



# MAKING SAFE HELMETS A REALITY FOR ALL: WHITE PAPER



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# WHAT IS THIS WHITE PAPER ABOUT?

The clock is ticking on the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 (Decade of Action). The recent *Global status report on road safety 2023 (Global Status Report)* suggests that in most countries, efforts so far have not achieved the reductions in road fatalities and injuries needed to reach the 2030 targets.

Urgent action is needed. This action must be based on evidence of what works to reduce deaths and injuries and must consider the safety and journey patterns of all road users, with a particular focus on those who are most at risk when a crash occurs.

Governments hold primary accountability to guarantee people's right to safe mobility and to halve road deaths and injuries by 2030, in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3.6 and 11.2. The 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (Ministerial Conference) in Marrakech, Morocco, in February 2025, is a critical moment. This is where national government ministers will gather to accelerate progress toward the Decade of Action and the road safety SDGs.

The Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety (the Alliance) and its over 395 member NGOs from more than 100 countries have been advocating for specific, evidence-based interventions that will help governments achieve the ambitious global targets. We have identified Priority Interventions within our Accountability Toolkit—based on global best practices, in consultation with Alliance member NGOs, and backed by an expert panel—that offer significant value for governments seeking to fulfill their responsibility

to save lives on the road. Ensuring safe motorcycle helmets through appropriate laws, enforcement, and promotion is among these. This white paper enhances the global evidence gathered for the helmet Priority Intervention, setting out key messages and key asks to make it more specific and actionable.

The messages and asks in this white paper are based on investigations conducted by the Alliance, including desk research, expert interviews, key informant interviews with selected NGOs, and community consultations with motorcycle users in five countries across three regions. We aim to show the realities people face in choosing a safe helmet and offer some solutions to address the hurdles. The white paper will be a foundation for the Alliance and its member NGOs to build on, bringing a grassroots perspective to the worldwide push for implementation of effective helmet standards and solutions that protect the right to safe mobility for all.

As you read, we ask you to commit and act in your role—as a government official, civil society representative, or other stakeholder—to ensure that every helmet for every rider in every country is a safe one.

# WHAT WE MEAN BY “SAFE HELMETS”

In this white paper, we refer to “safe helmets” or “standard helmets.” Safe helmets are standard helmets—certified to a recognized national or international standard enshrined in law and tested by an independent third-party ISO-17025-accredited laboratory.

Any helmets not meeting these criteria are considered unsafe. By this, we mean helmets that do not meet any recognized safety standards and are not tested by an independent third-party ISO-17025-accredited laboratory. Some nonstandard helmets simply lack certification; they are designed to be used as helmets but have not been designed, manufactured, or tested to achieve a recognized safety standard. Others—counterfeit helmets—mimic certified models but use inferior materials and fake certification labels, misleading riders into believing they are safe. Also available are novelty helmets, made of thin plastic, that lack the energy-absorbing expanded polystyrene (EPS) liner used in safe helmets and are often marketed as fashion accessories or toys. All forms of nonstandard helmets are unsafe helmets. In this white paper, they are referred to as either “nonstandard” or “unsafe.”



A motorcycle delivery rider in Kenya.

