

CEBU ROAD SAFETY FORUM

OBJECTIVE

PISM Cebu as lead convenor together with partner organizations to organize and host a Road Safety Forum to be held on September 22, 2010 which will serve as launching pad to kick off a new public-private partnership that will address various road safety issues that affect businesses and the community at large.

BACKGROUND

A series of road accidents occurred during the recent months which have awakened the public's consciousness of the need to improve the quality of drivers and the vehicles that they operate. A high profile road accident involved a passenger tour bus which resulted in the deaths of 30 Iranian medical students and members of their families. Several other incidents involved commercial buses, cargo trucks and container van trailers. The concerned government agencies such as the LTO, LTFB and PNP HPG then took corrective actions such as suspending the franchise of commercial transport companies involved in said incidents and subjecting their vehicles and drivers to thorough inspection and examination. Local government officials also added their sentiments with requests to concerned agencies to improve on the road conditions which they believe is a contributing factor and their appeal to motorists in general to be more careful when they are driving.

While the government is doing what it can within the limits of its resources, there seems to be not much of any response from the private sector except to express their concerns and apprehensions over the spate of road accidents.

RATIONALE

There are a number of factors that cause accidents to happen on the road. The authorities and the general public are aware of these reasons but seem helpless and ineffective in implementing the necessary measure to curb or lessen the incidence and gravity of road mishaps. As commonly accepted as the present reality in Philippine society: we have good laws but implementation is wanting, we have good ideas but lack the political will; and everyone knows exactly what is to be done but expect others to take action.

Private business firms have been successfully pursuing and implementing safe practices at the workplace in addition to health and environmental protection programs. This is in consonance with their overall quality management initiatives. Organizations which have established quality and safety management systems are very much aware of their responsibility to encourage and promote similar

good practices among business partners particularly their suppliers and sub-contractors. It is considered beneficial for progressive companies to communicate in no uncertain terms to transport service providers and to demand compliance of their quality, health, safety and environmental policies and standards.

There is also a sound and practical basis for business firms to be actively involved in programs to upgrade the prevailing standard of service rendered by the road transport sector. On time delivery of goods that are in good condition is critical to the buyer's business operations. The same holds true for products that need to reach their intended markets safely. Even more important is to ensure that safe public transportation is available for the companies' employees who commute to and from work. It is not enough that safety improvements be made and directed only upon a company's own vehicles or to its contracted transport fleet. It is absolutely necessary to take concerted action with other firms that rely on road transportation to move freight. Even if one's own vehicles and drivers are compliant with all traffic safety requirements but if the other road users are not then it doesn't really solve the problem at all.

The underlying theme behind this proposed campaign is that **road safety is good for business**. This campaign will be different from other similar programs in that this will have to be business led. For this campaign to succeed, private firms need to get behind this campaign, assert their rights as customers and leverage their buying power to demand for improved standards, better enforcement and positive results from the commercial transport sector.

It will be highly commendable and beneficial for the private sector to undertake a comprehensive road safety program that not only supports their business goals but also clearly manifest their social responsibility to the entire community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Invite major stakeholders: NG (LTO, LTFRB, PNP HPG; DECS); LGUs (municipal mayors); NGOs (SOPI, Safe Kids Philippines); commercial transport groups; and business firms to participate in this forum to discuss current and future programs to address road safety issues.
2. Invite selected "model" companies to share their experiences and best practices in managing their transport operations, e.g., Ceres Liner; Shell.
3. Engage business organizations to participate and possibly co-host or sponsor the forum to show their active support to Road Safety. This is key to the success of the road safety campaign through an effective public-private partnership.