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Film Star Michelle Yeoh in Hanoi to Promote Child Helmet Use



Ha Noi, 18th March 2008 – International celebrity Michelle Yeoh, the Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition, the FIA Foundation, and the NTSC joined together in Hanoi today to stress the importance of helmets on child motorcycle passengers. In Hanoi to film a road safety documentary for the FIA Foundation, Ms. Yeoh said she was shocked at the number of children on motorcycles not wearing helmets.

“It was very troubling to see so many children in Hanoi riding on motorcycles without helmets. Parents must act right now to put helmets on their children.”

When asked about why she was concerned about road safety, Ms. Yeoh explained “Worldwide, there is a child who is seriously injured or dies in a road accident every 30 seconds. Vietnam is losing thousands of children every year. I think all of us have to support this helmet wearing campaign. We need to protect our future, we need to protect our children”

Representatives of the Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition (VHWC) also made clear to the public that helmets for kids was a vital public health issue. “The current situation cannot continue. Far too few children are wearing helmets and far too few parents realize how dangerous this is,” said Danish Ambassador Peter Hansen. “The National Helmet Wearing Campaign will focus exclusively on child helmet wearing in the next few months. We’re intent on making sure every parent in Vietnam knows that every child on a motorbike needs a helmet.”

AIPF President Greig Craft described how parents throughout the country were losing children because of a lack of helmets. “Every week, we hear how children without helmets are dying in traffic accidents while their parents, who do wear helmets, survive. This is a horrifying, unacceptable reality. It must be changed,” Craft stated.

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The FIA Foundation's Deputy Director General, Mr. Saul Billingsley discussed the increasing importance of helmet use and traffic safety worldwide.

“Quote from SB discussing UN and FIA activities”

The Honorable Bui Huynh Long, Chief Secretariat of the National Traffic Safety Committee thanked Ms. Yeoh for her involvement in this urgent national issue. “The NTSC appreciates Ms. Yeoh's efforts in helping children and families throughout Vietnam. Informing and persuading parents to put helmets on their children is one of our highest priorities.”

About Michelle Yeoh's Filming in Vietnam

Michelle Yeoh is spending four days in Hanoi filming an FIA Foundation-sponsored documentary with filmmaker Richard Stanley. The short film, part of the FIA Foundation's international “Make Roads Safe” campaign, focuses on helmet wearing issues in Vietnam and will be shown at the United Nations, on the FIA's website, and distributed to traffic safety advocacy groups throughout the world.

As part of the filming, Ms. Yeoh, a Road Safety Ambassador for the FIA Foundation, has participated in a “Helmets for Kids” school ceremony, a roundtable discussion with local high school students, and has visited traffic accident victims and their families. In addition, the documentary will include interviews with Vietnamese doctors, government officials, international development professionals, and families of accident victims.

The documentary will be available for viewing on the FIA Foundation website later this year.

About the Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition

The Vietnam Helmet Wearing Coalition is a partnership between government agencies, NGOs, embassies, development agencies, and multinational corporations aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of motorbike helmets in Vietnam. Currently sponsoring a year-long, US\$1.3M public awareness campaign, the VHWC supports Helmets for Kids donations, public concerts, television ads, and print media. Members of the VHWC include the National Traffic Safety Commission, the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation, the Danish Embassy, AusAid, the World Bank, the

Asian Development Bank, the World Health Organization, Intel Vietnam, Michelin Singapore, Inc., and the US Embassy.

About the FIA Foundation

The FIA Foundation has been established in the United Kingdom as a registered charity with a donation of \$300 million made by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the non-profit federation of motoring organisations and the governing body of world motor sport.

The FIA Foundation manages and supports an international program of activities promoting road safety, environmental protection and sustainable mobility, as well as funding specialist motor sport safety research.

The FIA Foundation is an NGO in Roster Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations and a regular participant in the Working Party on Traffic Safety and the World Forum on Harmonisation of Vehicle Standards at the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The Foundation also works with international agencies including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UN Environment Programme on road safety and environmental issues.