

PRESS RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNOR-GENERAL SUPPORTS VIETNAM'S LAUNCH OF THE DECADE OF ACTION FOR ROAD SAFETY

For immediate release

10 May, 2011- Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of Australia, supported the UN's Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) in Vietnam at a *Helmets for Kids* event on 10 May. This is one of many activities hosted by the Ministry of Transport, the AIP Foundation, the WHO and UNICEF to launch the Decade in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government's objective in the Decade of Action for Road Safety is to reduce the traffic fatality rate by 38 percent, from 13 per 100,000 population to 8 per 100,000 population.

AIP Foundation has implemented a communication campaign featuring ten celebrities promoting road safety to raise awareness in advance of the launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The campaign includes a television commercial, billboards, and news and online media coverage in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Danang, with the message: "Together, we can save millions of lives." AIP Foundation will also promote road safety at the grassroots level through community-based programs including street walks, photo exhibitions, and activities at traffic safety parks.

"Road safety is an issue that affects everyone, every day. However, it does not receive nearly the same attention as other major public health issues," said Mirjam Sidik, Executive Director of AIP Foundation. "The Decade of Action for Road Safety is a unique opportunity to highlight the devastating impact of road traffic crashes on both the individual and the nation. 11,000 people die every year due to road traffic crashes in Vietnam. This level of loss is unacceptable."

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce spoke at a *Helmets for Kids* launch ceremony, sponsored by the Australian Embassy and AIP Foundation, at the Mai Dich Primary School in Hanoi. "The Vietnamese Government, the Australian Embassy, the AIP Foundation and other partners have made a commitment to increase the number of children wearing helmets to 80% over the next three years," said Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce. "During this time it will be critical to educate parents and families about wearing helmets, not just sometimes, but every time the family is travelling on a motorbike."

Through *Helmets for Kids*, the Australian Embassy donated helmets and road safety education to 924 students and 54 teachers. Studies show that wearing a helmet on a motorbike reduces the likelihood of serious brain injury by 69 percent and death by 42 percent.

The Mai Dich primary school is located in a high density traffic area, where children are vulnerable to road traffic crashes during rush hour, when they are commuting to and from school. Traffic safety infrastructure - such as stoplights and zebra crossings - is sparse, putting children at greater risk of road traffic crashes. The majority of students at Mai Dich primary school commute to school via motorbike, and 85 percent of these students do not wear helmets, mainly due to cost barriers.

For the editor

For media inquiries, please contact:

Megan Bailey
Communications and Outreach Coordinator
AIP Foundation
Mobile: 0912139798
Email: megan.bailey@aipf-vietnam.org

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, 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, V-SPEC, which manufactures Protec brand tropical helmets. These helmets offer an environmentally appropriate, safe and affordable option for motorbike and bicycle users.

In 2009, AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the FIA Foundation and the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative, 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.