



**BỘ GTVT**

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**MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT LEADERSHIP CALLS FOR COLLABORATION TO INCREASE CHILD HELMET WEARING IN 2012**

*December 12, 2011- Ha Noi*

The Ministry of Transport's leadership held a workshop "*Assessing 2011 achievements and planning on 2012 activities on child helmet use*" in Ha Noi on December 12<sup>th</sup> to solicit international stakeholders and government authorities to improve child helmet wearing in Vietnam.

The need for this workshop was demonstrated by research findings from the Viet Nam National University, which reported low rates of child helmet use, reaching as low as 16 percent in some locations. Moreover, their findings showed that due to widespread misinformation, many parents see helmet use as a threat to their child's safety. Twenty-six percent of parents believe that child helmets have negative health effects for children, such as causing spinal injury. Parents also identify inconvenience, lack of affordability, and concerns about appearance as reasons for not putting a helmet on their child. Significantly, the younger a child is, the less likely he or she is to wear a helmet.

The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Transport (MOT) and the United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF), and facilitated by the Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation, to review the efforts made by various agencies regarding child helmet use in 2011 and the challenges encountered, as well as sharing plans for 2012.

The workshop opened with a speech by the MOT leadership, with a direct and straightforward request. Vice Minister Le Manh Hung emphasized: "*I would call for your openness in assessing the challenges and lessons learned over the past year and suggesting new approaches to implementing communications efforts effectively in the year to come with a view to enhancing child helmet wearing rate.*"

Echoing this request, Ms. Lotta Sylwander, UNICEF Viet Nam Representative, highlighted the vulnerability of children on the roads: "*The sight of children wearing helmets as they travel with their parents is rare, which is of genuine concern as motorcycles are the main form of family transport in Viet Nam, and that road traffic injuries are the second leading cause of injury related mortality for children.*" She also urged: "*Promotion of child helmet use requires multi-sectoral involvement. Awareness raising and legal enforcement are the two critical areas for promoting it.*"

Ms. Lotte Brondum, from the AIP Foundation, highlighted that all heads should be protected: "*If an adult head needs a helmet, then surely a child's head does too,*" she stated. "*There is no lower age limit on which children should wear helmets to afford them protection against injury when riding on a motorcycle.*"

The AIP Foundation also spoke of their three-year child helmet campaign entitled 'Children **also** need a helmet' in partnership with national and international stakeholders. The aim of the campaign is to put a helmet on every child's head over the next three years, by making non-helmet wearing socially unacceptable. Campaign activities include flyer distribution, agency workshops and family events across HaNoi, HCMC and Da Nang to impart correct information and refute the myths on child helmet use. The next stage of activities will focus on behavior change through powerful social marketing messages featured in television spots and on billboards and posters.

Next, several leading members of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA), and the Ministry of Public Security (C67) also went on to speak about their work to address child helmet use.

According to a report from the Ministry of Education and Training, challenges include lack of school management's attention to child helmet use and inadequate coordination with parents in this regard. In addition, traffic safety education in general is subject to a number of constraints such as insufficient teaching time, absence of specialised traffic safety teachers and lack of funds for educational extracurricular activities for the students.

MOLISA representative spoke of other challenges regarding child helmet use such as correct child helmet wearing and quality of child helmets.

In addition to the overview of the present situation, the workshop served to compile some of the plans that are going to take effect in the next year.

This will be supported by C67's enforcement efforts. According to Colonel Tran Son, police forces will strengthen patrols and strict fines to parents who violate child helmet regulations as promulgated in Decree 34/2010/ND-CP and Resolution No. 88/ND-CP of the Government.

UNICEF Viet Nam's Goodwill Ambassador, supermodel Ms. Vu Nguyen Ha Anh, also spoke at the workshop: *"It is an honor for me to participate in this workshop, and I hope that through my involvement, we can highlight these issues in a fun and approachable way to young people, who would not otherwise take an interest in understanding or complying with the law."*

After their speeches, ministry officials and the UNICEF Viet Nam Goodwill Ambassador placed helmets on ten children's heads to symbolize their collaborative commitment to child safety on Viet Nam's roads.

During the 'Question and Answer' session, representatives from local government offices, journalists, and teachers and parents from Hanoian schools were able to ask the leading officials questions. A teacher commented as the workshop ended: *"We are confronted with this issue on a daily basis at our schools. Participating in this workshop has renewed our motivation to commit to educating children and parents, and encourage schools across the country to do the same."*

For more information, please contact:

Ministry of Transport:

UNICEF

Chloé Denavit  
Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
AIP Foundation  
Phone: (84-8) 6299 1409 (ext. 113)  
Email: [chloe.denavit@aipf-vietnam.org](mailto:chloe.denavit@aipf-vietnam.org)