

SPEECH:

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IN CONJUCTION WITH:

ROAD SAFETY CONGRESS 2026

ON:

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09.30 AM

VENUE:

MITEC KUALA LUMPUR

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera and Salam Perpaduan

[Salutation]

OPENING — EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

1. Every morning, millions of Malaysians leave their homes with a destination in mind.

   A father rides his motorcycle to work. A mother sends her children to school. A young graduate begins the journey towards a promising future.

2. They travel on different roads, for different reasons, but they share one simple hope.. **to return home safely.**

3. Yet, for too many Malaysian families, that ordinary expectation remains unfulfilled. Many of us still remember the heartbreaking tragedy involving a young Malaysian family who had travelled to Putrajaya to celebrate our Merdeka Day.

4. It was the story of a young husband and wife, together with their little son, enjoying the celebrations and sharing photographs with their loved ones - just like thousands of other Malaysian families. **It was just like normal family outing on an day for our national pride**.

5. But what began as a joyful celebration ended in tragedy. **On their journey home, all three lost their lives.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. I share this story not simply to remind us of the tragedy, but to **remind us of the responsibility we carry. For those of us entrusted with shaping policies, designing roads, enforcing laws and developing safer technologies -** we must ask ourselves one difficult question:

Could this tragedy have been prevented?
and more importantly, ***what must we do to prevent the next one?***

7. Yes, we cannot change what happened to that family. **But we can change fate of countless others by making our roads safer and preventing such tragedies from happening again.**

8. That is why we are gathered here today. Not simply to discuss the future of mobility, but to shape a future where progress is measured not only by how far or how fast we travel, **but by how many lives we protect along the way.**

THE HUMAN COST OF ROAD CRASHES

Ladies and gentlemen

9. Last year alone, Malaysia recorded **6,537 road fatalities**. That is **18 lives lost every single day**. Nearly **two out of every three** fatalities involved motorcycle riders and passengers. These figures demand more than our attention. They demand our action.

10. Furthermore, road crashes also impose an enormous burden on our nation. Their socioeconomic cost has been estimated at up to **RM30 billion annually**, affecting productivity, healthcare, household income and the wider economy.

11. But let us be clear. **The true cost of a life lost can never be measured in ringgit.** As the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Road Safety and Traffic Congestion, **I view these figures with profound concern.**

12. Malaysia has established a clear national ambition through the Malaysia Road Safety Plan - to reduce road fatalities by 50 per cent by the end of this decade. It is an important commitment. **But a target alone will not save lives.**

13. The question before us is no longer whether road safety matters. The question is **whether we are prepared to make the difficult decisions, strengthen coordination and sustain the interventions necessary to deliver real results**. Because when lives are at stake, **good intentions are not enough.**

SAFER AND SMARTER MOBILITY: RETHINKING ROAD SAFETY

Distinguished guests,

14. Thus, the theme of this Congress - *Safer and Smarter Mobility* is both timely and necessary. Malaysia is moving towards a future shaped by digital connectivity, intelligent

transport systems, advanced vehicle technologies and new forms of mobility.

15. These developments present tremendous opportunities. But we must never confuse technological advancement with real progress. **A nation does not become more advanced simply because its vehicles become smarter. It becomes more advanced when its people become safer.** This requires a fundamental shift in how we approach road safety.

16. For too long, the discussion has focused heavily on the mistakes of individual road users. Of course, personal responsibility matters. Reckless driving, speeding and disregard for traffic laws must never be tolerated.

17. But **we must also recognise a simple reality.** Human beings make mistakes. A responsible transport system must therefore be designed not only to discourage those mistakes, but also to prevent them from becoming fatal.

18. That is the essence of the **Safe System Approach**. Safer roads. Safer speeds. Safer vehicles. Safer road users. And better care when crashes occur. These are not separate

responsibilities. They are **interconnected parts of one national system.**

19. Technology must strengthen that system. Data should help us identify dangerous corridors before more lives are lost. Research should inform better road design. Intelligent enforcement should address high-risk behaviour. Innovation should make vehicles and infrastructure more forgiving of human error.

20. This is where MIROS carries a greater responsibility. Its role must go beyond producing research and reports. **The real value of its work lies in translating evidence into practical solutions that make our roads safer and save lives.**

THREE PRIORITIES FOR OUR COLLECTIVE ACTION

21. Ladies and gentlemen, with this responsibility in mind, I wish to put forward **three priorities that deserve our immediate attention as we work towards Vision Zero.**

22. **First, we must make our roads safer for motorcyclists.** Motorcyclists account for the largest share of road fatalities in Malaysia. For many, motorcycles are not a lifestyle choice, but a necessity to earn a living.

23. Too often, we place the blame on riders and their behaviour. While personal responsibility is important, road safety must work both ways. We need responsible riders, but we must also provide safer roads, better infrastructure and effective policies.

24. Malaysia has already begun this work through our road safety programmes and improvements to motorcycle lanes. **But we must now take these efforts further - expanding what works to more high-risk roads across the country.**

25. I therefore call upon the Ministry of Transport, together with MIROS, to prepare a **joint Cabinet paper** proposing a coordinated national approach to expand proven motorcycle safety measures, with clear priorities, timelines and measurable outcomes.

26. **Second, we must integrate our road safety data.** Malaysia has valuable road safety data across various agencies. But when information is held separately, we lose the opportunity to see the bigger picture and act earlier.

27. I am aware that coordination between agencies is not always as effective as it should be. Sometimes, information is not shared, responsibilities overlap, and institutional boundaries get in the way. Enough is enough.

28. When it comes to road safety, no agency should be above one another, and no institution can work in silo. Whether it is MOT, PDRM, JPJ, JKR, Prasarana or PBTs - each has a role to play, and **all must work as one.**

29. I therefore want all relevant agencies to work towards one **integrated national road safety intelligence platform,** connecting our existing systems and turning shared data into coordinated action. **This is where smarter mobility will make a real difference.**

30. **Third, we must move beyond awareness campaigns towards a national culture of road safety.** We have conducted countless road safety campaigns over the years.

But awareness alone is not enough. People may know the rules, yet still choose to take risks. That is the behaviour we must change **and this responsibility goes beyond individual road users.**

31. Employers must take the safety of their workers seriously. Delivery platforms must not reward speed at the expense of safety. Schools must instil safe habits from a young age. I therefore call for a **stronger national partnership involving government, industry, schools and communities to make road safety part of our everyday culture** — not just something we talk about during campaigns.

32. **Because ultimately, safer roads require better systems, smarter technology and a society that chooses safety, every single day.**

CLOSING — FROM VISION TO RESPONSIBILITY

33. Ladies and gentlemen, these are the three priorities I wish to leave with this Congress. Let this Congress be a catalyst for bold ideas and meaningful action as we move closer to Vision Zero.

34. Because I believe road safety is more than a transport issue. **It is about human lives, the future of our nation, and the responsibility we carry as leaders to protect both and that is a responsibility we cannot afford to fail.**

35. With that, and with Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, I hereby declare the **Road Safety Congress 2026 officially open.**

Thank you.
Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.