



*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Road safety advocates make their case for policy priorities and actions**

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The Coalition for Road Safety and Handicap International, funded by the Global Road Safety Partnership, together with the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation are calling on the Royal Government of Cambodia to take immediate action to reverse rising toll of road traffic crashes.

Cambodia's roads are the site of nearly 2,000 reported deaths and more than 15,000 injuries each year. Around 80 percent of road traffic fatalities involve vulnerable road users – motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. “By putting measures into place to protect these road users, Cambodia would undoubtedly save thousands of lives,” said Lim Sokchea, Coalition for Road Safety Executive Director.

Preliminary reports indicate that motorcyclists accounted for 68 percent of road traffic fatalities in 2012, 66 percent of whom suffered head injury. “The real tragedy is that these deaths could be prevented,” said Kim Pagna, Asia Injury Prevention Foundation Country Director. “Motorcycle helmets are proven to reduce the risk of serious injury by 69 percent and of death by 42 percent in a crash, but while motorcycle driver helmet wearing rates are more than 60 percent, fewer than 10 percent passengers wear helmets.”

In response to this appallingly dangerous situation, more than 100 stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and international community have endorsed a joint statement imploring the government to pass comprehensive helmet legislation. This joint statement also calls on the media to promote safe road behavior and promote helmet use through all mediums and the private sector to develop internal policies to encourage their staff to respect traffic laws. Over 4000 Cambodian citizens have shown their support for the draft traffic law that mandates motorcycle passengers including children to wear helmets through online and traditional petitions.

The press conference also featured additional evidence-based recommendations made to support the target set by the government to reduce road fatalities by 50 percent by 2020. The recommendations outline firm actions towards the government's ultimate vision of zero road traffic fatalities and span all aspects of road safety: empowering smarter road users through education; improving the enforcement of, and therefore the compliance with, traffic regulations; building safer roads; and establishing quicker post-crash response.

“The road safety sector does not receive enough financial support for a sustained impact to reduce road traffic fatalities in Cambodia,” said Ear Chariya, Handicap International Road Safety Program Manager. “Road traffic crashes cost an estimated US\$329 million in 2012, compared to a US\$1.7



million national investment in road safety over the same period. Improved political commitment and resourcing for safe roads translate into lives saved, injuries averted, and a bolstered economy.”

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### About the Coalition for Road Safety

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### About Handicap International

Co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Handicap International primarily focuses on the prevention of disabilities and providing support for people with disabilities by ensuring they can fully take part in social life. The organization has since launched development programs in almost 60 countries. Road safety has become an important issue among the prevention activities undertaken by Handicap International in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam since early 2000. These actions take the form of road safety classes, raising the awareness of the public, establishing road crash data system and supporting civil society and authorities to undertake road safety initiatives.

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### About AIP Foundation

The Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation is a U.S. registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that uses cross-sector 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 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).”

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