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PRESS RELEASE

Ho Chi Minh City Begins Enhanced Enforcement of Children Wearing Motorcycle Helmets

Ho Chi Minh City, 11 September 2012 – Ho Chi Minh City's (HCMC) Provincial Traffic Safety Committee and Traffic Police (PC67) have launched the next stage in a national initiative to reduce the high number of children killed or seriously injured on Viet Nam's roads.

Part of a three-year programme to increase motorcycle helmet wearing in Vietnamese children (“Children **also** need a helmet”), this new campaign is the latest activity in a partnership between the National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC), the Road and Rail Traffic Police Department and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the non-profit, Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation.

Starting from today, with the support of WHO, dedicated units of the traffic police will commence enhanced helmet wearing enforcement operations in five municipality districts, targeting school-aged children who ride as passengers on motorcycles. In addition to enforcement activities, police officers will also be distributing leaflets and flyers about helmet and motorcycle safety standards as well as vouchers for free helmets.

“Legislation mandates that children from age six and above must wear a helmet when travelling on a motorcycle. Parents or adults carrying a child without a helmet are liable for a fine of VND100,000 – 200,000” said Mr. Nguyen Trong Thai, Chief Secretariat of the NTSC.

“Enhanced enforcement is one of the most effective measures to increase helmet wearing in accordance with the law. To achieve maximum impact, we will be implementing enforcement near schools particularly during the times when parents are dropping off or picking up their children” said Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tuong from the HCMC Traffic Safety Committee.

“Latest helmet wearing results from July 2012 show that whilst more than 77%¹ of adult riders and passengers in HCMC are wearing helmets correctly, only 32%² of children are helmeted” said Dr Takeshi Kasai, WHO Representative to Viet Nam. “Through this programme we hope to increase this to at least 60% of children by the end of December 2012 and, in time, to see this intervention decrease the number of children killed or seriously injured,” added Dr Kasai.

Enforcement operations over the next four months will also be supported and supplemented by public information and social marketing campaigns including TV documentaries, billboards and flyers. “Parents are often unaware that helmets can dramatically decrease the likelihood that their child will be injured or killed in the event of a crash,” said AIP Foundation Executive Director Mirjam Sidik. “We want to create messages that confront parents with the tragic reality of what they risk by not insisting that their child wear a helmet.”

Following the successful piloting of this programme in HCMC, partners anticipate scaling up to include Ha Noi and Da Nang within the next six months.

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For more information please contact:

Ms. Phung Thi Thu Phuong , Communications Officer, World Health Organization, Viet Nam Country Office. Tel: 84-4-943 3734/5/6, Email: Phungt@wpro.who.int

Nguyen Quang Tuan, Program Coordinator, Asia Injury Prevention Foundation, Phone: (84-8) 6299 1409 (ext. 107), Cell: 098 352 2633, Email: tuan.nguyen@aipf-vietnam.org

¹ 77.5% of adult riders and passengers are wearing a helmet, however an estimated 23.5% are wearing substandard helmets

² 31.8% of child riders and passengers are wearing a helmet however an estimated 9.3% are wearing substandard helmets

