

PRIVILEGE SPEECH
15th Regular Council
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Davao City
February 17, 2009

DECADE OF ACTION FOR ROAD SAFETY
By Councilor Pilar C. Braga, PhD

The United Nations has called on governments across the world to support the campaign for a “Decade of Action for Road Safety” which targets a 50% reduction in road deaths globally by 2020.

Currently 1.3 million people are killed on the world’s roads each year, a toll set to increase to 2.4 million by 2030 according to a World Health Organization study. The Make Roads Safe campaign is calling for the international community to commit to a ten year action plan with tough regional targets for inquiry reduction to prevent these terrible forecasts from being realised.

If we are going to calculate the amount of money both government and the private sector spends for victims of road accidents this must be humungous! I read on an ADB report on road accidents that if we are going to calculate the costs of an accident then we must add the cost of the personnel who attended to the accidents the police, doctors, nurses, drivers of the 911 and the first responders among others PLUS, the use of the vehicles, the hospitals operating rooms and beds, equipment PLUS the cost of the insurance claims, health benefits and claims, PLUS the monetary equivalent of pain, grief and suffering PLUS the cost of the damage to property PLUS the expected income that can be earned by the person in his/her lifetime. Yes, these are some of the hidden costs of a road accident.

A death due to a road accident costs the society Php 2.3 Million, a serious injury costs Php 350,000 and a minor injury costs Php69,000. I hope that our city executives and legislators will realize the cost of road accidents. The ADB report estimated that

road accidents cost the nation at least P2.5 billion pesos annually. Now this really is a big amount.

Allow me to quote Professor Roberto P. Alabado III, of UP-Mindanao (an expert in urban planning and traffic management) when he asked these questions:

1. Can local government hire more effective traffic enforcers to apprehend reckless drivers and enforce road safety regulations?

2. Can local governments construct more road infrastructures like traffic islands designed to enhance road safety?

3. Can local governments invest in drivers' education programs to educate the motorists and pedestrians about road safety and road courtesy?

4. Can local governments procure technology like radar guns to catch overspeeding vehicles and breath analyzers to check drunk drivers?

Surely these will cost a few millions but look at the cost of road accidents to the coffers of the national government and local government units that runs to billions. The cost to put up better road safety infrastructures and programs will definitely be less than the societal cost of road accidents deaths and injuries.

These necessary expenses are needed to enable our citizens to have a safe environment and to live long and productive life.

Because of the above reasons and more, the Committee on Energy, Transportation and Communication is rushing to finish the Traffic Code of Davao City, as our response and legacy of the 15th Council.

Thank you, Madam President.

PILAR C. BRAGA, PhD
City Councilor

February 17, 2009