



## Association for Safe International Road Travel

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Road Crashes Are the No. 1 Killer of Young People Worldwide, Says ASIRT

**WASHINGTON (May 20, 2014)** – Road crashes worldwide are the No. 1 cause of death for young people, including Americans traveling abroad, said Rochelle Sobel, president of the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT), in remarks in the nation’s capital on May 19.

“Inadequate laws, irresponsible driver behaviors and poor enforcement continue to shatter dreams and destroy lives,” said Sobel, who founded ASIRT in 1995 following the death of her son, Aron Sobel, and 22 other passengers from a bus crash in Turkey.

Road traffic injuries have bypassed HIV and malaria as the No. 1 cause of death for young people globally, according to a new World Health Organization report, “Health for the World’s Adolescents.” Boys are three times more likely to be killed in road traffic accidents than girls. Laws related to alcohol and speed prevention, safe pedestrian areas around schools and graduated drivers’ licensing can reduce risks.

For 2014, ASIRT’s theme, *Safe Youth, Safe Roads, Safe Future*, builds on the steady momentum of change established by the United Nations’ General Assembly, which declared 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The growing community of road safety advocates and activists includes individuals and organizations worldwide.

“Every 30 seconds someone is killed and 19 others are injured on roadways worldwide. Children and youth are disproportionately involved in traffic crashes. These are not mere accidents. They are preventable,” said Bill Bronrott, deputy administrator with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation, who received ASIRT’s Road Safety Champion Award at its annual event in Washington, D.C.

“We have the knowledge and expertise as a nation to drive this death toll down toward zero in our country,” added Bronrott, a U.S. road safety advocate who works with 1,100 staff and commercial vehicle safety stakeholders to increase support for FMCSA’s core mission of saving lives by preventing large truck and bus crashes. “And, we have an obligation as a member of the global community to work with developing nations to do the same.”

Other ASIRT award recipients included the National Organizations for Youth Safety; Bill Frederick, director of Lodestone Safety International; Charles W. Wheeler, ASIRT Of Counsel; and Shell International Petroleum Company.

“If we achieve our goal, we will save 5 million lives and prevent 50 million injuries. There are many reasons to be hopeful. Much has been accomplished, but so much more remains to be done,” Sobel added. “We shall do it in our children’s memory and in their honor and for their safe future.”

## **About ASIRT**

ASIRT, based in Rockville, Md., is a non-profit, humanitarian organization dedicated to improving road safety for American and international travelers worldwide. Founded in 1995, ASIRT works to ensure that road safety is a policy priority of international decision makers by encouraging U.S. government involvement on the global and country-level through educational briefings for members of Congress and other government agencies. ASIRT provides government and corporate travelers and employees, tourists, and students with the informational tools to make safe, informed travel choices including country-specific *Road Travel Reports*, travel tips, checklists and safety language cards.

ASIRT is part of a global network of road safety experts and stakeholders who share best practices and develop partnerships to adapt and apply effective strategies worldwide. Currently, ASIRT provides technical assistance as one of six partners in the Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Road Safety Program, a five-year evidence-based initiative designed to improve road safety in 10 target countries. ASIRT is currently working in Kenya and Turkey advocating for road safety legislation and improved enforcement. For more information, visit [www.asirt.org](http://www.asirt.org).

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