

THE DAILY STAR

September 23, 1996

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## MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR ON THE ROLE OF NGOS IN TRAFFIC SAFETY

Dhaka - 23rd September, 1996

Organised by: BANGLADESH ROAD TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

CANTONMENT

# ROAD SAFETY IN BANGLADESH

- A N Hussain  
Chairman, BRTA

### Introduction

When we leave aside the death caused due to childhood mortality, heart disease and old age cancer, the greatest number of people dying in the prime of life is injury related or accidents. Due to lack of accurate data it is not possible to narrate the Bangladesh scenario but statistics of Thailand indicates that more years of potential life is now lost in that country due to road accidents than by tuberculosis and malaria combined. Transport Research Laboratory of UK, in a study found that approximately 70 percent of the years lost due to road accidents are working years. Hence excluding the human tragedies involved with the loss of dear ones, road accidents causing loss of the most economically active years of those persons. Thus it can be said that road safety is an issue of great importance both socially and economically for any country.

**Accident Trends**  
2. During last five years, on an average 1600 people were killed and another 3000 were injured due to road accidents in Bangladesh. The country has a fatality rate estimated at 58 deaths annually per 10,000 registered motorised vehicles, a rate some 25 times higher than most industrialized countries. Moreover, this can only be an underestimate as road accidents are grossly under reported. Fatality rate is 25.3 in India, 18.7 in Pakistan and 15.5 in Sri Lanka, (fig 1). Of the total casualties (dead+injured) in Bangladesh, 39.8 percent of road accidents is fatal while for Pakistan it is 28.4, India 17.4 and Sri Lanka is 7.9 percent. In other words Bangladesh has far worse road accident record compared to the neighbouring countries. The ESCAP study for road safety has ranked Bangladesh lowest among its 51 member states as regards

co-ordination of road safety activities.

### Accident Cost

3. Deaths and serious injuries as a result of traffic accidents represent a considerable waste of national resource and cause anguish and grief to family and friends of those killed or maimed. The more serious accident victim may remain in hospital for days, or in some case for months and some may require medical treatment for the rest of their lives. Thus the use of the hospital beds and highly skilled medical staff add to the cost of road accidents. In addition, cost incurred by the police to visit accident sites, investigation, court trial, cost of vehicle and property damage and insurance processing is added to the accident costs. Besides, it is necessary to include an estimate of the productive loss to the country of someone killed or crippled. Research in number of countries indicates that such losses are normally in the range of 1-2 percent of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). On this basis loss due to road accident in Bangladesh, if estimated at 1 percent of the GDP only, is about Tk. 1000 crore or about US\$ 250 million.

### Case Study of Biswa Road-Airport Road Junction

4. Accident analysis of this black spot reveals the following:

★ 23 accidents have taken place at the junction in the last 12 month period.

★ The total numbers of casualties are 37, 18 dead, 12 grievously injured and 7 sustained simple injury.

★ In these 23 accidents, 12 pedestrians were killed, 3 grievously injured and 2 sustained simple injury. In other words, pedestrians constitute 74 percent of the total number of casualties.

★ Out of these 23 accidents, mini buses were involved in 9 accidents, trucks in 4, buses in 5 and tempo in 4; in other words commercial vehicles were involved in 96% of the accidents.

★ Of the 37 casualties, 24 persons belonged to the age group of 21-35, which is 65 percent of the total number of casualties.

★ Field inspection of the black spot revealed the following:

tion through to evaluation. Currently, NGO involvement is not frequent during implementation. Evidence shows, however, that NGOs can provide valuable input during project identification and design. Where NGOs are expected to participate in implementation, they should also be consulted during design.

### WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH NGOS IN BANGLADSH

The European experience working with NGOs in the field of traffic safety, shows that the NGOs are a necessary supplement and extension to the government efforts. The NGOs normally also reach easier the most important target group which is the road user. In most of the European countries, the NGOs are considered to be both neutral and trustworthy. One main reason for this, is that most of the NGOs have a <<grassroot level>>. There is no reason to think that the NGO situation in Bangladesh is so different from Europe. I think it is nearly the same!

