

FRSC Inaugural Annual Lecture Series



A COMPENDIUM OF PAPERS AND SPEECHES AT THE INAUGURAL FRSC ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES IN 2009



FRSC Emergency Number:
0700-CALL-FRSC(0700-2255-3772)
website:www.frsc.gov.ng

Annual Lecture Series Monograph No.1

The accidents arise mainly from the poor condition of Nigerian roads, little or no knowledge of the highway codes among many Nigerian road users, poor condition of many vehicles used in the country, laxity in the enforcement of highway codes, over reliance on road transportation leading to congestion on the roads; failure of the railways and the under utilization of alternative means of transportation such as the inland waterways, and the indiscipline and absence of road courtesy on the part of many Nigerian road users. The FRSC is an instrument which, if adequately supported by the Government, can make a difference in transforming the causative habits of the Nigerian road users and in putting in place measures to control the incidence of road accidents in the country.

And finally, I want to conclude with a plea to our Federal and State Governments to enunciate and implement a coordinated transportation policy. I plead with them to pay greater attention to the condition of our roads not only for the sake of saving our people from premature deaths and disabilities, but also for the sake of removing a veritable obstacle to the socio-economic development of our country.

I thank you all for your attention.

Chief Emeka Anyaoku *CON, CFR, GCVO*.
Abuja, 27 October 2009.

CONTENT

	Page
2009 FRSC Inaugural Annual Lecture Series Programme- A Brief	2
Text of Key-Note Address delivered by the President of the Senate Distinguished Senator David Mark, GCON	3-5
Speech by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed, CFR	6-7
Opening remarks by the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	8-9
Address presented by the Chairman FRSC Col. Lawan Gwadabe (Rtd)	10-12
Welcome address by the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive of FRSC Osita Chidoka	13-17
Capital Waste on Nigerian Roads by Chief Emeka Anyaoku GCVO, CON, CFR	18-32

2009 FRSC INAUGURAL ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES
PROGRAMME- A BRIEF.

In the wake of increasing trend in road crashes in Nigeria and the call for global action by the United Nations to address it, the Federal Road Safety Corps as part of its renewed efforts in creating safety awareness and stirring desired attention from government and Stakeholders instituted and organized an Annual Lecture Series which had its inaugural edition graced by His Excellency, Chief Emeka Anyaoku CON, CFR, GCVO.

The following pages contain text of the Speeches by the Senate President, SGF, FCT Minister, FRSC Chairman, COMACE and the Main paper delivered by the Guest Speaker. Below are some of the photo clips of the occasion which took place in Abuja..



codes and regulations before any driver can be certificated and licensed. And to this must be added a massive public orientation campaign in order to make drivers and other road users realize as in the words of an Australian Traffic Rule that "road sense is the offspring of courtesy and parent of safety".

This is not discounting the fact that there is an urgent need for more and clearer road signage on Nigerian roads. Furthermore, there are too many vehicles on our roads that do not have rear lights, and even head lights. These defects are a great source of avoidable road mishaps in our cities and highways.

Apart from the above challenges, there are also problems that I believe have in no small ways continued to inhibit the operations of the FRSC. The problems include apparent severe budgetary constraints leading to insufficient human and material resources; threats to the safety of FRSC personnel and equipment, especially on the highways and at night; and sometimes, the non-compliance by the elite to traffic rules including in particular driving against one-way streets.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to summarise my comments, road accidents is a global phenomenon which has been of concern to the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. I believe that it should be of particular concern to Nigeria where its costs every year in human and material resources are monumental.

was the creation of several thousand Special Marshals and road safety clubs for young people and the desirable objective of restoring the integrity of driver's licence.

FRSC has also intensified Nigeria's association with the West African Road Safety Organization (WARSO) in order to ensure a maximum utilization of the experiences therein, so as to enhance the reduction of road traffic accidents in the country. Through WARSO, the FRSC leadership is also exporting Nigeria's own experiences and innovation in the road traffic sector, thereby contributing to the enhancement and harmonization of road traffic regulations in the sub-region. But despite these remarkable achievements, I believe that the FRSC is still encountering continuous and serious challenges in the discharge of its responsibilities. The challenges have continued to dilute some of its successes, thus keeping road traffic accidents in the country consistently on an uncomfortable high side.

