

# UAE Khaleej Times 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013

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## Awareness key to achieve zero road fatalities in UAE by 2020: Experts

Kelly Clarke / 7 November 2013

Traffic experts say awareness is key to achieving zero fatalities by 2020.

When the UAE spoke of creating a palm-shaped island and the world's tallest building, many thought it was impossible. But they did it.

Now, with its vision for zero road fatalities by 2020, and the backing of an official from the World Health Organisation (WHO) saying the UAE has the potential to be one of the best countries in the world for road safety, focus is key.

The UAE's rapid expansion and planned diversification away from oil has seen the likes of Dubai catapult to many of the world's top ten lists, but compared to the Western world, it is still playing catch up when it comes to safety on the roads.

Responding to a question from Khaleej Times' reporter on whether the zero death vision was realistic, "Vision is vision, work toward other sectors economy."

Speaking to Khaleej Times, director of the UAE's first road safety portal, Road Safety UAE, Thomas Edelmann says information relating to road safety here is still fragmented, but absolutely believes the vision can be achieved.

"All the contents are there, it just needs to be compiled on one platform. The UAE has the talent and resources to commit and follow through, but work needs to be ongoing."

He said road campaigns here have been very effective in creating momentary awareness, but in reality "campaigns come and go", so it is important for the country to create a constant noise level when it comes to road safety.

Making reference to the country's diverse population, Edelmann says the vast number of communities means it's important to keep everyone aware.

He added that it was hard to find literature on the do's and don'ts of road behaviour here, so it made sense to "gather it all together under one platform".

According to statistics from the Pulitzer Centre, the UAE records 12.7 road-related deaths per 100,000 people, whereas the UK, France and Italy record 3.7, 6.4, 7.2, respectively.

But compared to other Middle East countries, the UAE has one of the lowest road death rates with Saudi Arabia coming in at 24.8 deaths per 100,000 people, and 30.4 deaths in Oman.

According to Al Banna, the road death rate in Dubai has dropped considerably, by about 60 per cent, since 2006.

"This is due to many of the Ministry of Interior's initiatives for all the emirates."

Focusing on Dubai, Al Banna said the RTA's strategy is focused on three main factors: Engineering, enforcement, and education.

He said the growing infrastructure and ongoing works to build footbridges and improve road quality was an important factor contributing to their 2020 vision of zero road deaths, but added the efforts of the Dubai Police in enforcing road laws, and ongoing programmes in many departments here, to educate people from all ages, was also key.

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And with WHO statistics noting road traffic injuries as the eighth leading cause of deaths globally, the Ministry of Interior here has launched a number of initiatives to tackle the issue.

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NATION 7

# Road to 100% safety

Traffic experts say awareness is key to achieving zero fatalities by 2020

Kelly Clarke

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Hussain Mohammed Al Banna



Thomas Edelmann

## Mohammed to open FNC session on Nov 11

ABU DHABI — His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, will open the third ordinary session of the 15th Legislative Chapter of the Federal National Council (FNC) next Monday in the presence of Crown Princes, Deputy Rulers, senior civilian and military officials and members of the diplomatic corps accredited in the country.

Earlier, the President, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, issued a Federal decree calling for the convening of the third FNC ordinary session of the 15th Legislative Chapter on November 11.

Shaikh Mohammed will deliver a key speech on behalf of the UAE President on developments and important events nationwide. The FNC will elect a panel to prepare a reply to the inaugural speech of the President.

Mohammed Ahmed Al Maktoum, Speaker of the FNC, commended the interest of the wise leadership in the council, noting that Emiratis have confidence in the FNC, which addresses issues of development and welfare in the UAE. — Wam