

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Factory and Garment workers' safety in focus: Cambodia hosts second national workshop to address and seek solutions for safer commutes to work**

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – April 30, 2024

Around the world, the daily commute is a cornerstone of modern life. Many of us have access to safe public transportation options, and some of us can even walk or ride a bicycle to work. Safe commuting practices are a crucial pillar of societal well-being and productivity for all. In Cambodia, thousands of garment and footwear factory workers risk their lives traveling to work.

In 2022, more than 3,900 factory workers were injured, and more than 63 workers died commuting to and from work in the garment and footwear factory sector. The trucks that currently provide transportation to and from work are often large, flat, and very dangerous as factory workers must stand up as there are no proper seats to sit on. Often, many factory workers are crammed into the trucks, causing danger to their safety and well-being. The high risks encountered on their way to work do not only impact the lives of workers but also the lives of the family members they support.

These commuting risks are preventable. To address these dangers and work together to find solutions, AIP Foundation will be hosting a second national workshop on the Possibility to Transition from Trucks to Safer Vehicles as part of the *Prevention and Participation* program supported by VF Corporation. The first workshop was organized in late 2021, where a feasibility study on options to facilitate the transition to (safer) passenger vehicles in Cambodia's garment and footwear sector and its key recommendations were shared with large-scale audiences, including H.E Minister of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and discussed the practical implementation from the feasibility study, opportunities, challenges and how to overcome the challenges.

The objective of the workshop is to discuss a pathway to successfully transition to safe and seated vehicles for garment and footwear workers in Cambodia. This workshop will provide solutions and recommendations for workers' commuting safety backed by the government, private sector, development partners, factories, brands/buyers, collective transport representatives, Trade Unions (TU) leaders, and worker-related organizations. This second national workshop will be held in close collaboration with Cambodia's government partners, including the General Secretariat of the National Road Safety Committee (NRSC) and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

AIP Foundation Cambodia and target factories' representatives will present the progress, challenges, and solutions on the Transition to Safer Vehicles, including practical examples of successful transition to safer vehicles. Following the presentations, the Cambodia Country Director of AIP Foundation and a senior representative of the NSSF will co-facilitate a plenary session on "The pathway to transition from trucks or unseated vehicles to [safer] passenger vehicles."

"Ensuring the safety of Cambodia's garment and footwear workers is a top priority at VF Corporation. Our support to the national workshop underscores this commitment. By prioritizing safer passenger vehicles, we're advancing crucial discussions and enhancing the well-being of those who make our products. Together with our suppliers, local authorities and civil society, this program is driving meaningful change for a safer journey to work," says Jens Aas, VF Program Manager for Worker & Community Development.

The workshop welcomes the attendance of representatives from the relevant government bodies, private sector, development partners, trade unions (regional and national), the associations of collective transportation drivers, garment and footwear brands and factory management, civil society organizations and media members, indicating the importance of joint efforts in reaching safer commuting for workers in Cambodia.

H.E Mrs. Min Meanvy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) and Secretary-General of the NRSC, will chair and deliver the closing remarks at the end of the national workshop. Before closing the workshop, a panel discussion titled "How can stakeholders support the swift attainment of the agreed pathway?" will be facilitated by the Co-Chairperson of Cambodia's Road Safety Network.

"The Cambodian government is firmly committed to ensuring that workers can access to dignified and safe collective transport to and from work in order to prevent and reduce road crashes among the workers. The National workshop today represents an important event which promotes dialogues and discuss options how to transition from flatbed cargo trucks to affordable safer vehicles," shares H.E Mrs. Min Meanvy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and Secretary-General of the National Road Safety Committee.

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#### **About the *Prevention & Participation* Program**

The *P&P* program, which will take place between 2020 and 2024, will be progressively implemented at 13 factories, reaching approximately 51,000 workers and drivers across 6 provinces. The program is financially supported by VF Corporation, one of the world's largest apparel, footwear and accessories companies founded in 1899 and aims to improve worker transport (vehicle and driver licensing), reduce dangerous driver behaviors like overtaking, distracted driving, and non-helmet wearing, and improve infrastructure and traffic management around factories. AIP Foundation will continue to work with the government for policy and legislative change. In addition, AIP Foundation will build capacity and factory support to own and sustain initiatives and identify and implement measures that promote the transition to safe and seated passenger vehicles, driven by appropriately qualified drivers.



### **About AIP Foundation**

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For more than 24 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](http://www.aip-foundation.org) or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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