Nigeria is still in dire need of serious formal and well-supervised driving schools where lessons in safe and courteous driving habits are taught. What pass for driving schools in this country today are not regulated enough in terms of ensuring high quality in what they do, and making sure that they do not certificate and license incompetents. Thus, there is an obvious need for formal driving tests, including the test of knowledge of the highway

TEXT OF KEY-NOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR DAVID MARK GCON AT THE OCCASION OF THE FRSC INAUGURAL ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES

Protocol

It is with profound gratitude and a high sense of joy that I stand before you on the occasion of the Federal Road Safety Corps inaugural Annual Lecture Series which is another dimension in its continued search for solution to the lingering problem of deaths on our roads.

The Federal Road Safety Corps in its over two decades of existence has developed from its humble beginning to an institution of reference across the sub-region and beyond. Today it occupies a pivot position in Road Traffic Administration and Safety Management in Nigeria.

I am aware that through the leadership of FRSC, Nigeria is the current President of the African Regional Group of the International Road Safety Organization and also the West African Road Safety Organization (WARSO) - an organization conceived and being nurtured by FRSC to promote common approach to tackling road safety challenges in member countries. Nigeria as a member of the World Community has its share of the prevailing issues and challenges in tackling road traffic crashes.

Available statistics reveal that the most vulnerable group involved in road traffic crashes is within the productive age bracket of which low and middle income countries are mostly affected. It goes without saying that the economy of such nations suffers series of setbacks and Nigeria is no exception. This carnage on the highways led the United Nations to declare a decade of action (2010-2020) with the sole aim of reducing crashes and its attendant consequences. This is against the backdrop of projections that road traffic crashes may attain the status of the highest cause of deaths if left unchecked.

The world situation of road traffic crashes and the Nigeria experience are both indications signifying the need to put in place adequate measures to checkmate this scourge, hence today's inaugural annual lecture series.

Let me therefore salute the visionary and steadfast leadership of the Corps for organizing this lecture which is a means of empowering the motoring public through knowledge dissemination.

As we continue to chart a new course in our search for a more permanent solution, I call on all and sundry to support this worthy cause. The task of keeping deaths off our roads is a collective one and as such we must all be ready to commit our time, energy and resources to complement the efforts of

 Government in this quest.

It has sought to pursue its statutory obligations with tenacity: clearing obstructions on the highways, trying to determine and enforce speed limits for all categories of roads and vehicles, and providing prompt attention and care to victims of road traffic accidents, amongst other functions spelt out in its constitutive instrument.

The result of this exertion has seen some improvements in the road traffic sector of the Nigerian transportation system. The unified licensing scheme has since harmonized and standardized all the drivers and vehicle licenses in the country. A properly managed and well computerized national data bank has also been established to ensure an efficient coordination of road traffic activities in the country. This data bank has particularly enhanced and made very effective, the management of the tripartite arrangement between the federal and state governments' agencies under the auspices of the Joint Tax Board, which is geared especially towards coordinating the issuance of drivers' license.

In his interview published in *The Guardian* newspaper of 17 October 2009, the Corps Marshal and CEO, Osita Chidoka, impressively outlined how the FRSC under his watch has been endeavouring over the last two years not only to sustain the gains achieved by his predecessors, but also to ensure a marked improvement on such gains. Among the measures he spoke about

Before the establishment of the FRSC, very scant attention was given to issues of safety on our roads. In the 1970s and the early 1980s, for instance, the statistics of traffic-related deaths and injuries in Nigeria was so alarming that the country was placed by the International Road Federation (IRF) as among the countries that had the highest rate and severity of road traffic collisions.

The enforcement of road traffic rules was almost brought to a halt by the stalemate in the duplication of functions in road traffic administration by multiple agencies, particularly the police and the vehicle Inspection Officers (VIOs). This problem led to a huge crisis of legitimacy for the prevailing drivers' license, more so because the lapses in licensing administration had led to the multiple production of the document. What followed was corruption and laxity, making it difficult for the possession of a driver's license to be a valid reason for one to be taken seriously as a competent and disciplined road user. Traffic regulations declined and standards plummeted all over the country.

