



# General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

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## General Committee

### Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 10 April 2003, at 9.30 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. de Santa Clara Gomes (Vice-Chairman) . . . . . (Portugal)

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*In the absence of Mr. Kavan (Czech Republic), Mr. de Santa Clara Gomes (Portugal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly and allocation of items (continued)**

*Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by Oman (A/57/235)*

1. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Oman had asked to address the Committee under rule 43 of the rules of procedure regarding the proposal contained in documents A/57/235 and A/57/235/Add.1 concerning the global road safety crisis.

2. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) took a place at the Committee table.*

3. **Mr. Al-Hinai** (Oman) said that the recent death in Muscat of four children and their parents, leaving behind one son, was a tragedy repeated every day somewhere on the roads of Member States. There was a limit to what national law enforcement agencies could do to encourage compliance with traffic rules, although many road traffic deaths could be prevented if drivers were deterred from speeding, driving without a seat belt or motorcycle helmet, driving under the influence and ignoring stop signs. Traffic injuries and deaths were on the increase worldwide and it was estimated that, by 2020, road traffic injuries would account for about 2.3 million deaths globally, with 90 per cent of those occurring in developing countries. The annual cost of road accidents was a staggering US\$ 50 billion, with Africa alone accounting for one fifth of those funds that could have been channelled to development projects.

4. Two obstacles to promoting road safety were uncertainty about assigning responsibility and ignorance. Road safety was the responsibility of everyone: road users, governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and academia. Road safety was a multidisciplinary agenda with clear roles for all. As far as ignorance was concerned, few people realized that more people died on the road than from malaria, or that road traffic injuries were preventable.

5. A worldwide effort was needed to raise awareness of the importance of road safety and to impress on governments the magnitude of the problem. Road safety was not a public health issue alone, and the international community should study why more deaths and injuries occurred in developing countries. Low- and middle-income countries had much to learn from countries with good road safety records, and several non-governmental organizations were also working hard to raise awareness. The General Assembly was the ideal forum for promoting cooperation among governments, civil society and public health, transport and law enforcement agencies. By approving the request for an additional item to be included on the agenda, the Committee would enable the General Assembly to discuss road traffic safety for the first time.

6. The draft resolution in document A/57/235/Add.1 recognized the magnitude and causes of the problem and requested a report from the Secretary-General. It was vital to concentrate on critical questions, disseminate what was learned and pool knowledge from different places in order to protect the current and succeeding generations, so that some of the tragic deaths might not have been in vain.

7. **The Chairman** said he took it that the General Committee wished to recommend the inclusion of an additional item, entitled "Global road safety crisis", in the agenda of the current session.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee recommended that the item should be allocated to the plenary Assembly.

10. *It was so decided.*

*Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by Yemen (A/57/236 and Add.1 and 2)*

11. **The Chairman** informed members of the Committee that, with regard to the request by Yemen for the inclusion of an additional item concerning the situation in Iraq contained in document A/57/236 and supported by the Sudan in document A/57/236/Add.1, he had received a subsequent letter from Yemen dated 9 April 2003 (A/57/236/Add.2) in which Yemen had asked for consideration of its request to be postponed.

*The meeting rose at 9.50 a.m.*