It is already experienced through well publicized successes of NGOs in Bangladesh, that more and more development assistance has been channelled through different fields. Traffic safety is not yet addressed by the NGOs in Bangladesh, but this should now only be a matter of time.

Bangladesh has thousands of NGOs. One of the first challenges in this project will be to identify the appropriate partners among the existing NGOs. The NGO seminar will be an excellent possibility to start the discussion how to mobilize key NGOs for this new type of work, and how to address all the practical, administrative issues to get the NGOs involved to improve the serious traffic safety situation in the country. Pilot projects could be one of the next steps to make towards a strong future collaboration with the NGOs in Bangladesh.

★ Traffic movements coming from the Biswa Road enter into the high speed Airport Road abruptly and they are not very clearly visible to the traffic going to or coming from the airport and vice versa.

★ There is a large flow of pedestrians from Biswa road coming into the Airport Road who try to go across beating the high speed traffic on the Airport Road and vice versa.

★ Due to lack of proper enforcement, buses park on the Airport Road and at times in the centre of the junction to drop and pick passengers.

★ Pedestrian facility is not very elaborate. For lack of traffic education whatever facility exists is not extensively used by the pedestrians. They prefer to cross through centre of the junction, instead of using the zebra crossing nearby.

★ Street vendors and abundance along one corner of the junction.

★ Road geometry and environment are not appropriate.

★ The possible counter measures for the junction can be:

★ Provision of pedestrian fencing from the railway line on Biswa Road on the Airport Road in both directions. Additional fencing will be required along Airport Road opposite the junction with Biswa Road. The fencing in Biswa Road could significantly reduce the width of the road so that pedestrians have sufficient space and are not tempted on to the wrong side of the fence. The road width reduction would have the added benefit of channeling the traffic on the approach to the junction.

★ Provision of bus bays on both sides of Airport Road. These should be away from the junction with Biswa Road.

★ Provision of pedestrian crossing with a widened facility in the centre of the road for pedestrians (central refuge) or a pedestrian over bridge. The zebra crossing should be at the rear of each of the bus bays to give pedestrians maximum vision when crossing.

★ provision of a physical speed reduction measure on the immediate approach to the pedestrian crossing. This could be a low profile speed hump with painted hatching warning drivers of its presence.

★ Once the physical measures are in place the police is to ensure that all pedestrians use the new facilities and the buses never stop on the road to collect or drop passengers.

★ Any NGO or boys scouts can take in hand programmes to educate pedestrians of the area on the safe practices of road crossing.

**Conclusion**  
7. Accident as defined in Oxford English Dictionary is "an unusual event, which proceeds from some unknown causes or known causes". Unknown causes are something beyond the scope of the discussion but the known causes can be easily acted upon for countermeasures without branding every accident as an act of God.

**Bibliography**  
1. Ross Silcock, TRI, Road Safety International Guidelines, pp 7.9, para 2.4, ADB, Aug 96.

2. Source: BRTA

3. Ross Silcock, TRI, Road Safety International Guidelines, pp 2-7, 2-8, fig 2-6, ADB, Aug 1996

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5. Stien Lundebye, Souvenir, International Seminar on Road Safety, pp 10, BRTA, Oct 1995

### MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Bangladesh Road Transport Authority is organising a seminar on "The Role of NGOs in Traffic Safety" under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications. With the development of roads and increase in the number of motor vehicles, road accident has become a common concern to all. To contain the frequency and number of road accident an integrated multi-sectoral approach is required both from within and outside the Government. The seminar on the role of NGOs in traffic safety is, therefore, a timely step.

I am also happy to learn that National Road Safety Council is going to implement the draft 'National Road Safety Action Plan'.