The establishment of the FRSC brought a discernible improvement to the situation. Since 1988, when it was established, the agency has sought to take measures to prevent or minimize road traffic fatalities in the country.

I must not end this address without giving the desired recognition to the guest lecturer, Chief Emeka Anyaoku CON, CFR, GVCO, for his support and belief in the cause of stamping out deaths from our roads. You have indeed proven yourself to be a patriot and a worthy ambassador who truly believes in the Nigerian project.

I implore everyone here today to endeavour to drink from the fountain of knowledge of this erudite scholar for I am convinced that if we practice what he is about to teach us today, Nigerian roads will be safer and we all will enjoy fuller lives.

Thank you and God bless.

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION ALHAJI MAHMUD YAYALE AHMED, CFR ON THE OCCASION OF FRSC INAUGURAL ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES


Protocol

I am indeed honoured to witness yet another milestone in the various positive steps of the Federal Road Safety Corps aimed at mitigating injuries and fatalities on our roads through sustained public education.

Awareness and education are necessary instruments to stir positive action on the part of major stakeholders. This step taken by the Corps at this period of our national development is therefore heart warming and most commendable.

The realization of our national development team can only be achieved in an atmosphere devoid of the injuries, deaths and insecurity posed by the ever increasing rate of traffic crashes on our roads and the resultant depletion to human and material resources.

The present leadership of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) is quite committed to the growth and development of the Organisation into a model known for its efficiency, integrity and competence. With the modest achievements in the last few

 Years, I have no doubt that the FRSC has

put the ill-maintained and rickety vehicles off the roads and save human lives. But today, with the collapse of effective inspection, procedures and standards, the Nigerian roads have virtually become a huge slaughter slab, where human lives appear to worth little or nothing.

There is also the important factor of ill-trained drivers some of whom are barely literate and thus can hardly interpret or understand some of the signage that are important for safety.

The use of mobile phones while on the wheels is also contributing to the increase in road traffic accidents in the country.

Another contributory factor to many road accidents especially within towns and cities seem to be drunken driving. Even though a vigorous campaign had been waged to stop the habit of driving under the influence of alcohol, this practice has continued and even seem to have increased today because there have been constant reports about the sale of alcohol, especially the locally brewed illicit gin, in motor parks across the country. It is against this background of the causes of road accidents on Nigerian roads that I would now like to comment on the work of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

country can survive his/her road journey from Lagos to Benin, or Onitsha to Enugu, or from Gusao to Sokoto.

The present situation in Nigeria has been exacerbated by the fact that our once thriving railway system is now comatose, while the cost of air travel is beyond the reach of most Nigerians. The result is heavy traffic congestion on the poorly maintained roads by not only passenger vehicles and buses, but also by haulage and heavy duty trucks conveying petroleum products and other goods. And the situation is made worse during the rainy season because the ditches and potholes on the roads are often completely covered by water. Added to the absence of an effective policy for road construction and maintenance, is the poor conditions of the vehicles on Nigerian roads. Although vehicles have manuals that prescribe the modes and periods for maintenance, such instructions seem to be rarely adverted to by the owners because of the habitual lack of maintenance culture among most of our people. And this situation is made worse by the overwhelming number of second hand or used cars popularly referred to as tokunboh on Nigerian roads. Tragically, many of them are in bad shape and ill-maintained.

The adverse effects of poor maintenance culture are also increased by the collapse of the MOT test policy and the vehicle inspection programmes in the country it was possible to

become one of the functional institutions in Nigeria today.

The Federal Government places high premium on human lives and believes that good road infrastructure is an antidote to crash. This is demonstrated in the recent approval of N6.4 billion to the Federal Road Maintenance Agency for the repairs of roads nationwide.

Let me acknowledge and appreciate the Guest Speaker, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, CON, CFR, GCVO for finding time to be here and share with us his wealth of experience.

May I also recognize the presence of all stakeholders and acknowledge their tremendous collaborative efforts in sanitizing all facets of road transportation and ensuring security of lives and property in our dear country.

As we look forward to renewed efforts on the part of the Corps, I thank all government agencies and other partners for their support and call for more inter-governmental collaborations to give this important agency all it requires to thrive.

