

PRESS RELEASE

Dr. Jill Biden, Second Lady of the United States, promotes road safety during her visit to Vietnam

19 July, 2015 – Hanoi, Vietnam

Second Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden touched down at Hanoi’s Noi Bai airport to be greeted on the tarmac by Ambassador Ted Osius and spouse Mr. Clayton Bond, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Greig Craft, President of AIP Foundation. Dr. Biden’s visit to Vietnam is part of her four-country visit to Asia.

The main focus of Dr. Biden’s visit was to engage government and civil society partners on issues related to women’s economic empowerment, including educational opportunities for women and girls. She was joined by Catherine Russell, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues; Scot Marciel, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and Christie Vilsack, USAID Senior Advisor for International Education.

A group of five children were on-hand to receive motorcycle helmets from Dr. Biden carrying the 20th Anniversary logo of normalization of U.S.–Vietnam diplomatic relations. The children, as well as their disabled parents, come from Soc Son District, a disadvantaged area of Hanoi where AIP Foundation recruits workers for its social enterprise, Protec helmet factory. Protec, a pioneer of the lightweight “tropical” helmet, reinvests its profits to provide quality helmets and road safety education to students from at-risk schools. On the occasion, Greig Craft presented Dr. Biden with a special commemorative helmet which will be displayed in the White House.

Ambassador Ted Osius underlined strong support for the new Public–Private Partnership (PPP) between the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and AIP Foundation, with key sponsorship from U.S. companies. Launched in May, the PPP will distribute a total of 25,000 child helmets in 15 rural provinces during the 20th anniversary year. The U.S. Embassy and AIP Foundation together seek to prevent child injury and death from riding motorcycles without helmets.

Currently, road crashes are the second leading cause of death among children in Vietnam. Helmets are proven to reduce the risk of serious injury by 69% and the risk of death by 42% in a crash.

According to World Health Organization, more than 21,000 people per year are estimated to die in road crashes in Vietnam, most of them motorcycle victims, and more than 433,000 Vietnamese are injured every year. Right now, most adults in Vietnam are wearing helmets, but only 68% of children in the major metropolitan areas do.

“By encouraging more children to wear helmets, and providing children and communities with education on road safety, AIP Foundation and the U.S. Embassy believe that we can help turn those numbers around”, said Greig Craft.

Craft’s goal is to donate 2.5 million child helmets to other developing countries within the next 5 years.



Greig Craft (L), Dr. Jill Biden (C) and Ambassador Ted Osius (R) greet US 2nd Lady on tarmac at Hanoi, Vietnam

About the 20th Anniversary

The 20th anniversary of normalized U.S.-Vietnam relations marks an opportunity to further deepen our two countries' 2013 Comprehensive Partnership. Its goal is to contribute to peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity in each country, in the region, and in the world. The recent history of US partnerships with India and Indonesia teaches us that moving beyond bilateral engagement to broader cooperation is necessary and healthy for a maturing relationship. Economically, annual trade volume increased from less than \$500 million in 1995 to \$35 billion today. The growth in US imports of Vietnamese goods has been faster than growth of our exports to Vietnam. With negotiations on the TransPacific Partnership (TPP) nearing conclusion, we hope that Vietnam's participation in this gold-standard comprehensive trade agreement will lead to significant changes in management of the economy and new trade and investment opportunities as barriers fall. Vietnam's membership in TPP simultaneous with its continued progress toward greater transparency and respect for rule of law, may mean that the United States could become Vietnam's number one investor, duplicating its role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a whole.

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a US 501(c)(3) 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 road crash prevention programs across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit www.aip-foundation.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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