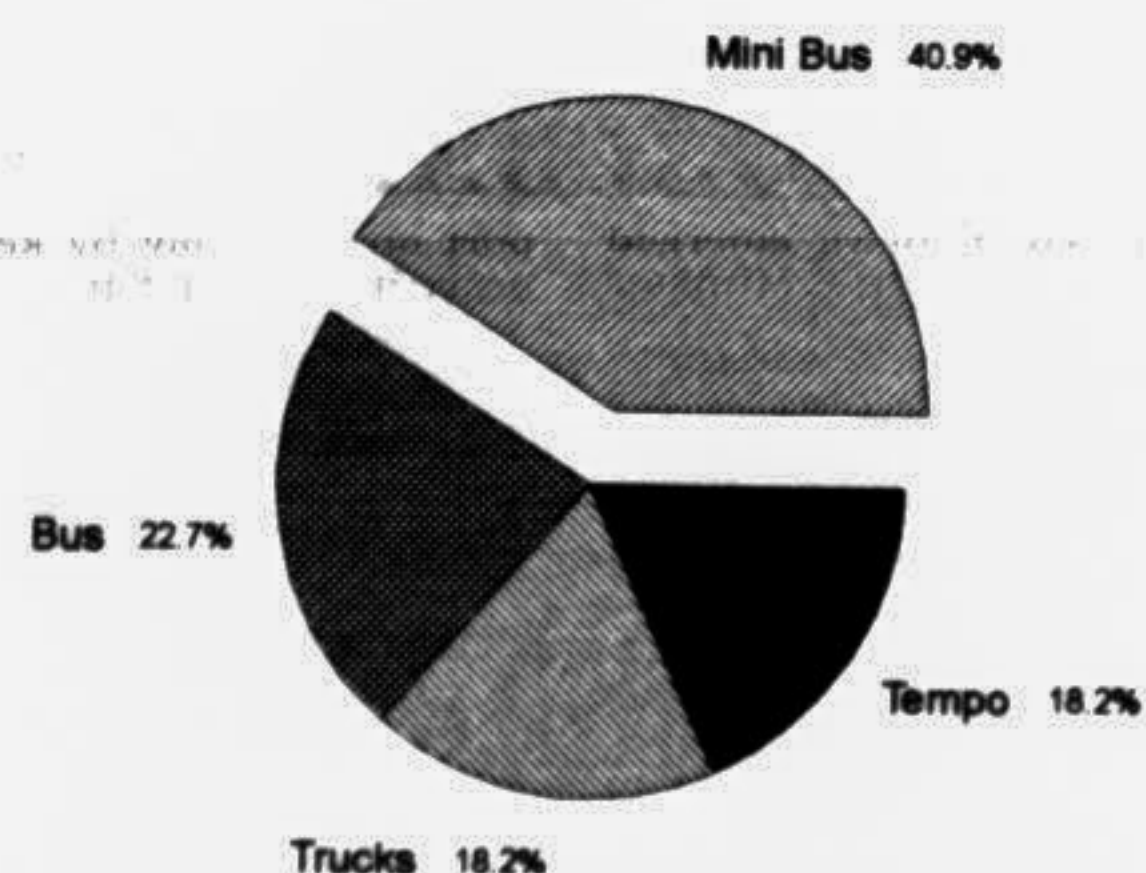
I hope the deliberations in the seminar will help formulate policies and strategies on the role of NGOs to supplement the efforts of the Government in road safety and save valuable lives and property of the people.

I wish the seminar all success.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu  
Long live Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina  
PRIME MINISTER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

GRAPH SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF VEHICLES INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS



## THE ROLE OF THE NGOS IN TRAFFIC SAFETY

### INTRODUCTION

The World Bank has for some decades collaborated closely in several fields with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As shown later in the presentation, this collaboration has become an increasingly important feature of Bank-financed activities.

However, Bangladesh will be the first country where the World Bank establish a collaboration with NGOs in the field of traffic safety. This will be done as a part of the Bangladesh second Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project (RRMP-2).