I thank you all for your presence and I hope we have a lot more to learn as we listen to this inaugural edition of the lecture.

Thank you and God bless.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES OF THE FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS AT SHERATON HOTEL AND TOWERS, ABUJA, 27TH OCTOBER, 2009

Protocol

I am highly delighted to address this gathering on this auspicious occasion marking the maiden edition of the FRSC Annual Lecture Series.

The Federal Road Safety Corps has been quite proactive in its approach towards addressing the challenges posed by road traffic crashes. This is in keeping with the contemporary world order as traffic crashes, and fatalities have grave consequences on global health and economy.

Today's event is quite significant taking into cognisance the theme of the lecture and the calibre of personalities here present. You will agree with me that the Guest Lecturer, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, CON, CFR, GCVO as the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Nations is an icon of accomplishment and a celebrated success.

On the other hand, the theme of the lecture is quite interactive and timely especially at this crucial period of the current socio-

8 Economic and political reform in the country. All hands

Ibadan expressway to a private company for reconstruction, the policy in Nigeria on road construction and maintenance was built on the assumption that the public sector can alone adequately cater for the needs of the country in road construction and maintenance. The consequence has been the gross inadequacy of the efforts of the public sector in the construction and maintenance of roads in the country.

The example of countries like Malaysia has demonstrated that massive improvement in the number and maintenance of express roads in a country can be achieved through partnership of the public and private sectors.

The condition of our roads both the major arteries of this country and the roads in most of our major cities beggars imagination. And here I must ask the question: do our government Ministers and leaders who we know often travel and see the condition of roads in other countries never feel embarrassed by the condition of roads in our resource-rich country? Do they not notice the large potholes that litter the roads and even bridges including most spectacularly, the 3rd Mainland Bridge in Lagos?

It is undeniable that among the most potent indicators of the state of any nation is the condition of its roads. For example, it would be hard to imagine that with the present condition of our roads, any visitor's pre-disposed favourable impression of our

25

The remains of vehicles damaged in accidents are a common sight along Nigerian roads. I am sure that if all the vehicles are properly insured as they should be, the payment for damages and compensation arising from the injuries and loss of lives as well as for the vehicles involved in the accidents will break the back of many companies in our insurance industry.

Added to these tangible costs are also the intangible but significant costs. These include the cost of casting Nigeria in the image of an unsafe place. Such unfavourable image inevitably leads to stymieing the Federal Government's current effort to develop Nigeria's tourism. The ripple effect of an unfavourable image for any country in this context can also extend to adverse effects on foreign investment; for investors are inclined to be reluctant to go wherever it is judged that life and property are not safe.

There are many causes of road traffic accidents in Nigeria. At the broad or macro level, there is clearly an ineffective holistic transportation policy on the part of the Federal and State Governments. The absence of a well defined and effective implementation by the Governments of an integrated policy of how to enable people and goods to move to destinations throughout the country produces a number of consequences including the poor conditions of our roads. Besides, until the recent concession by the Federal Government of the Lagos to

must therefore be on deck to move the nation forward.

At this juncture, I implore the Corps to continue to intensify its efforts at creating public awareness, enforcement, and adoption of contemporary technology in trauma care and rescue services as well as ensuring robust partnerships. These among others are the requirements that guarantee safety on our roads.

Let me use this opportunity to once again congratulate you on the recent lunch of the new emergency Ambulance service by her Excellency Hajiya Turai Yar' Adua, First lady Federal Republic of Nigeria.

May I also call on all other stakeholders to support the Federal Road Safety Corps and complement Government's efforts in this sector. Across the globe, road safety is being managed by both Government and the private sector and the earlier we build on this, the better it will be for generations yet unborn.

Distinguished guests, it is my hope that the outcome of this lecture will transform our attitudes and the understanding of our expected reciprocal obligations towards achieving better road culture in Nigeria.

I wish you a fulfilling and successful programme.

Thank you.


**AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN
COL. LAWAN GWADABE (RTD) ON THE OCCASION OF
FRSC 1ST ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES HOLDING AT
SHERATON HOTEL AND TOWERS, ABUJA**

On behalf of the Federal Road Safety Corps, I am highly delighted to welcome all our distinguished guests to this historic maiden edition of the FRSC Annual Lecture Series with the theme "Sustainable Development and Road Safety".

