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Nha Trang, 16th June 2008 – The public awareness campaign for the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP Foundation) orchestrated a concert and a *Helmet for Kids* (HFK) in Nha Trang City. The concert’s message was “Put a Helmet on your Child”, fitting in with the primary theme of phase III of the public awareness campaign.



The HFK ceremony was dedicated in honor and memory Le Xuan Han who tragically died 4 months ago at the age of 8. Her picture was present at the concert as a reminder to the audience of how tragedy can affect families when the basic safety needs of a child are not care for. When she was young, she had wanted to go to medical school and devote her life to saving other people’s lives. This dream like the rest of her hopes and desires evaporated the instant her parents decided to ignore the helmet law. What happened to Han is extremely sad, but it is illustrative of what is happening across the country.

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We have internal reports that show that parents are more likely than the general public to fail to put helmets on their children,” explains Mirjam Sidik - Executive Director of the AIP Foundation. She continued, “This is an extremely disturbing trend, in HCMC for example, parents are 10% less likely to put a helmet on a child than someone who doesn’t have any children of their own.”

While adult compliance to Vietnam’s helmet-wearing law is excellent, a loophole has resulted in a lack of enforcement towards children aged 14 and under. The fact is that we forget our children. There are many programs that give the message that helmet save lives, however, few campaigns actively advocate and present the dangers of allowing children on motorbikes without a helmet. Vietnam is losing thousands of their own parents.

Asia Injury Prevention Foundation

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“Like a war, traffic accidents are killing and maiming youths ... every day,” wrote Archbishop Desmond of South Africa Tutu – Nobel Peace Prize Winner in a letter to Vietnam’s Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The letter was written to congratulate Vietnam for co-sponsoring a historic United Nation’s resolution on improving global road safety and for the nation’s successful implementation of Decree 32 on December 15th 2007. Echoing concerns of AIP Foundation, UNICEF and WHO, Archbishop Tutu urged modification of Resolution 32 to require children to wear helmets, Tutu said: “I am aware that a misunderstanding has apparently arisen over enforcement of helmet wearing by children aged 14 and under, and the ensuing public misperception has resulted in a rapid decline in the number of children wearing protective helmets while riding on motorcycles. I am sad to learn that up to twelve Vietnamese children are dying every day as a result, and many more suffer traumatic brain injury.”

Realizing the importance of the cause, the AIP Foundation organized the concert as the part of a larger goal to increase helmet- wearing rates among children. Prior to the concert, many activities were organized to feature helmets and advertise the events. On June 13th 2008, the AIP Foundation and the Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition (VHWC) held a *Helmets for Kids* event at 08/03 Kindergarten in Nha Trang. Three hundred and seventy seven helmets were donated to each student under the age of fifteen.

Neo Chee Cheong, Vietnam Chief Representative of Michelin Asia (Singapore) noted “One of the reasons that parents are not buying helmets is because they can’t afford one, almost 10% of people say children should not wear helmets because they are too expensive. The HFK events are held to help alleviate the burden among working families.”

The VHWC sponsored the concert: it began with a road show and ended at the concert’s venue, 2/4 Square. In addition to the music show, the concert featured testimonials of various road accident victims, a fashion show and famous singer such as Pham Quynh Anh, Dang Khoi and a comedian Anh Vu. In this concert, the AIP Foundation presented their new goodwill ambassador for Vietnamese traffic safety, Miss Photography 2006, Cao Thanh Hang. “I can’t believe parents wouldn’t put helmets on their

children,” says Thanh Hang, “these children are their future, and the parents should be doing more to protect them.”

The concert primary message “Put the helmet on your child”, made a strong impression on the audience. On behalf of the organization, Mirjam Sidik sincerely shared: “Vietnam is a developing nation. Each family, each person is the part of this progress. Children are the valuable property of our country and the future of our country. For the purpose of protecting Vietnam’s future generation, we must enhance and broaden the message of our campaign: “Put the helmet on your child”. **That is also the way parents should show their love to their children.**

About AIP Foundation: AIP Foundation is a US non-profit organization whose goal is to reduce injuries from road crashes, particularly involving children. The Foundation is implementing a national primary school education curriculum, and road safety public awareness campaigns. Its *Helmets for Kids* program has distributed more than 350,000 child helmets to primary schools throughout Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. The program is now being expanded into Africa. AIP Foundation’s not-for-profit Protec Helmet Company has developed the world’s first ‘tropical’ helmet, and child motorbike helmet standard. The physically disabled are employed to assemble the helmets at the AIP Foundation factory, creating a valuable social model. All profits are put back into the community.

About the Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition (VHWC): VHWC is a group of organizations and businesses dedicated to improving the road traffic safety environment in Vietnam - particularly by promoting public awareness on helmet wearing. Chaired by the AIP Foundation, the VHWC includes: the Asian Development Bank, AusAID, the Danish Embassy, the FIA Foundation, Intel Products Vietnam, Michelin Asia (Singapore), the US Embassy, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization (WHO).