

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Danish Ambassador rides from Bangkok to Phnom Penh to raise money for child helmets**

*February 17, 2012 - Phnom Penh*

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, motorcyclists including Danish Ambassador to Cambodia Mikael Hemniti Winther arrived in Phnom Penh after driving from Bangkok in the Go4 Charity Ride. This trip raised funds for a 7 month school-based road safety program called *Helmets for Kids* which is being run by the non-profit AIP Foundation. A launching ceremony will congratulate the bikers and kick-off the school program.

With 1,816 deaths on the road in 2010, the numbers of road traffic crashes in Cambodia is swiftly becoming a major cause for concern. Particularly alarming is the fact that 72 percent of crashes are caused by motorcycles, yet preliminary research shows that only about 8 percent of passengers—including children— wear helmets.

“The results of this phenomenon will continue to be disastrous to the country’s youth, and cost Cambodiaan estimated 279 million USD per year, if nothing is done,” said Mirjam Sidik, AIP Foundation’s Executive Director. “The Go4 Charity Ride is one example of how successful a partnership between private sector firms, individual activities, and non-profit organizations can be.”

The government of Cambodia also endorsed child helmet use by joining representatives from these groups at the *Helmets for Kids* launching event held at the Hotel Cambodiana. Road safety is one of the government’s main priorities, particularly in the second year of the United Nations’ Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).

“I would like to deeply thank the Kingdom of Denmark and Go4 Charity Riders for sponsoring this program,” said H.E Poeu Maly, Deputy Secretary General of the National Road Safety Committee. “This is a charity act which shows the attention and support earned by the Cambodian government and the National Road Safety Committee as role models in road injury prevention. The government’s efforts seek to cut down the number deaths resulting from head injuries in accordance with the 10 year National Road Safety Action Plan (2011-2020), which aims to reduce fatalities and increase wearing helmet rate to 100% by 2020”.



"We are very happy to hear that the Royal Government of Cambodia is preparing to adopt the law requiring compulsory helmet wearing among passengers, including children" said H.E Mikael Hemniti Winther, Danish Ambassador to Cambodia and Thailand. "In the meantime, we encourage Cambodian people, especially parents, not to wait for the passage of the law. They should immediately start making their children wear helmets whenever they are on motorcycles or bicycles."

Located along dangerous National Road 2, the students of Prey Sandek School risk their lives daily to get to school. Thanks to the support of Go4 Charity Ride organizers and participants, 484 primary school students and 31 teachers and staff members will receive donated helmets free of cost, and be taught valuable road safety lessons by AIP Foundation staff. Teachers and parents are also approached in the *Helmets for Kids* program, through educational materials and teacher trainings. In addition, the school's fences will be painted with images to remind parents to put helmets on their students. Other road safety themed activities will be conducted outside of the classroom, such as essay writing, helmet decorating, and drawing contests.

"These projects, conducted throughout the school year, will keep students engaged and excited," explained Mr. Yem Sokha, Principal of Prey Sandek School. "By teaching adults and children about the consequences of neglecting to wear a helmet on the road, all of us are truly impacting the rest of their lives, and in fact, this entire generation, one school at a time."

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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 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, 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).’” In May 2010, H.E Mr. Im Sethy, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, High Representative of Deputy Prime Minister H.E Mr. Sar Kheng, Minister of Interior launched the Cambodia Helmet Vaccine Initiative (CHVI) in Phnom Penh.