May I seize this opportunity to commend the wonderful support of our distinguished stakeholders and friends from within and outside the country who have tirelessly continued to promote and identify with the cause of providing safety to lives and property on our roads.

Indeed, this landmark occasion is the result of such strategic knowledge based on mutually beneficial relationship which this agency has maintained with her collaborators over the two decades of existence.

I am particularly elated about the theme of this maiden edition of FRSC Annual Lecture Series. In consonance with the advice of Mr. President, His Excellency, Alhaji Musa Yar' Adua, GCFR who last year at the opening ceremony of the FRSC 20th Anniversary and International Conference on Road Safety in

 Africa said and I quote: "I urge the various Agencies in

reportedly burnt to death when their vehicle hit the Gyadi-Gyadi pedestrian bridge on Zaria road in Kano. The road from A.Y.A to Nyanya in Abuja was also recently reported to have recorded a total of 1,162 accidents in the first nine months of this year alone, in which some 22 persons lost their lives.

More recently, the Guardian newspaper of October 20 reported the tragedy of a wedding party in Kano that ended in agony with the death in a road accident of scores of members of the same family who attended the marriage party. And four days later on 24 October, This Day reported that according to a road traffic update by FRSC in Abuja, about 4,120 persons had lost their lives so far this year while 20,975 others were seriously injured in accidents involving 11,031 vehicles across the nation.

These are indeed very grim statistics, and what is most regrettable is that these accidents also affect innocent children, some of whom die or are orphaned in the tragic situations. On the material side, these road accidents contribute to the worsening of the condition of the roads. Vehicles that burn out on the roads contribute in weakening them. Bridges are also destroyed, particularly the protectors or railings by their sides. And vehicles are frequently completely lost in the accidents.

along the expressway. Many of the students were killed on the spot, while others were seriously injured.

The same day at the Umunya junction section of the same road, a fuel tanker which also reportedly ran into another ditch on the road and caught fire, consuming everything close to it, including bystanders, buses and cars, in which the Nation newspaper of 10 October estimated that up to eighty (80) people died while This Day of the same date put the figure at 70. Whatever the accurate figure may be, these accidents are particularly lamentable because they illustrate the extent of the collapse and state of disrepair of our roads. Some observers have expressed concern that not even Afghanistan and Iraq, which are in a state of war, have such dilapidated roads or indeed have recorded such road traffic fatalities.

In Lagos, the next day, five persons were reportedly burnt beyond recognition while many others got injured when an intra-city commuter bus that was conveying them lost its tyre, somersaulted and caught fire at the Oworonsoki area of the city. It was one of the several road accidents that are daily recorded on Lagos roads.

Up in the Northern part of the country, on October 17, 13 students said to be between the ages of 15 and 19 were

charge of road safety and traffic management administration to sustain this kind of gathering as it will enable the continent sharpen and develop better understanding of issues peculiar to Africa and address them accordingly”.

The leadership of the Corps has not only taken heed of this advice, but has proactively put in place this annual event with the aim of building upon her past successes as the lead agency in road traffic management in Nigeria as well as a vibrant key player in global road safety matters.

As this programme progresses, let me reiterate that as the frightening statistics of needless casualties and losses arising from road traffic crashes stare us in the face, the resources and political commitment to prosecute sustainable development on road safety is pitifully inadequate.

Against this backdrop, let me emphasize that we can use this forum to elicit necessary attention and action from the relevant national and international quarters for the cause of advancing and institutionalizing world best practices in road safety.

Finally, as I leave this podium, I wish to challenge this forum and call for more support in the following areas:

- Moral and material support for FRSC to tackle the nation's road safety problems.
- Appropriation and allocation of the desired financial and human resources to assist the Corps at all levels of Government.
- Provision of necessary logistics to help in the enforcement of traffic regulations and rescue services through public/private partnerships.
- Support for local and international initiatives among the various stakeholders concerned with road safety matters.

