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EMBAJADA DEL JAPON
SANTIAGO, CHILE

Santiago, mayo de 1993.-

ARCHIVO

Distinguido señor:

Tengo el agrado de dirigirme a Ud. para saludarle muy atentamente e informarle que a partir del presente mes la Misión Diplomática a mi cargo, hará llegar regularmente a las 93 personalidades más destacadas de Chile un Boletín Informativo que contiene las últimas noticias del Japón, relativas a recientes acontecimientos, descubrimientos e investigaciones realizados en mi país.

Espero sinceramente que el presente boletín sea de utilidad e interés para su persona.

Me valgo de la oportunidad para ofrecerle las seguridades de mi consideración más distinguida.


Yukihiisa Eto
Embajador del Japón

EMBAJADA DEL JAPON
EN CHILE

ULTIMAS NOTICIAS DEL JAPON

(VIP 93)

TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGNS WILL TARGET ELDERLY AND WOMEN DRIVERS

The numbers of drivers and passengers killed each year in traffic accidents has exceeded the 10,000-mark for five consecutive years since 1988, and efforts to check the trend have so far met with little success. Surveys reveal that a disproportionately large share of the accidents involve elderly and female drivers, who are a growing presence on the nation's roads. In view of the findings, the National Police Agency will be targeting its efforts to reduce accidents at members of these two groups.

Traffic deaths began to soar in the 1960s, when Japanese society became increasingly motorized. In 1970 the total hit a record high of 16,765 people, prompting the Government to pass the Traffic Safety Policy Law. The following year it implemented the first of four five-year traffic safety plans.

Under the plans the Government made significant headway in improving roads, installing and improving safety controls, such as traffic signals and pedestrian crossings, and calling national attention to the importance of driving more carefully. In the same year that the

first plan came into force the number of traffic deaths began to plummet, and in 1979 it fell to a low of 8,466- about half the level of the peak year of 1970.

In the early 1980s the curve began to move upward again. This time, however, a variety of factors were at work. The increase in the volume of traffic constituted one of the major causes. More people were buying cars and getting a driver's license. Moreover, businesses were stepping up their use of commercial vehicles as the pitch of economic activity intensified.

Another factor involved basic changes in road conditions. A growing number of vehicles were on the roads at night, reflecting the diversification of lifestyles and the surge in nighttime activity. In addition, drivers were growing older, a reflection of the graying of the population. By 1988 traffic deaths topped 10,000 again and continued to soar, reaching 10,344 in 1988, 11,086 in 1989, 11,227 in 1990, 11,105 in 1991, and 11,451 in 1992.

On the heels of the increase, the National Police Agency undertook an analysis of the rate of increase for specific age and sex groups and other conditions, comparing the averages for the five-year period from 1983-87 to the 1992 averages. The results revealed that the rate of increase was particularly steep for elderly and female drivers.

In 1992 a total of 4,783 people died in passenger car traffic accidents, 43.6 percent more than the 1983-87 average, which was 3,332. The rate of increase was about three times higher than that for accidental deaths involving pedestrians, which rose by 15.7 percent. The number one cause was the failure by passengers to fasten their seatbelts.

Another underlying factor was the increase in the number of drivers, especially senior citizens. Between 1982 and 1992 the number of people with a license rose 1.5-fold for all age groups and fourfold for people 65 years of age or older. The increase is due not to a rise in the number of senior citizens getting a license but to the fact that many of the people who started driving in the 1960s had now entered the upper age brackets. In 1992, 442 elderly drivers died in passenger car accidents, 2.3-times more than in 1983-87, when the average was 188.

The number of women with a driver's license rose 1.4-fold over between 1982 and 1992. In 1992 the number of women killed in passenger car accidents hit 1,089, 1.7 times more than the average for 1983-87.

The general strategy for bringing down the number of accidents is reducing traffic congestion, improving roads and other infrastructure, and getting people to drive more carefully. Based on its experiences, however, the National Police Agency has realized that further improvements to the infrastructure will only have a limited effect in reducing traffic deaths (the number of deaths per 10,000 drivers), since the rate

has remained steady at about 1.7 or 1.8 for the past 10 years. For this reason, it plans to focus its efforts on getting people to drive more carefully, through publicity campaigns and driver education programs.

(The material herein is based on domestic Japanese news sources and is offered for reference purposes. It does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the Japanese Government or of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

NUMBER OF TRAFFIC DEATHS

YEAR	TOTAL
1970	16,765
1975	10,792
1980	8,760
1981	8,719
1982	9,073
1983	9,520
1984	9,262
1985	9,261
1986	9,317
1987	9,347
1988	10,344
1989	11,086
1990	11,227
1991	11,105
1992	11,451