts on every trip.

In Brunei Shell Petroleum, we have thought long and hard about Princess Masna’s call “that reducing road accidents is everyone’s responsibility”. We asked ourselves what more could be done. At the same time, we also wanted to try and align any initiative with the unique Brunian spirit of giving, sharing and caring for one another.

We see this principle in action during the Hari Raya open houses where family and friends can drop by someone’s house for ‘makan’. We see it operating when everyone makes spontaneous donations to a friend who has lost his or her home and belongings in a flood.

Similarly, we thought, why not extend the same spirit of caring and looking after each other by sharing the message of road safety?

This is how we came up with the idea of “Tell-A-Friend” as a launch pad to engage as many people as possible to commit to becoming safer drivers.

What is the message we need to send to our friends? Basically the five principles of road safety which the Government wants every road user to adopt. These are...and I am sure you can remember them by heart now...wearing seat belts, not using mobile phones, observing speed limits, wearing cyclist’s safety helmets, and using pedestrian crossings.

Not just ticking off these principles like a checklist. Rather, going over them carefully with your family and friends, and reminding them of the consequences of road accidents as well.

We need to say to our family and friends that we want to have zero road accidents and that we care for them immensely. We need to discuss the importance of diligently observing the five principles and, in the process, we also remind ourselves too on the vital need to follow the principles.

If we keep telling more and more family and friends, and widen our circle of sharing and caring, we can cover the entire population of Brunei Darussalam. It is not difficult. All it requires is for each of us to spare a small amount of time and put in the effort. Not much to ask to save lives on the road.

Let's not leave this until tomorrow or another day...it's everyone's responsibility.... it's our responsibility...let's all now get out there and "Tell-A-Friend" about road safety.

Thank you.