Thank you for your attention, God bless.

where an estimated 90 per cent of all traffic related fatalities currently occur. And these vulnerable road users, apart from motorists, also include pedestrians, bicycle riders and motorcycle riders.

Let me now come to road traffic accidents in Nigeria. When he spoke recently in Lagos at a workshop on the challenges in the Management of Traumatized Patients, the Medical Director of the National Orthopedic Hospital, Igbobi, was reported in the Vanguard newspaper of 16 October 2009 to have stated that of the several thousands of people who die or are disabled every year in Nigeria through road traffic accidents, most are men between 15 to 49 years of age. This, in my view, should be a major concern to the Nigerian government. The implications of the various dimensions of the cost of road traffic accidents in Nigeria are truly frightening.

On the human side, the losses, particularly of those vibrant and skillful members of the country's population, can be very painful. The frequency of the losses is equally worrying. To give some recent examples, on October 9, along the Enugu-Onitsha expressway, two major accidents killed dozens of people, including school children. The first involved the students of a private secondary school in Nnewi who were returning from Enugu after an excursion. Their 18 seater mini-bus reportedly ran into a ditch on the road, had a burst tyre and somersaulted

The purpose was to deliberately focus global attention on road accident as a growing transportation and public health problem all over the world; and to emphasize the fact that traffic fatalities and the associated injuries can be avoided given the appropriate resolve and commitments by governments and the civil society. This promotion of global awareness through discussions on road safety matters has continued to gain ascendancy in every part of our world today because it is perfectly worth the while.

In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on easing the global road safety crisis. During the General Assembly's debate on the resolution, the Oman representative observed that "member states had unanimously emphasized that road traffic injuries posed a global public health crisis requiring urgent national and international attention".

The statistics is really grim. In its 2004 report, the WHO had also estimated that about 1.2 million road users are killed in traffic collision every year all over the world, that is, excluding the many more who are seriously injured. In 1990, a global epidemiological study projected that the annual number of fatalities and disabilities arising from traffic collision would increase by more than 60 per cent by 2020 if the current trends persist. This projection is particularly true in developing countries like Nigeria where road users are most vulnerable and

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CORPS MARSHAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS OSITA CHIDOKA ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURAL ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES OF THE FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS AT SHERATON HOTEL & TOWERS ABUJA ON 27TH OCTOBER 2009

Protocol

Over the years, road safety has gradually attained an unenviable status of a developmental problem. About 1.2 million deaths and 50 million varying degrees of injuries are recorded worldwide. A sizeable percentage of these deaths and injuries occur in low and middle income countries with adults of productive age brackets mostly affected. The economic implications of this is that about 1% of the average country's Gross National Products (GNP) which far out- weighs the total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) available to such countries is being affected.

This statistics is quite frightening even as a likely increase is inevitable if urgent steps are not taken to reverse the trend. The United Nations through its resolution has thus called for a decade of global action (2010-2020) aimed at reducing road traffic crashes Member nations are called to institute measures and Strategies in this direction in line with the peculiar nature of the region.

The Federal Road Safety Corps as the Lead Government Agency

in Road Traffic Administration and Safety Management sequel to this call has been fashioning out measures and intervention strategies to curb the menace posed by road traffic crashes in Nigeria and indeed the West African Sub region. This is evident in its Lead role in the creation of the West African Road Safety Organization (WARSO) and vigorous campaign for the renewal of membership of the African Regional group of the International Road Safety Organisation (GPA-PRI) by other African countries. In this direction, several laudable initiatives and programmes such as the Regional Vehicle Administration Information System and the communal Data Base for ECOWAS Sub region using the platform of WARSO are being pursued.

In the same vein, the FRSC Annual lecture Series, the inaugural edition of which we are here to witness is another landmark in the efforts of the Corps aimed at encouraging actions from Government, relevant stakeholders as well as all categories of road users. While there is the need to put in place adequate measures to reduce the severity of injuries to road traffic crash victims as evident in Safety devices in Vehicles and the road construction, it is even more important to bring to the understanding of all and sundry that road crashes are caused and therefore avoidable.

