

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Safety Delivered* advocates for government enforcement on helmet quality in Vietnam**

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In order to implement the Prime Minister's Directive 04 / CT-TTg dated January 19, 2018 on accelerating the application of solutions to improve the effectiveness of legal regulations on mandatory helmet wearing for motorbike drivers, motorcyclists, and electric bicyclists, AIP Foundation and the National Traffic Safety Committee co-hosted a program mid-term review forum. The event will discuss strategies to improve the use of quality helmets, with the engagement and support of national and local government representatives, road safety and public health experts, and private sector stakeholders, including helmet manufacturers in Vietnam.

It was proven in nearly all countries that wearing a quality helmet can reduce the chance of death by 42% and of serious injury by 69%. Poor quality helmets lack many of the critical components, which play a role in saving the wearers' life—such as the energy-absorbing foam lining that reduces the impact in a crash. However, the easy accessibility and low cost of low-quality helmets, in combination with low road user awareness, can encourage individuals to opt for a sub-standard helmet over a quality helmet on the market. Although Viet Nam has successfully maintained the helmet wearing rate quite high for years, sub-standard helmet use is still one of the underlying problems in following the Government's regulations on helmet wearing. As mentioned in Decree No.4, "production, trading and using helmets that do not meet national quality standard, fake helmets, cap helmet are still an on-going and un-anticipated issues. This issue has caused difficulties in regulation and enforcement for government agencies.

A total 540 child and adult motorcycle helmets were collected and exchanged in Ho Chi Minh City and Thai Nguyen Province for the quality research study, conducted in partnership between AIP Foundation and the Hanoi University of Public Health through the *Safety Delivered* program, supported by The UPS Foundation. 25.9% of the surveyed helmets were identified as "cap helmets," which lack the foam lining needed to adequately protect wearers' heads. By law, these cap helmets do not meet the satisfactory quality requirements as stated in National Technical Regulation - QCVN2: 2008/BKHCN (National Technical Regulation on helmet for motorcyclists.) Furthermore, the study found that only 10.5% of helmets in a representative sample of collected helmets were able to successfully pass impact absorption tests followed to regulation QCVN2: 2008/BKHCN. In other words, 89.5% of surveyed helmets worn are sub-standard helmets that would fail to significantly reduce the chance of brain injury or skull fracture of their users in a road crash.

The forum also featured guest speakers from the government and from the medical field to share their perspectives on the issue of helmet quality, ranging from its implications for traumatic brain injuries to

the process of investigating road crashes involving sub-standard helmets. Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Training, the National Traffic Police, the media, and a quality testing center also facilitated group discussions on strategies for improving quality helmet use. The key findings of these discussions will help inform the development of action plans to improve helmet quality in Ho Chi Minh City and Thai Nguyen Province, with the potential of scaling up to the national level in the future.

Mr. Khat Viet Hung, Executive Vice Chairman of National Traffic Safety Committee, stated, “The research findings mentioned above shows that poor-quality helmet usage leads to a higher risk of fatalities in road crashes. Although the number of helmets tested is low, the research can still reveal the quality of helmets on market today. This raises a question on the effectiveness of our work on supervising and managing protective equipment. In addition, the research also serves as evidence for government agencies to further investigate and closely monitor policies to improve their work on the quality of motorcycle, bicycle and electric bike helmets in Viet Nam.”

The mid-term review forum also covered the achievements of the first half of the 2019-2020 *Safety Delivered* program year. *Safety Delivered* has expanded to address the issue of quality helmets, building upon a partnership between AIP Foundation and The UPS Foundation to increase child helmet use in Vietnam since 2011. *Safety Delivered* successfully distributed 10,942 helmets and implemented educational road safety activities and awareness campaigns at program primary schools in 2019. As a result, helmet-wearing rates among students were observed to have increased from 23% to 77% at 7 primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City and from 27% to 82% at 11 primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province.

Russell Reed, Managing Director of UPS Thailand and Vietnam, shared, “*Safety Delivered* has made much progress in encouraging helmet use in Vietnam, thanks to the efforts by AIP Foundation and National Traffic Safety Committee. It is important that the conversation also focuses on the quality of helmets used. We look forward to further progress in educating students while on the roads and continued research efforts to protect broader communities.”

Mirjam Sidik, CEO of AIP Foundation stated, “Students and their parents deserve to feel safer and more confident when they travel on the roads. We can achieve this by improving access to road safety education, but we must also work together to ensure they have access to quality equipment on the market. Through our research and advocacy efforts, we aim to ensure that choosing quality helmets is the norm in Vietnam, protecting vulnerable road users on every journey they take.”

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About Safety Delivered

Safety Delivered is supported by The UPS Foundation and implemented by AIP Foundation in Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The program aims to reduce road crash injuries and fatalities among vulnerable motorcyclists by working with young drivers to improve their driving behaviors and by increasing child helmet use.

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For 20 years, AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit www.aip-foundation.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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