

"Mobility for a Better World"

Speech by H.E. Mr. Adolf Ogi  
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Minasan Ohayo Gozaimasu. Mr. Vice Minister, Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

What a pleasure it is to be here in this fantastic country of Japan.

What a delight it is to be here in the snow and mountains of Hokkaido.

How happy I am to be back again in the Olympic city of Sapporo, a magical venue for winter sports!

How privileged I feel to meet so many extraordinary people from all over the world!

I would like to express my gratitude to the World Road Association (PIARC) Mr. President Michaud and our Japanese hosts for their kind invitation.

And I am especially pleased to greet from here to Tokyo, the Minister of Transport, Mrs. Chikage Oogi. Ogi met Oogi on Friday afternoon in Tokyo.

I am not Japanese, nor a road worker, nor a top athlete, as you can see.

I am simply a Swiss politician, who was twice President of his country, and served successively as Minister of Transport, Communications and Energy, and as Minister of Defense, Public Safety and Sport.

Today, I am happy to be able to share my experiences and to communicate my enthusiasm in order to help create a better world.

I am proud to take up the new challenge that comes with my appointment as Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Sport for Development and Peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You might wonder why I am speaking about myself with such emotion.

The answer is that Sapporo brings back many happy memories.

In 1972 - thirty years ago, almost to the day - I came here as a young man, at the head of the Swiss skiing delegation, to the 11th Winter Olympics Games and was privileged to witness the victories of Marie-Thérèse Nadig, Bernard Russi and of others who won medals in many disciplines.

What a success for Switzerland. What a start for my political career.

What intense experiences we shared during the Olympic competition.

Just a stone's throw away from here.

So many medals won, so many successes achieved for our athletes.

And- despite national and sporting rivalries - so many new friends made!

To this day, Sapporo enjoys a fabulous image in Switzerland.

And what a launching pad Sapporo represented for my own career!

I brought to politics the lessons I had learned from sport - the need for

- optimism,

- enthusiasm,

- self-assurance,

- performance

-all combined with respect for the others and for the differences between us --

-- respect for those values which have enabled Switzerland to establish its own special place at the heart of Europe and within a wider world.

Through conviction and dedication, I worked my way up to the top of our political system.

I was born and grew up in the beautiful Alpine village of Kandersteg - which is also a ski resort, though hardly on the scale of Sapporo!

In the mountains, the forces of nature place everybody on an equal footing.

You, the winter maintenance specialists, know better than anyone what obstacles ice and snow can put in the way of travel.

As you know, greater mobility gives greater openness to the world. Yes, openness, that is the key of progress safety on our way towards a better world. Today, I should simply like to talk to you about some of the experiences of my own country, Switzerland.

As a former Minister of transport, I am well aware of:

- the problems of mobility

- the importance of roads and public transports

- the need for winter maintenance

- the challenges faced by the countries concerned

Switzerland, for its part, knows some of the constraints experienced world wide.

It will come as no surprise to you, professionals of the road, that individual mobility continues to increase.

People are traveling further and longer.

And road users are feeling the effects of the increase in traffic such as: traffic jams, accidents, pollution and the like.

To cope with this increase in traffic, Switzerland has developed massively the public transport systems.

Systematic encouragement is needed to shift the transport of people and goods from road to rail.

To this end, a lot of money is regularly invested to improve the transport infrastructure.

For example, two major rail tunnels are currently being constructed through the Swiss Alps.

One of 55 km and one of 30 km. It is the biggest public work project ever made in Switzerland. I initiated it, I brought it through Parliament and won a referendum for financing.

In view of all these achievements, you might think that it would now be possible to sit back and relax.

Unfortunately, however, the latest figures show that this is not the case.

Since 1960, when construction started on the current motorway network, there has been a huge increase in traffic.

- fivefold for private cars
- sevenfold for goods vehicles.

Thus, Switzerland has proved to be no exception in this general trend.

The main reasons for traffic movements by private individuals are leisure, work, training and shopping.

Meanwhile, globalization, rationalization and economic flexibility have required the movement of goods.

In Switzerland, people use their car for over 70% of all distance covered, as against only 20% for public transport.

The biggest surprise, however, is that there has been no change in the ratio of private car to public transport usage between 1984 and 2000.

The figures show that the automobile is still doing very well in Switzerland.

- 80% of all households own a car
- 30% of households have a second car as well

There is 1 car for 1.8 inhabitants.

More than 1 600 km of motorway has been brought into service since the beginning of the 1960s. A further 200 km or so remains to be built, mostly in tunnels.

Looking beyond these figures, Swiss transport policy focuses on the principles of sustainable development as Mr. President Michaud already mentioned yesterday.