As an important part of my mission September 1996, I will meet with representatives from selected NGOs in Bangladesh and other entities in the private sector who are interested in traffic safety, and recommend how the involvement of NGOs and the private sector can help improving the serious road safety situation. To ensure active participation of NGOs in traffic safety, I will be preparing recommendations for appropriate traffic education training materials as well as format of material to be used for public information campaigns by NGOs and the media.

### ROAD SAFETY NGOS IN EUROPE

In most of the European countries, the NGOs during the last decades have played an important role in improving the traffic safety situation. Nearly all the European countries have separate NGOs working only with traffic safety. These NGOs have developed to be a natural part of the traffic safety efforts in the actual countries. A clear majority of the NGOs are working to prevent accidents, and are not involved in treatment and rehabilitation of the traffic accident victims. However, in many countries a close collaboration has been established with NGOs working for victims assisting in treatment and rehabilitation etc.

The European traffic safety NGOs mainly work in the fields of

traffic safety education in kindergarten, primary school, and secondary school  
information matters including campaigns and media-service  
coordination between NGOs

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and also towards different public sectors

Several years experience has also shown that NGOs can initiate traffic safety activities which the public authorities have problems to execute, due to, for example private fundings or various types of contributions.

The traffic safety NGOs in Europe certainly also need input from international NGOs working in the same field. Therefore all the NGOs are members of the international and world wide traffic safety organization << La Prevention Routiere Internationale >> (PRI) which has its headquarters in Luxembourg. About 60 countries are represented and the number of members is presently increasing rapidly. We also find Asian NGOs represented in PRI, which is divided up into several regional groups. An international traffic safety congress is held every second year, last year in Budapest, Hungary.

### THE WORLD BANK WORKING WITH NGOS

Long Traditions  
The World Bank started operational collaboration with NGOs in the 1970s. The collaboration with NGOs has become an increasingly important feature of Bank-financed activities. Growing collaboration with NGOs can be attributed to the expanding role and influence of the NGO sector generally, as well as increasing recognition within the World Bank as to the specific benefits which NGO involvement can bring to Bank-financed operations.

Between 1973 and 1988, only six percent of Bank-financed projects involved NGOs. In 1994 over half of Bank-financed approved projects included some form of NGO involvement. These figures shown clearly the increased frequency of Bank-NGO collaboration, but give little indication of the quality or depth of the interaction. In many cases, the roles played by NGOs are quite minor and frequently limited to project implementation. Achieving the full potential benefits of NGO collaboration implies enhanced

roles for NGOs earlier on in the project cycle.  
Official World Bank advice or guidelines to work with NGOs is still limited. However, it was in 1995 published a very practical guide to operational collaboration between the world Bank and non-governmental organizations << Working with NGOs >>. I will in the following present some of the Bank key points from this guide related to working with NGOs.

### OPERATIONAL NGOS

The World Bank classifies operational NGOs into three main groups:

1) Community-based organizations (CBOs) - which serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area. CBOs are normally <<membership>> organizations made up of a group of individuals who have joined together to further their own interests. Also referred to as grassroots organizations or peoples organizations.

2) National organizations which operate in individual developing countries.

3) International organizations which are typically headquartered in developed countries and carry out operations in more than one developing country.

Among projects involving NGO collaboration recorded in FY 94, 40% involved CBOs, 70% involved national organizations and 10% involved international organizations.

### NGO STRENGTHS

Because the nature and quality of individual NGOs varies greatly, it is extremely difficult to make generalizations about the sector as a whole. Despite the diversity, some specific strengths generally associated with the NGO sector include the following:

strong grassroots links

field-based experience

the ability to innovate and adapt

process-oriented approach

participatory methodologies and tools

long-term commitment and emphasis on sustainability

cost-effectiveness

### WHY THE WORLD BANK WORKS WITH NGOS

NGO involvement can contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of Bank-financed projects by introducing innovative approaches and promoting community participation. In addition NGOs can help expand project uptake and reach, and can facilitate greater awareness of diverse stakeholders views.

