

Press Release

MICHELLE YEOH FILMS ROAD SAFETY DOCUMENTARY IN CAMBODIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Phnom Penh, 22 February 2011- At age 23, Ken Kary had everything she ever wanted- a husband, a baby girl, and a life in the city. She had moved to Phnom Penh three months earlier with her family, where her husband worked as a motorbike taxi driver. One day, he went to work and never returned. He was hit by a car on his way home at 7 pm; though he owned a helmet, he was not wearing it. Jobless and without support in Phnom Penh, Kary moved back to her hometown- Kom Pung Tong- a rural province where she lives with her mother and daughter.

Cases like Kary's are all too common in Cambodia, where road traffic crashes were the largest non-communicable disease burden in 2010. To promote traffic safety awareness, the FIA Foundation in coordination with the Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation recently filmed a documentary featuring actress and Global Road Safety Ambassador Michelle Yeoh. The documentary demonstrates the burden of traffic fatalities in Cambodia and examines the many interventions being implemented to combat this public health crisis.

“My visit to Cambodia aims to show that these deaths and injuries can be prevented”, said Michelle Yeoh. “They can be prevented by simple acts like always wearing a motorcycle helmet. This year, as we launch the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, we should be more determined than ever to keep everyone, and especially our children, safe from harm”.

In filming the documentary, Yeoh interviewed high-ranking government officials, visited road traffic crash victims in hospitals, and participated in school-based road safety education programs. Yeoh met with H.E. Sar Kheng Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister and H.E. Tram Iv Tek, Minister of Public Works and Transport, to advocate for quick passage of a law mandating helmets for motorcycle passengers. Currently, the law only requires motorcycle drivers to wear helmets; however, helmets have been proven to reduce the likelihood of death from a road traffic crash by 42 percent and the likelihood of injury by 69 percent.

“In 2010, we lost 1,709 Cambodians to road traffic crashes. We cannot afford this level of loss,” said H.E. Sar Kheng Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister. “Road traffic crashes are an enormous burden on our country's economic, health care, and social welfare systems, in addition to the extreme suffering of the victims and their families.”

Yeoh also visited Sampov Meas Primary School, a target school for the Cambodia Helmet Vaccine Initiative's *Helmets for Kids* program, which combines helmet donation with road safety education. Yeoh trained

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students and teachers on proper helmet use and safe road behavior and demonstrated traffic lessons on the school's interactive traffic safety corner.

“This documentary for the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety will highlight not only the tremendous burden of road traffic crashes, but also the inspirational stories of people who are working to make our roads safer,” said Saul Billingsley, Deputy Director General of the FIA Foundation. The Cambodia Helmet Vaccine Initiative – a coalition comprised of AIP Foundation, Ministry of Interior, National Road Safety Committee, ANZ Royal Bank (Cambodia) Ltd., and Total Cambodge – was launched in 2010 in Phnom Penh. Since then, the Initiative has implemented school-based programs, public awareness campaigns, and helmet use research. Preliminary data from helmet use observations conducted in January 2011 show that helmet use is extremely low among motorbike passengers, who are not required by law to wear helmets. In Phnom Penh, passenger helmet use rates were recorded between 8 and 12 percent during the daytime and between 6 and 8 percent at nighttime.

“We see helmets as a ‘vaccine’ against traumatic brain injuries, which are the leading cause of death from motorbike crashes,” said Mirjam Sidik, Executive Director of AIP Foundation. “We hope this documentary inspires viewers to encourage their families and loved ones to wear helmets and serves as a catalyst to change social norms.”

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About AIP Foundation

The Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP Foundation) is a U.S. registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that uses public-private partnerships, education, and school-based helmet programs to reduce the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities in developing countries.

In 2009, AIP Foundation launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative with partners FIA Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, and the Inter-American Development Bank. The Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative is an international coalition with the objective of “putting a helmet on every head in the Decade of Action for Road Safety.” The Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative operates in developing countries according to its five pillars: public awareness education, technical assistance, research, targeted programs, and helmet provision. Cambodia is one of the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative's target countries for program implementation.

For more information about the AIP Foundation and the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative, please visit www.asiainjury.org; www.helmetvaccine.org

About FIA Foundation

The FIA Foundation is an independent UK registered charity which manages and supports an international program of activities promoting road safety, environmental protection and sustainable mobility, as well as funding specialist motor sport safety research. Its global Make Roads Safe campaign led the call for a UN Decade of Action for road safety and the FIA Foundation is working closely with the World Health Organization to support the global launch of the Decade on 11 May.

For more information about the FIA Foundation, please visit: www.fiafoundation.org; www.makeroadssafe.org.

About Michelle Yeoh

Michelle Yeoh is an internationally renowned actor and star of movies including 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon', 'Memoirs of a Geisha', 'Sunshine' and the James Bond movie 'Tomorrow Never Dies'. Since 2007, Michelle Yeoh has been the global ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign. She has travelled around the world discovering the extent of the road safety epidemic and calling on the international community to recognize the issue, and to take urgent action to reduce the traffic deaths and injuries in developing countries.

Michelle led the campaign's 'Call for a Decade of Action' which resulted in the UN General Assembly proclaiming the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 in March 2010. Two previous documentaries featuring Michelle's work for road safety have been shown by the BBC.

"Over the past few years I have traveled in many countries and seen the terrible impact that a lack of basic road safety can have on people's lives. A child is killed or maimed on the roads every thirty seconds. These tragedies are so sad, and so unnecessary, because we have the ability to prevent this. It is time for the talking to stop. It is time for real action to make roads safe."
-- Michelle Yeoh, Make Roads Safe Global Ambassador