The following priorities have been established for the road network:

- the highway network is to be completed as quickly as possible ( target: 20159
- maintenance of the highway network has to be co-ordinated
- existing capacity must be optimized through technological innovation (telematics)
- road safety is to be ensured through regulatory measures
- intermodality has to be promoted
- In view of the trend in traffic over recent years, it is impossible to avoid targeted investments on the

existing road network.

By taking into account the criteria of sustainable development from the planning stage of every project, it will be possible to minimize additional costs.

Road maintenance is one of the main concerns. Sustainability in winter maintenance has become a very important item which this Congress will be addressing.

While Switzerland shares the general trends of Europe, it has on various occasions played a pioneering role in the domain of transport, especially with regard to the Alpine crossings.

To take a recent example:

On 1 January 2001, Switzerland introduced a service-based charge for heavy goods vehicles (HGV), Swiss and foreign - with a total weight of more than 3.5 tons (heavy vehicle fee).

The purpose of this new tax is:

- to encourage the transfer of goods traffic from road to rail
- to finance an increased supply of public transport
- to reduce the number of accidents involving heavy goods vehicles (for example: in road tunnels). As you know, last October, we had a very bad truck accident in the Gotthard tunnel.
- to reduce the nuisance generated by goods traffic
- to favour the use of private cars
- to optimize the use of the existing road network

The road system is developing all the time. It is reality, not an utopian dream!

Being a pioneer is a state of mind.

Drilling tunnels, building roads and railways, constructing ports and airports -- all of these things contribute to mobility.

Pioneers are driven by a belief, by optimism.

You - the specialists who have traveled to Hokkaido island- you know that the road represents far more than just a strip of asphalt!

Within your specializations, each of you is concerned with managing the advantages of mobility and its disadvantages.

We must not wait to tackle the challenges related to the future road systems. We have to begin here and now.

This applies to winter maintenance - as it does to all other aspects of road transport.

But road transport is just one part of the equation. Other modes of transport also come into play.

In Switzerland, the road of the future will be:

- a platform for multimodal communication

- as safe and optimal means of travel for all users
- as space which is open to private cars, to public transport and to other users like cyclists, pedestrians and others.

Telematics - the data management of infrastructures and vehicles - will make a significant contribution to resolving the problems of mobility.

In this connection, the Federal Road Authority has drawn up the Swiss Road Telematics Guidelines Vision 2010. The measures contained in this document are already being implemented with the partners concerned.

So ladies and gentlemen,

Let us work together for the benefit of all-  
the environment, the economy, the society, for the good of humanity.

In a nutshell, sustainable mobility is also a state of mind!

On our way from the airport to the hotel, we all traveled on excellent roads that had been cleared of snow by our Japanese colleagues. That again is a reality! There is nothing utopian about it!

The road is a gateway opening on to the world!

A world made up

- of continents differing in terrain and climate
- of nations, large and small
- of economies - developing, emerging and advanced
- of different cultures and regional sensitivities
- of decision-makers, builders, managers, users -- not to mention sportsmen and sportswomen!

You - road specialists who came to this congress from all parts of the world - you are familiar with roads in their various manifestations!

In industrialized countries, the main threat to transport systems is often the saturation of infrastructures. This is something we have all experienced! Who among us has never been stuck in a motorway traffic jam ? I was this morning !

Thus, the "rail against road" approach, is the wrong way to develop better transport systems.

In developing countries, the main threat for the future of their populations is often due to:

- the lack of appropriate infrastructures, mainly roads
- the shortage of financial resources,
- insufficient know how (engineering skills, road safety, etc.....)

I am not talking about "globalization" in the negative sense of that term.... But rather about "greater openness to the world"!

"Mobility" and hence "roads" provide a practical and lasting contribution to this.

"On our Way towards a Better World"!!

The world is made up of human beings who organize themselves within certain structures.

Each organization, within its own specific field, must work with its partners to meet the future challenges.

- The World Road Association (PIARC) must work with its partners to build "roads" for the benefit of all!
- The United Nations (UN) must work with its partners to build up "development" and "peace" for the benefit of all!!

This is reality, not a utopian dream!

There is no better example than Switzerland and Japan. Whereas thirty years ago the two countries were worlds apart, they are today closer than ever.

It is with great pleasure that I invite Minister Mrs. Chikage Oogi to visit my home village of Kandersteg during her next visit to Switzerland, and to take a traditional fondue with her Swiss counterpart Mr. Moritz Leuenberger.

And a superb motorway will bring them all the way from Bern, due to Mr. Michaud, on to a mountain road that has been entirely cleared of snow! And just down the valley, work is in progress on a great railway tunnel through the Alps. Come all, and have fondue with me and see it yourself. Arigatou Sapporo. Arigatou Hokkaido. Arigatou Nippon.

Thank you all.