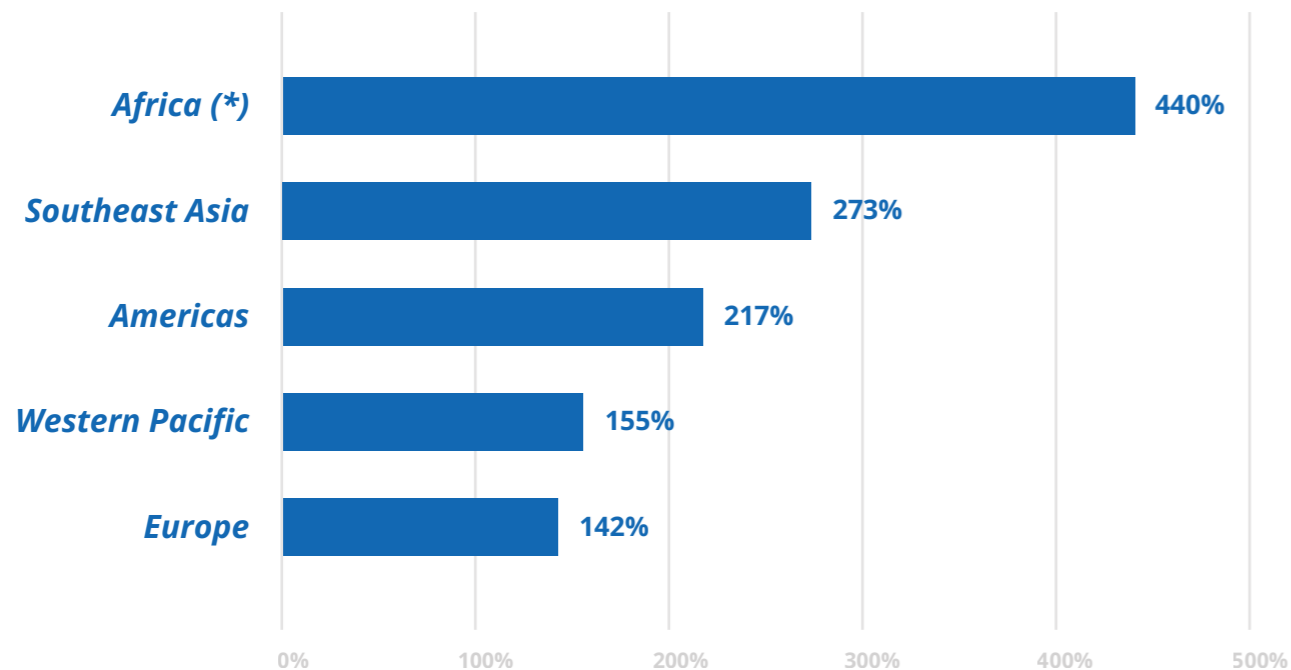
# WHY FOCUS ON HELMETS?

## Motorcycle use is growing exponentially

Motorcycles have become more than just a means of transportation. They are a symbol of economic empowerment, enabling access to jobs, education, and other opportunities, especially for individuals who may not have access to cars or reliable public transportation.

This means that guaranteed access to safe helmets is a basic need for countries' economic growth and for full participation of individuals in education, work, and the choices that enable any individual to achieve their maximum potential. This is an issue that goes beyond road safety: it is relevant to the whole SDG agenda.

Figure 1: Growth in Motorized Two- and Three-Wheelers by Region<sup>1,2</sup>



\*Data for Africa is based on the period from 2010 to 2022.

