

International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) Presentation Tuesday 9 September 2008

Many will be aware of the European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP) which defines the 'safest' and more hazardous routes in Europe, including the United Kingdom, this status being determined after considerable research into the nature of the roads and associated casualty data. EuroRAP is funded by the European Commission, Toyota, ACEA and FIA Foundations. The automobile clubs who are its members also invest a great deal of staff time and resource into their own national programmes and increasingly, governments are paying for their own roads to be inspected according to the EuroRAP method. The primary objective of all these road safety stakeholders is to reduce the toll of road casualties by the implementation of basic safety engineering systems and by educating drivers about the risk they face. iRAP is a further development of this initiative.

Dr Suzy Charman, International Programme Manager for iRAP started her presentation with the stark statistic that Deaths and Injuries arising from road collisions are an international, increasing public health concern. Likening it to Malaria and Tuberculosis in terms of victims the bleak figure of 1.3 million people dying annually on the world's road network with up to a further 50 million sustaining varying degrees of injury was a worrying state of affairs, especially in the younger, 10 to 24 years age group.



Suzy explained the expanding commitment of world wide communities which was a significant move with further involvement and investment by worldwide organisations, including the World Bank. Each major country had its own titled group: Australia = AusRAP, United States of America = usRAP etc. (not sure about Canada) but inputs data and shares ideas through the iRAP organisation.

Studies immediately revealed that a greater part of the global death and injury toll occurred in developing countries (85%) with future reductions expected in wealthier countries that would be offset by further increase in the poorer nations.

iRAP is committed to saving lives in developing countries by the implementation of affordable programmes of safety engineering. Things the UK takes for granted such as footpaths, pedestrian crossing facilities and safety fencing can make a major difference to countries where engineering methods are either in their infancy or simply do not exist.

Though iRAP has an interest in driver education, their main thrust is to seek consistent and affordable measures that make the environment in which all road users safer. Though the UK may curse the roundabout, it is being seen as one of the more cost effective solutions in both Europe (France in particular) and Brazil (the Capital Brasilia and San Paulo) who are quickly appreciating this low cost solution to safety concerns.

Suzy outlined the progress that iRAP had made in certain South American countries where work had been undertaken and post implementation data collection had been able to produce route maps showing the iRAP star rating (5* good to 1* poor) covering various routes, class of traffic and forward projections.

The presentation was well received by the 30 plus delegates and to support much of the data that was given; Suzy provided a large amount of literature, case studies and a DVD for delegates to further digest at their leisure.



This was a lively and interesting presentation that demonstrated a real concern for addressing road safety on an international scale supported by case studies which show that much has been achieved and more can be achieved in the future years. Not a short term programme but a forward journey. In closing, Suzy asked that members might take some time to look at and review the new iRAP road safety toolkit available at www.irap.net/toolkit when she would be most grateful for any comments. This invitation applies to any member, not just those who were able to attend.

The Branch is very grateful to Dr Charman for giving up her time to make this valuable presentation that must give hope for future generations and international involvement. **Further information about iRAP and EuroRAP can be found on their web sites, www.irap.net and www.eurorap.net**