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MŨ BẢO HIỂM

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“Children also need a helmet”- Setting the Facts Straight on Child Helmet Use in Vietnam
Hanoi, November 2nd, 2011

From November 2nd to 30th, 50,000 flyers refuting widespread myths about child helmet wearing will be distributed in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Danang. This marks the launch of a public awareness campaign focused on child motorcycle helmet use by the National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC), the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the National Traffic Police (C67), and the World Health Organization (WHO). The social marketing campaign is being implemented by Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation and will be accompanied by strengthened police enforcement, supported by WHO.

“The distribution of flyers is only the first part of a much larger child motorcycle helmet campaign,” explains Mirjam Sidik, Executive Director of AIP Foundation. “This information dissemination introduces Phase One, entitled ‘Children also need a helmet’. Phase One will also include workshops to raise awareness among community leaders and parents, and powerful social marketing messages featured in television spots, on billboards and posters, and at a community event. This campaign is based on the fact that wearing a helmet is one of the most effective road safety interventions, reducing the risk of head injury and death by 69% and 42% respectively¹”.

“Phase One is the beginning of a three year campaign which aims to increase motorcycle helmet wearing among children in our target areas,” says Mr. Than Van Thanh, Chief Secretariat of NTSC. “Road traffic accidents claim more than 11,000 lives and seriously injure over 10,000 people every year in Vietnam. The vast majority of victims are motorcycle riders and their passengers, which includes a large number of children, who are the future of our country². This situation is distressing to the Government of Vietnam and the NTSC, and it is detrimental to the development of the country. We are dedicated to effectively lowering the numbers of casualties, particularly of children, through this national campaign.”

While most Vietnamese adults wear helmets, in compliance with the national legislation mandating helmets for motorcycle riders, child helmet use rates are dangerously low. Decree 34 requires children to wear helmets starting at age six, and involves a fine for parents whose

¹ Liu BC, et al. “Helmets for preventing injury in motorcycle riders.” *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. (2008)

² National Traffic Safety Committee (2010)

children are non-compliant. However, recent observations set the national child helmet wearing rate at 30%, and as low as 16% in some areas³.

“On January 24, 2011, the Vietnamese Government instigated Resolution No. 88/NQ-CP to strengthen the key measures being taken to ensure traffic safety and order,” says Mr. Tran Son Ha, Deputy Director of the Road and Railway Traffic Police Department (C67). “We plan to reinforce traffic surveillance and patrols, to make sure that adults who are riding with children not wearing helmets in our target locations will be strictly fined”.

“The Ministry of Education and Training has a responsibility to ensure that parents across Vietnam are equipped with correct information to protect their children,” explains Mr. Duong Van Ba, Deputy Director of the Department of Student Affairs, MoET. “For example, many well-meaning parents incorrectly believe that helmets will harm their children’s health. The truth is that this is just a rumor, not based in fact, yet it has prevented thousands of parents from putting helmets on their children”. The flyers being distributed this week hope to dispel this dangerous myth, among several others.

The importance of helmet wearing has become an international issue. In May 2011, Vietnam celebrated the launch of the United Nations’ Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), and this child helmet campaign is committed to achieving the Decade’s goals. Michelin Vietnam is the exclusive entrepreneur partner sponsoring part of the campaign. “Michelin Vietnam was honored to support this campaign and its message,” says Mr. Lionel Cadeau, Managing Director. “Safety is one of Michelin’s top priorities and contribution to social community activities is also in our charter. We believe that enhancing traffic safety fosters economic development dramatically”.

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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 works to reduce the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities in developing countries. In 2009, AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the FIA Foundation and

³ Vietnam National University. *Survey on public opinions on child helmet use “Head safe. Helmet on” Project.* (March 2011)

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)’”. For more information about AIP Foundation, please visit www.asiainjury.org.

Annex: Content of the flyers being distributed this week

Myth: Accidents don't happen on short trips, so it's unnecessary to put a helmet on my child.

Fact: Most accidents happen just a short distance from the driver's home. Close to your home or on short trips you feel confident and have a false sense of safety, therefore you take risks that can cause accidents. If you don't put a helmet on your child's head, they are at a higher risk of being injured from an accident.

Myth: I am an excellent driver, so I will not have an accident.

Fact: Accidents happen to even the best drivers. In addition, someone driving near you may be a bad driver and cause the accident. Be prepared; put a helmet on your child's head.

Myth: It takes too long to put a helmet on my child's head.

Fact: It takes 20 seconds to put a helmet on and strap it.

Myth: Helmets for children are too expensive, and I don't know if they are of high quality.

Fact: For 150,000 VND you can get a good quality helmet that will protect your child's head from injuries if you have an accident. There are currently cheap helmets on sale at the market, but these are of sub-standard quality. Make sure you buy a certified helmet so that your child is properly protected.

Myth: Helmets are too heavy for my child's head and neck; they will hurt my child.

Fact: A good quality helmet weighs less than 300 grams. A number of scientific research studies have shown that there is no link between helmets and increased neck injuries in children.

Three steps to putting on a helmet:

Step 1: Identify the front and back of the helmet. Put the helmet stably on the head so that the front curve is placed neatly above the eyebrows.

Step 2: Adjust the retention system, pulling the straps under the earlobes.

Step 3: Buckle the chin strap securely enough under the chin. The wearer can loosen or tighten the retention system and chin strap at his or her will.