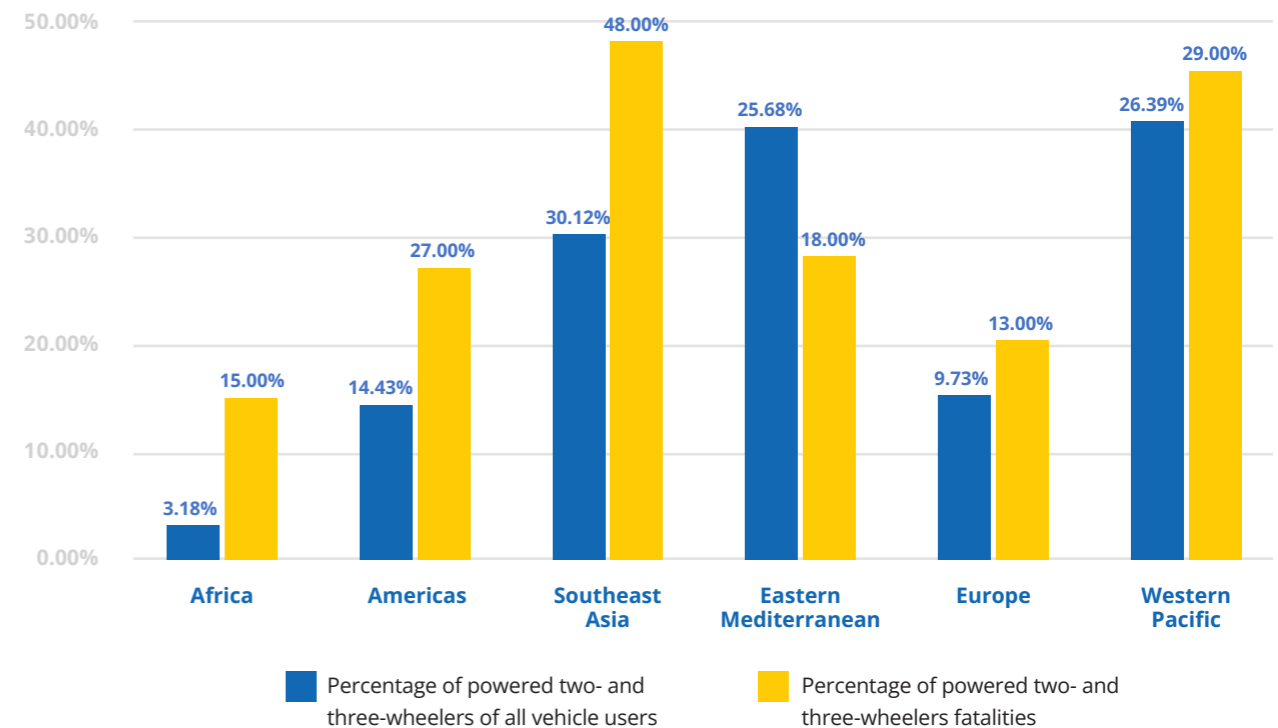
<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2024). Global status report on road safety (GSR) 2023. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. <https://www.who.int/publications/b/72484> (The GSR 2023 does not report these numbers for Africa.)

<sup>2</sup> Bishop, T. & Courtright, T. (2022). *The wheels of change: Safe and sustainable motorcycles in Sub-Saharan Africa*. FIA Foundation. <https://www.fiafoundation.org/resources/the-wheels-of-change-safe-and-sustainable-motorcycles-in-sub-saharan-africa>

## Motorcycle riders are disproportionately affected by road crashes

In almost all regions of the world, motorcycle riders are disproportionately represented among road fatalities. While motorcycle riders make up 3%–30% of road users by region, they account for 13%–48% of road fatalities.

Figure 2: Distribution of Powered Two- and Three-Wheelers Usage and Fatalities by Region<sup>3</sup>



### Safe helmets save lives

Safe helmets reduce the risk of death by over six times and reduce the risk of brain injury by up to 74%.

**74%**

### Not all helmets are safe helmets

We know safe helmets are a proven way to protect motorcyclists from debilitating head injuries. But not all helmets around the world are safe helmets. It's not enough to encourage helmet use because the reality is people still can access unsafe helmets. *People are doing the right thing by wearing a helmet, but if that is an unsafe helmet, we are letting them down when they need it most.* In the event of a crash, they could suffer head injury or even death, which is statistically avoidable with a safe helmet.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. (2023). WHO Road Safety Data [Mobile application software]. (3.0). Geneva, Switzerland.



# KEY MESSAGES

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**1****Motorcycles Are Playing a Significant Role in People's Lives**

Motorcycles have become more than just a means of transportation. They are a symbol of economic empowerment, enabling access to jobs, education, and other opportunities, especially for individuals who may not have access to cars or reliable public transportation. This is the reality; we cannot ignore their prevalence, and we must find solutions that ensure that their use is safe, starting with providing safe helmets.

**2****Access to Safe Helmets Is a Fundamental Right**

Everyone has the right to safe mobility, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This includes the right to access helmets that are truly protective. When anyone obtains a helmet, they deserve the assurance that it will protect them.

**3****We Are Letting People Down by Allowing Unsafe Helmets into the Market**

When nonstandard helmets are let into the market, we are letting people down. Manufacturers, importers, exporters, distributors, and transport services (such as delivery companies, moto taxis, and ride-hailing apps) that produce, sell, or provide customers with nonstandard helmets are evading accountability and endangering lives and livelihoods. Without proper regulation of the helmet market, these unsafe products proliferate and contribute to road deaths and serious injuries.