### HOW THE WORLD BANK WORKS WITH NGOS

NGOs are active contributors to the Bank's economic and sector work (ESW) and participate in lending activities from identification

through to evaluation.

Currently, NGO involvement is not frequent during implementation. Evidence shows, however, that NGOs can provide valuable input during project identification and design. Where NGOs are expected to participate in implementation, they should also be consulted during design.

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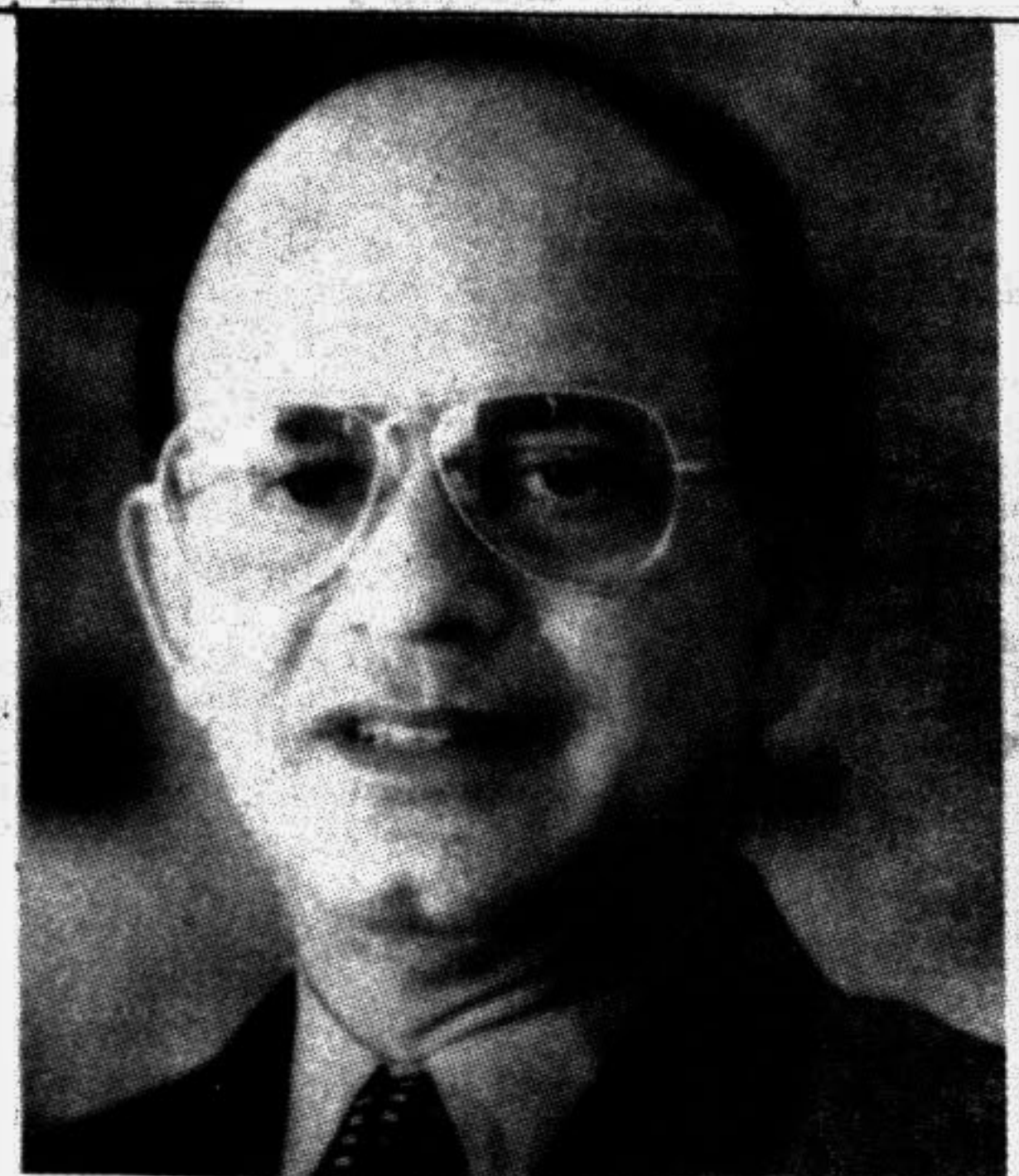
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### MESSAGE

