



MEDIA STATEMENT

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Editor

Date: Thursday, 06 August 2020

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RE: MVA FUND ENDEAVORS TO MAKE ROADS SAFE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AMIDST COVID-19

As we battle the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic that poses an increasing burden on public health systems, the MVA Fund endeavors to continue to fulfill its mandate through the design, promotion and implementation of crash and injury prevention measures. Consequently, the Fund gears its efforts toward interventions that aim to secure the safety of vulnerable road users such as school-going children.

In order to create a safe journey to school and facilitate the transition from fewer to the current state of vehicle mobility, the Fund along with its road safety partners carried out school road safety activations in the past few weeks. Before the recent announcement on the suspension of face to face learning for most of the school grades, related interventions were conducted at Okandjengedi Primary School and Okatana Primary School in Oshana region as well as Moses //Garob, Al Steenkamp and People's Primary schools in Khomas region, focusing on scholar patrol implementation, Yellow Dot programme and pedestrian safety.

Year-to-date comparative crash statistics recorded by the Fund's Emergency Call Centre from 01 January to 15 July 2020 show that 39 children below the age of 17 lost their lives, while 22 sustained varying degrees of injury in 255 crashes. Compared to the same period in 2019, crashes and injuries indicate a respective decrease of 19% and 30% while fatalities remained the same.

Notwithstanding the improvement in these statistics, an unabated continuation of motor vehicle crashes will diminish the progressively stunted public health facilities and divert the available but limited emergency response services from the pandemic to crashes that can be avoided.

“The current global health crisis necessitates that we remain alert, vigilant and fit to prevent crashes and subsequently reduce the impact of COVID-19. We acknowledge the anxiety and stressful times we find ourselves in as a nation; the Fund will therefore continue to find innovative ways to promote road safety in schools to lessen the impact of road crashes on public health systems and contribute to government efforts of combating Covid-19,” says MVA Fund’s Chief Corporate Affairs Surihe Gaomas-Guchu.

With the suspension of face-to-face teaching for the Pre-Primary, Grade 1, 2, 3, 7 and 9 effective on Tuesday, 4 August 2020, the Fund implores on parents and guardians to encourage the young ones to stay home and off the streets. Equally, the same message goes to the school management authorities to play their part to continually educate the learners, specifically the Grade 10’s, 11’s and 12’s who continue with face-to-face teaching at schools, to practice good road safety behaviour and create an environment where children can safely co-exist with other road users.

Additionally, the public at large is urged to be extra cautious and patient when driving around school zones and observe stipulated speed limits, scholar patrols and always be on the lookout for children playing, walking or cycling around schools and indeed residential areas.

The MVA Fund once again reminds the public to report crashes to the MVA Fund Accident Response Number **081 9682**, as doing so can save a life.

Deemed Signed

SURIHE GAOMAS-GUCHU

CHIEF CORPORATE AFFAIRS