**4****Implementation Challenges Shouldn't Block Progress**

While implementing and enforcing the national helmet standard may be complex, it's the lack of action that often stalls real progress. We have the tools, evidence, and case studies that show us what needs to be done and how. Governments must not let challenges deter them; they must remain accountable by taking action to ensure public safety. It's in their interest to engage all stakeholders, including manufacturers and distributors, to actively support these efforts. The failure to implement proven solutions is an unforgivable paradox that endangers lives and hinders economic and social participation.

**5****Only Helmets that Meet Safety Standards Should Be Available in the First Place**

It's not enough to encourage helmet use, and riders shouldn't be responsible for identifying safe helmets. Governments must take accountability by enforcing their national helmet standard at the market level to eliminate nonstandard helmets. This means manufacturers, importers, exporters, distributors, and other commercial providers of nonstandard helmets are overseen and laws are enforced to prevent nonstandard helmets from reaching people.

**6****We Need to Expand Our Focus Beyond Traditional Road Safety Sectors to Ensure Successful Implementation**

Effective helmet regulation requires coordinated efforts across ministries, including those that may not normally be involved in road safety—transport, trade, consumer protection, fiscal policy, and others. Safe helmets must be not only protective but also affordable and comfortable for people to choose to wear them across all socioeconomic groups.



# KEY ASKS

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety outlines the role and influence of key actors in contributing to the 2030 road safety targets—governments, private sector, funders, UN agencies, and NGOs. We call on:

## Governments

### ■ Demonstrate accountability

**1. Lead on Helmet Regulation and Enforcement:** Governments must spearhead development of a national motorcycle helmet standard (if it does not exist) that is enforceable for production, trade, sale, and commercial use, aiming for universal market compliance over time.

**2. Implement Comprehensive Helmet Market Regulations:** To prevent the proliferation of unsafe helmets, governments must regulate and enforce helmet safety standards for manufacturers, importers, exporters, distributors, and transport providers. This includes active surveillance, imposing penalties when violations are detected, and confiscating unsafe products.

**3. Coordinate Cross-Departmental Efforts:** Government agencies in areas beyond traditional road safety—such as consumer protection, trade, and fiscal policy—must work together to regulate the helmet market through existing mechanisms, such as standards bureaus and consumer protection acts.

### ■ Prioritize proven interventions

**4. Leverage Available Tools and Evidence:** There's no need to start from scratch. Governments can use existing global materials and evidence, and learn from their own country and others to continually improve and enforce helmet standards. Governments can use existing tools, evidence, and case studies to continuously improve domestic helmet standards and promote compliance.

**5. Invest in Independent Testing and Certification:** Governments should support independent helmet testing laboratories, ensuring credible certification labels to help people make informed choices.

**6. Apply Penalties for Noncompliance:** Random testing across manufacturing, import, and retail channels, coupled with fines and confiscation for noncompliance, will help enforce helmet standards.

### ■ Guarantee people's right to safe mobility

**7. Ensure Availability of Effective, Comfortable, and Affordable Helmets:** Governments need to secure the supply of safe helmets proven to reduce head injuries, ensuring they are both affordable and comfortable for all motorcycle riders.

**8. Conduct Regular Market Surveillance:** Regular market surveillance across the supply chain—combined with imposing penalties when violations are detected and confiscating unsafe products—is crucial to enforcing helmet standards and monitoring progress.



A motorcycle rider in Mexico.



## NGOs

### ■ Stand up for people's right to be safe on the roads

**1. Expose Nonstandard Helmets in the Market:** NGOs can play a critical role in monitoring and publicly calling out nonstandard helmets, pressuring stakeholders to ensure helmet safety.

### ■ Use data and evidence to show what needs to be done

**2. Document Community Experiences:** Collect data from communities to highlight challenges and help improve their access to safe helmets.

**3. Promote Standard Helmets as the Popular Choice:** