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Residents of Phnom Penh wear helmets at a road safety workshop shop last year. Handicap International says that in 2013 the economic cost of road crashes in Cambodia was about \$337 million.  Vireak Mai

Traffic law's benefits touted

Thu, 8 May 2014 Chhay Channyda

Lives will be saved and Cambodia's government can net \$100 million by 2020 if it acts swiftly and passes a new traffic law this year, a study by the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIPF) reveals.

Released yesterday, the findings were based on a four-month study that looked at the positive gains of passing the long-awaited update to the current traffic law, and the effects of resulting enforcement.

AIPF country director Kim Pagna said that if the government approved and implemented the updated traffic law which mandates helmet use for passengers on motorbikes, not

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The study made its calculations according to a formula of the Asian Development Bank, factoring in property damages, administration costs, job losses, medical bills and human resources losses, he said.

"As a result of the analysis, we will encourage the government to pass the draft of the new traffic law because the law not only requires passengers to wear helmets, but also [more severely punishes] speeding and drunk driving. [This study] is a small part about helmets, and see how much we can gain. If the rest of the points are researched, we will gain more than that," Pagna said.

Handicap International has estimated that global economic costs of road crashes in Cambodia for 2013 stood at around \$337 million, and that's only the financial costs.

"Unless additional road safety actions are taken, the number of road fatalities in Cambodia is estimated to increase up to 3,200 a year by 2020," said Sophie Coelho, Handicap International's operations coordinator.

National Road Safety Committee secretary general Pov Maly said nearly 70 per cent of people who died in road accidents last year were on motorbikes, and 66 per cent of the victims died from head injuries.

The new traffic law, which still hasn't made its way to the National Assembly, would require motorbike passengers to wear helmets while limiting the amount of people on a motorbike to two adults and a child.

"We want to have the law in 2014," Maly said.

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