

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Empowering Safety* program launches in Ho Chi Minh City to save vulnerable young lives on the road**

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam - December 26, 2022

Small steps lead to big changes, and this year, Vietnam is celebrating 15 years since the successful passing of the 2007 helmet-wearing law. Building on the legacy of that achievement with local and national government partners, we know that just wearing a helmet is not enough. As a community, we must take every step to ensure that people have access to quality helmets that are affordable.

As part of the launch of the *Empowering Safety* program, supported by the Puma Energy Foundation, AIP Foundation in collaboration with the Traffic Safety Committee and the Department of Education and Training of Ho Chi Minh City, is hosting a helmet handover ceremony at Tran Khai Nguyen High School. Grade 12 students at the school will receive 750 newly produced ECE 22.06 United Nations Standard helmets. Defining our next step forward, these are revolutionary, safe, and affordable helmets meeting UN safety standards.

Safe and Affordable Helmet Initiative in Vietnam

This partnership between the Puma Energy Foundation and AIP Foundation contributes to the global Safe and Affordable Helmet Initiative in Vietnam implemented by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and Protec. This initiative tackles the prevalence of non-standard low-quality helmets in low and middle-income countries while making safety more accessible in these countries by creating an affordable helmet that is adapted to local traffic environments.

"It is very exciting to see and participate in such a prestigious global 'Empowering Safety' initiative funded by the Puma Energy Foundation taking place here in Ho Chi Minh City. The Traffic Safety Committee is highly dedicated to ensuring that youth across the city have access to quality helmets that will protect them in a crash. With the meaningful and practical program objectives, we hope to see this initiative expand to more schools across our city," shares Mr Nguyen Vu Hanh Phuc, Head of Chancery, the Traffic Safety Committee of Ho Chi Minh City.

UN ECE 22.06 Standard helmets make safety accessible

Empowering Safety program aims at increasing quality helmet use in high-need communities through the development and distribution of United Nations-standard ECE 22.06 helmets. Together with Protec, AIP Foundation's social enterprise factory and with co-funding from the FIA and the Puma Energy Foundation, the ECE 22.06 standard helmets are being produced in Vietnam.

Compared to the Vietnamese standard, ECE 22.06 standard helmets can absorb higher values of energy that occur during an impact. The ECE 22.06 helmets are designed with geometries and materials with enhanced mechanical properties. The ability of the helmets to absorb more energy leads to a significant reduction of the energy transmitted to head that, if not reduced over certain values, can potentially create injuries to the rider.

Safeguarding students on the road in Ho Chi Minh City

Despite serving as Vietnam's financial and technological center, Ho Chi Minh City continues to yield disproportionate risks to young road users – especially those living in low-income districts across the city. A 2019 helmet study conducted by AIP Foundation in Ho Chi Minh City found that nearly 90% of surveyed helmets were substandard, meaning they would not provide adequate head protection in the event of a crash.

The issue was that 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. A further issue is that 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 by government regulations.

Cracking down on low-quality helmet use in Vietnam

Vietnam's local and national governments are taking the lead in cracking down on low-quality helmets. In October this year, an inter-sectoral plan was launched to improve the effectiveness of the execution of quality helmet regulation across the country.

The plan serves as a basis for further solutions to enhance the effectiveness of enforcing laws requiring the use of helmets under the National Technical Regulations for riders of motorcycles, mopeds, and e-bikes nationwide to ensure that every road user is better protected on the streets.

“With a road user population heavily reliant on the private use of motorcycles as a primary mode of transport, there is a critical need for helmet safety programming targeting youth in this city. One of the simplest and most effective measures that can be taken to prevent road fatalities is to use a helmet,” shares Mirjam Sidik, Chief Executive Officer at AIP Foundation.

Students at the school are already aware of the national helmet law in Vietnam, but the ceremony will serve as an opportunity to raise awareness of the life-saving importance of quality helmet use.

Empowering Safety seeks to directly address this issue by improving helmet access and encouraging its use.

“We are proud to support the launch of the *Empowering Safety* program in Vietnam as we strongly advocate for safer streets and a safer future for all young people. This initiative marks a significant first step to ensuring youth are better protected from the dangers they face on the road. Young people are our future,” shares Vincent Faber, Executive Director of the Puma Energy Foundation.

###

About Puma Energy Foundation

Established in November 2013 as an independent philanthropic entity, the Puma Energy Foundation works to improve the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable communities in countries where Puma Energy operates. The Foundation partners with local NGOs which champion lasting change in the areas of Fair and Sustainable Employment and Clean and Safe Logistics. Another essential part of the Foundation's mission is to help Puma Energy employees organize and fund staff-led philanthropic activities. To find out more, visit www.pumaenergyfoundation.org

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For over 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. <https://www.aip-foundation.org/>

For Media Contact

Victoria Jönsson-Brown
Communications Officer (Global)
AIP Foundation
Tel: (+84) 91 598 75 84
Email: victoria.jonsson@aipf-vietnam.org