I am very glad that Bangladesh Road Transport Authority is holding a seminar on "The role of NGOs in Traffic Safety" under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications. To create a positive effect on the overall economy of the country the present Government is endeavouring to develop the road sector by constructing new roads and upgrading the existing ones. With larger road network and better quality road the number of vehicles is on the rise but unfortunately in incidence of road accidents, involving loss of valuable human lives and property, is also increasing. Comparable statistics show that Bangladesh has one of the highest road accident fatality rate in the Asia Pacific region. The Government is totally aware of the fact that unless appropriate remedial and pre-emptive actions are taken the situation will get worse as our economy, road network and vehicle fleet grows.

In view of the above the Government is putting in best efforts to build the counter measures to reduce road accidents. But the efforts of the Government alone is not enough to counter the various problems of road safety, co-operation of all is required to face this epidemic of the automotive age. Therefore, the seminar on the role of NGOs in road safety is very essential and timely.

I also feel very happy that the Draft National Road Safety Action Plan is being placed to the seminar for comments.

I hope the participants both from home, abroad government, NGOs and the stakeholder after detailed discussion in the light of the Draft National Road Safety Action Plan will be able to recommend the required policies and strategies for the NGO initiatives in road safety.

I wish the seminar all success.

Anwar Hossain  
Minister for Communication

## The role of NGOs in Traffic Safety

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### 1. Introduction

Road safety is becoming an increasingly important issue in Bangladesh with the rapid expansion of road network and vehicles both in urban and rural areas. It is obvious that the Government even if it does its best cannot tackle this problem alone and needs the active support of all sectors of society including educational institutions, media, NGOs, professional groups and others.

### 2. Role of NGOs in Traffic Safety

Some roles for NGOs in Traffic Safety and possible mechanisms for getting them involved are discussed below.

#### (a) Education and Awareness

As stated before, the NGOs relative advantage is their outreach and ability to reach all sector of society, particularly the poor. Therefore NGOs could be used to deliver messages and raise awareness of citizens, both Urban as well as rural, on Road Safety. This could be done through schools, workplaces, markets, roadside theater, radio, television etc.

#### (b) Rehabilitation of accident victims

Many NGOs specialize in health care. They could have special They could also provide post-treatment rehabilitation of the road accident victims by providing vocational training and other facilities.

#### (c) Legal support to victims

Victims of road accidents in Bangladesh have no hope of obtaining any compensation NGOs specializing in providing legal services could be engaged to take up pro-bono cases on behalf of road accident victims.

### (D) Training

Since most of the road accidents are caused by professional drivers mainly of trucks, buses and minibuses and to a buses extent baby taxis and rickshaws it would make sense to provide targeted training to such drivers.

### 3. Mechanisms for involving NGOs

A possible mechanism would be to discuss the issue with an apex body of NGOs such as the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) or the Voluntary Health Services Society (VHSS) about how to get the most suitable NGOs. They could then give advice and also identify suitable NGOs for each task.

### 4. Conclusion

It is clear the Road Safety is an important issue which will only grow in importance as the number of roads and vehicles continue to increase. It is necessary to take action immediately to reduce the number of road accidents. All sectors of society, including the Government, donors, as well as NGOs must play their due roles.

This process can be started immediately by taking some pilot projects in the most important and accident prone areas. Some possible priority pilot projects are listed below:

- Information campaign in selected high risk areas (e.g. Aricha highway, Dhaka city)
- Development of training materials and modules for drivers and pilot training.
- Discussions with health sector NGOs on providing treatment to road accident victims on pilot scale.
- Discussion with legal aid NGOs on providing legal aid to road accident victims on pilot scale.