It is against this backdrop, that the idea of the Annual Lectures Series evolved, to serve as a means of enlightening and

Road traffic accidents are reputed to be Africa's third biggest killer; and African roads are also reckoned to be the most dangerous in the world. The associated economic costs are also enormous. Although the data on these costs are unavailable in many countries, particularly the developing ones, the Kenyan ministry of public works published a 5% cost figure presumably of its GDP in 1997. Also in 1997, the South African government estimated that road traffic accidents cost the country R13 billion or 19% GDP. But generally, it is estimated that road traffic accidents cost African countries huge sums every year, which are reckoned to be equivalent to almost double of all overseas development assistance received by the continent.

The trend in the developed countries is also mind-boggling. In the United States, for example, the economic cost of road traffic accidents in 2005 alone was calculated to be \$625.5 billion, which was about \$2,100 per capita or about \$5,500 per household. The implication was that every American household paid the sum of \$5,500 in one way or the other through higher prices for goods and services, or through higher taxes.

When in 2004, the world Health Organization (WHO), hosted its world Health Day, it chose the slogan, "Road Safety is no Accident".

CAPITAL WASTE ON NIGERIAN ROADS

Road traffic accidents are a major source of anxiety that require prudent attention all over the world today. Although it is true that as Alexis Carrel, the French Nobel Laureate said, "to accomplish our destiny, it is not enough to merely guard prudently against road accidents, we must also cover before nightfall, the distance assigned to each of us"; but it also appears today that these words of wisdom are challenged by the regrettable fact that road traffic accidents also catch even those who set out to cover before nightfall the distances assigned to them.

The number of people who loose their lives in road traffic accidents all over the world is as staggering as the material costs. In two separate reports, one by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2004, and the other earlier in 1990 by two Harvard Scholars, Murray CJL and Lopez A. D., both reproduced in a recent study by Jeanne Breen, one time Executive Director of the UK Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, it was discovered that "as many as 50 million people each year may be injured in road traffic crashes globally a total representing the combined populations of Beijing, Delhi, London, Paris and New York", and that "without increased safety efforts, road traffic injury is predicted to be the third leading contributor to the global burden of disease and injury by 2020".

_Attitude.

At present, the behavior of an average road user viz-a-viz the safety devices negate the basic principles of safety thus predisposing other road users to danger.

As far as the Federal Road Safety Corps is concerned, it is our belief that much could be done to avert the crashes and its eventual consequences on the country's human and material resources.

Security of lives and property are essential and crucial ingredients to national development and in the case of our dear country, a sine-qua-non to the realization of the lofty ideals of Mr. President's 7 Point Agenda. The theme "Sustainable Development and Road Safety" and the lecture topic "Challenges of Road Safety in a Developing Economy" both underscores these stunning realities and the need for action.

As a member of the global community and more importantly one of the nations with a disproportional percentage of the crashes, there is need for joint action to combat the ravaging effects of road traffic crash on the socio-economic sphere of our lives. This is only achievable through the collective, genuine and sustained efforts at all levels.

The caliber of the distinguished guests and the ever supportive stakeholders in our midst today truly indicate that we are

in a threshold of causing positive change in the area of road safety and the road transport sub-sector in Nigeria.

Permit me to express the Corps' delight for the kind and patriotic gesture of our guest lecturer Chief Emeka Anyaoku, CON, CFR, GCVO, who has demonstrated his belief in the clarion call by his acceptance not only to be part of this annual gathering but also availing us of his intellectual wealth towards this crusade.

I also thank the Chairman and Special Guest of Honour, President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Distinguished Senator David Bonaventure Alechenu Mark (GCFR) for his usual support and also finding time to be here in person.

The Corps is quite appreciative of tremendous assistance of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation Alhaji Muhmud Yayale Ahmed, CFR as the supervising body and the chief host Senator Adamu Aliero the minister of the Federal Capital Territory as well as other ministers and distinguished guests who based on their belief in the worthy course of the Corps have ever been supportive.

Finally, I commend our various collaborators and stakeholders, government and Non-governmental bodies alike and I call for more support than ever before at this crucial time in our quest to rid our roads of preventable deaths.

I urge everyone here present to endeavour to internalize the messages contained in the lecture and let these reflect in our day-to-day movement and use of the road.

Once again, I welcome you to this inaugural edition of the Annual Lecture Series.

Thank you.