

PARTNERS LAUNCH MAJOR ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE IN BAYELSA

Thursday, the 28th of July, Nigerians from across Bayelsa state gathered to participate in a series of programs highlighting the roles of partnership in addressing road safety in Nigeria. The event is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Federal Roads Safety Commission (FRSC), the Agbami Partners and the Arrive Alive Road Safety Initiative (AARSI), a coalition of private sector companies (including Chevron, First Bank, Diamond Bank and Zenith Bank) aimed at reducing Truck and Motorcycle related crashes on the Nigerian roads.

The program began at the St Judes Girls Secondary School, Amarata, Yenagoa, where they held a meeting with okada riders (motorcycle operators), as well as Truck drivers. The group talked about motorcycle safety, and the issue of overloading, over-speeding, use of the appropriate head gear and the need to be visible on the road, especially at periods of poor visibility. The group also talked about Truck Safety including the issue of fatigue driving and non visibility of broken down trucks - including the dangers of drinking and driving and phoning/texting while driving, which cause many deaths on Nigeria's roadways each year.

The Bayelsa State Sector Commander, FRSC, Commander H B Halilu and Mr. Ngo kio, representing the Agbami group, joined His Excellency, the Governor of Bayelsa State, Mr. Timipre Sylva, represented by his Special Adviser on Inter-Governmental Affairs, His Highness (Hon.) Sonme Ogiligi, in flagging-off the Truck/Motorcycle safety campaign. At the event some 1000 AARSI motorcycle crash helmets were distributed to the okada riders, to protect them from head injuries which might lead to death in the event of a crash. 500 units of "Wake-Up" road safety device were distributed to both commercial and private vehicle drivers to alert them from falling asleep on the wheels.

More than 1,500 persons from Bayelsa State communities participated in the special events, including over 50 children and more than 50 uniformed FRSC officers.

In the words of the General Manager, Policy, Government and Public Affairs (PGPA, Chevron Nigeria Ltd, Mr. Femi Odumabo, speaking through Mr. Ngo Kio, "As good corporate citizens, Chevron Nigeria Ltd is concerned about saving the lives of members of this community and Nigeria in general"

In summing up the day, his Excellency, the Governor of Bayelsa State who spoke through his Special Adviser on Inter-Governmental Affairs, His Highness (Hon.) Sonme Ogiligi, declared the effort a huge success and complimenting the partners, noted that road safety is everyone's business. He called on the okada riders to imbibe all the safety messages passed to them by AARSI and ensure they wore the Helmets. He also called on other well meaning corporate citizens of Nigeria to emulate the gesture by the Agbami

Partners. Other dignitaries that graced the occasion include the Honourable Commissioner for Works and Transport, Engr. Ebitei Francis Williams, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Austin Agbonlahor, Chief Vehicle Inspection Officer (VIO), Patrick Akponimisigha, Chief Script of Prisons, Elder A. K. Shephard, representing the Controller of Prisons, Controller of Nigerian Immigration Service, Bayelsa State, Dr. Elder Robert Okwosukwo and the Chief Narcotic Supretendent, N.D.L.E.A, Bayelsa State, Mr. Peter Ogar.