

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng and Michelle Yeoh encourage passenger helmet use**

*9 December, 2014—Toul Svay Prey II Commune, Chamka Morn District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia*

Today, Michelle Yeoh, celebrity road safety ambassador, and Cambodian Government officials came together to support the donation of 6,652 helmets to students and teachers of six schools in Phnom Penh. The helmet donation held at Toul Svay Prey Primary School was organized by the Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation, with the support of USAID's Development Innovation Ventures (USAID-DIV) as part of the "Head Safe. Helmet On." project. The project aims to increase helmet wearing rates, advocate for legislation to mandate and enforce helmet use for passengers, including children, and implement school-based helmet safety education programs in classrooms.

Over 3,000 attendees, including partners from the FIA Foundation/Road Safety Fund, The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The UPS Foundation, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) attended the helmet donation ceremony. His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng; Director General Mr. Saul Billingsley of FIA Foundation; Ms. Michelle Yeoh, Actress and Global Road Safety Ambassador; Dr. David Sleet, Associate Director for Science of CDC; Mr. Jeff McLean, General Manager of UPS Vietnam; Mr. Sean Callahan, USAID Cambodia Deputy Mission Director; and Mr. Greig Craft, President of AIP Foundation, were among the attendees.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng presented Cambodian Government Medals to supporters in testimony of the government's gratitude for their collaboration and contribution to road safety efforts in Cambodia.

"Besides the loss of properties and lives of people, road crashes also cause many social problems in Cambodia such as disabilities and older persons living without support, and severe negative consequences on the socio-economic and national policy of the Cambodian government for promoting people's safety, social welfare and poverty reduction," His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng said. "To address these issues, the government has drafted a new road traffic law to ensure stringent law enforcement in order to reduce road crashes and their consequences as much as possible. The draft law also mandates motorcycle passengers, including children, wear helmets, and has recently been approved by the Cambodian Government and legislature. Today's helmet handover ceremony is an important activity and is aligned with the 2011-2020 Decade of Action for Road Safety that focuses on preventing the risks causing by road traffic crashes through the promotion of helmet wearing when travelling on a motorcycle."

Actress Michelle Yeoh first joined the Make Roads Safe campaign in 2008 and led the Call for Decade of Action ahead of the first UN Conference on road safety in November 2009. This is Ms. Yeoh's second visit promoting road safety in Cambodia. At the ceremony, Ms. Yeoh instructed students on proper helmet use and urged all to wear their helmets. "Although all road users are at risk on the road, motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable. In Cambodia, they make up the majority of road crash victims. Helmet-wearing is the first step—the essential step—towards preventing traffic injuries and fatalities, especially among our children. Please make sure that all motorcycle riders and passengers always wear a helmet."

Prior to today's event, AIP Foundation held training courses for teachers and parents in order to ensure the project's sustainability into the future. Throughout the school year, the project will include additional road safety activities along with helmet monitoring over the two years.

"The 'Head Safe. Helmet On.' project aims to increase passenger helmet rates in targeted communes to 30% within the first year, and to 80% in the second year," said Mr. Sean Callahan, USAID Cambodia Deputy Mission Director. "Such an increase in helmet-wearing will prevent thousands of unnecessary road crash injuries and fatalities and save Cambodia millions of dollars."

"A reported 1,950 road traffic deaths and more than 14,000 injuries occur each year on Cambodia's roads.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, this strong coalition of international and Cambodian partners is dedicated to making Cambodia's roads safer. The FIA Foundation has been supporting AIP Foundation since 2008 and is proud to be part of the work being done in Cambodia. Today's donation is an important drive towards fewer road deaths nationally and globally and, in combination with the new Road Traffic Law, a great example for the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. We are eager to see the progress that will be made over the next two years and beyond," said Mr. Saul Billingsley, Director General of FIA Foundation.

"The low rate of passengers on motorcycles with helmets is shocking: about only 9%,"<sup>2</sup> said Mr. Jeff McLean, General Manager of UPS Vietnam. "It is visible simply by looking at the busy roads here in Phnom Penh; the fact that many of the passengers are children makes this statistic all the more distressing. The enactment of the motorcycle passenger helmet law is only the beginning; we must also support its enforcement and education throughout the country. I look forward to the day when our fleet can look at the roads and see all passengers, including children, wearing helmets."

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### **About the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation**

The Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low- and middle-income countries. For more than 15 years AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit [www.asiainjury.org](http://www.asiainjury.org) or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

### **About the "Head Safe. Helmet On." Project**

"Head Safe. Helmet On." is a two-year project, sponsored by [USAID-DIV](https://www.usaid.gov/) with additional financial and in-kind support from the FIA Foundation/Road Safety Fund, The UPS Foundation, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to increase passenger helmet use in Cambodia. AIP Foundation aims to improve nationwide helmet wearing awareness through the project by providing school children and teachers with quality helmets and road safety education, developing public awareness campaigns, and advocating for the enforcement of the passenger helmet law.

### **For more information:**

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<sup>1</sup> Cambodia National Road Safety Committee Road Crash and Victim Information System. *2013 Annual Report: Road Crashes and Casualties in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 23, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2013.