

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**British Embassy Bangkok gives back to its community with a helmet donation at Wat Chaimongkol School**

*28 October, 2013 – Bangkok*

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, the British Embassy Bangkok donated 230 helmets to students and teachers of the Wat Chaimongkol School in Bangkok. The helmet donation launched the British Embassy Bangkok's partnership with the Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation on the *Helmets for Kids* program to increase helmet use, provide road safety and pedestrian education, and ultimately reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries among children. This partnership is the first of its kind in Thailand, and shows a great commitment from the foreign government to its surrounding community.

Wat Chaimongkol is located in the Rong Muang sub-district of Bangkok province. The British Embassy Bangkok is situated near this community and tourists from the United Kingdom commonly pass through this area. The local market is a popular stop among tourists, and local residents are accustomed to interacting with many British visitors. Sponsoring a *Helmets for Kids* program in this location provides an opportunity for the British Embassy to protect the lives of the children living in this area as well as demonstrate its dedication to working for this society to the many visitors that pass through from the UK.

The helmets were donated during a helmet handover celebration attended by H.E. Mr. Mark Kent, British Ambassador to Thailand, H.E. Mr. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Governor of Bangkok, and H.E. Mr. Chatchai Promlert, Director General of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. In celebration of this donation, students organized a dance performance with their new helmets and a road safety fashion show. Founder and President of AIP Foundation, Greig Craft, led a proper helmet use demonstration for students and Country Director of AIP Foundation Thailand, Ratana Winther, spoke about the importance of child helmet use.

“We are so pleased to have this opportunity to help try and improve road safety in our surrounding community,” said British Ambassador Mark Kent. “In Thailand, there are some 50,000 British residents and over 870,000 British visitors per year. In 2011 alone, there were 68,582 road traffic incidents in Thailand that resulted in 14,033 deaths. These affect Thai nationals, expatriates, and visitors so we all must work together to make Thailand's roads safer.”

Despite a national traffic law mandating helmet use for motorcycle drivers and passengers, only 43 percent of motorcyclists wear helmets on Thailand's roads. Among children, helmet use falls to only eight percent. Many families ignore the helmet requirement as road traffic crashes are not widely regarded to be an immediate threat. *Helmets for Kids* engages parents to impress upon them the importance of protecting their children from road injury; and at the same time, educates children on road safety and how wearing helmets can save lives.

“As a society, children are our most valued asset,” said Mrs. Ratana Winther. “Helmet use is a vital everyday step we must all take for ourselves and remember for our children in order to keep them safe.



The program we have organized for this school will increase students' safety as motorcycle passengers and bicyclists, as well as pedestrians.”

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### **About AIP Foundation**

The Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation is a U.S. registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that uses social enterprise, public awareness education, and school-based programs to reduce the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities in developing countries. AIP Foundation has offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Bangkok, Thailand. In 2001, AIP Foundation built its non-profit helmet assembly plant, manufacturing Protec brand tropical helmets in Vietnam. These helmets offer an environmentally appropriate, safe, and affordable option for motorcycle and bicycle users.

In 2009, AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the FIA Foundation and the World Bank, launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative (GHVI), an international coalition with the objective of “putting a helmet on every head in the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).”

### **About British Embassy Bangkok**

British Embassy Bangkok helps sustain and develop the important relationship between the UK and Thailand. It deals with a wide range of political, commercial, security and economic questions of interest to the UK and Thailand as well as visa applications and provide consular services. Over the years, the British Embassy has been calling for improved road safety across Thailand as an increasing number of British tourists come to Thailand each year. This increase brings with it the potential for greater numbers of British nationals to be injured on the roads. The Embassy seeks to raise awareness of the risks to British residents in Thailand and visitors alike.

For media contact:

Ratanawadee H. Winther  
Country Director  
Asia Injury Prevention Foundation

Wiriyaporn Posayanonda (Pam)  
Head of Communications  
British Embassy Bangkok

2, Prima Sathon Building Room 8302  
Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra Road, Yannawa, Sathon  
Bangkok 10120 Thailand  
T: 662-676-0274  
M: 66-(0)85-048-0781  
F: 662-676-0273

14 Wireless Road, Lumpini,  
Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330  
Thailand  
Tel: 662-305-8261  
Mobile: 66-(0)81-922-5135  
Email: [Wiriyaporn.Posayanonda@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Wiriyaporn.Posayanonda@fco.gov.uk)