

Protecting the Lives of Children: a conference at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

Children are the road users most vulnerable to injury. In most cases, their safety depends on adults' actions, or inaction. Children are often responsible for road accidents, themselves, by jaywalking, playing near roads, getting off buses or trams incorrectly. Many accidents involving children occur on and near railways.

On December 2, 2016, at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, a conference on Children's Safety, and Prevention of Children's Road Traffic Injuries was held. The conference was attended by representatives of relevant ministries and departments, public authorities, experts, and social activists. The objective of this forum was to consolidate efforts to improve citizens' responsibility in complying with traffic rules in order to prevent children's injuries on the roads and railways of Russia.



The main issues under discussion were:

- Toughening penalties for violation of traffic rules near children's educational establishments where warning signs "Watch out! Children!" and "Pedestrian crossing" are posted;
- Parental responsibility for traffic violations when an accident occurs for reasons attributable to the child, and the guilt is determined in court;
- The need to teach safety on railways, with involvement of experts, and training in preschool establishments, with participation of State traffic police officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia;
- Development of children's safety culture by means of mass-media, TV, etc.

Mrs. Valentina Petrenko, Federation Council member of the Federal Assembly of Russia, and Chairman of Mothers of Russia, an all-Russian social movement, in her closing speech proposed: creation of an integrated program at federal level to protect the lives of children.

Representatives of the Brahma Kumaris, Center for Spiritual Development (Moscow), headed by Sr. B.K. Sudha R. Gupta, Director, took part actively in this conference.

In her speech, Sr. Sudha pointed out that when on the road, the capacity of self-control i.e. the ability to control one's thoughts, feelings, emotions and senses is very important; indeed, considerable spiritual power is needed to remain stable and peaceful in different stressful situations. This can be accomplished through practicing positive thinking, which children should be taught to develop their sense of self-esteem, and responsibility for their own actions.



The Brahma Kumaris, Center for Spiritual Development released an interesting, helpful book on these vital human values, including a workbook. This teaching material can be used by parents and teachers to work with children aged 7-10. These lessons will help children learn a set of qualities that will help them protect their lives and health.

In support of this Brahma Kumaris, Center for Spiritual Development initiative, the Conference participants signed a promise that no such accident would happen due to their own carelessness.

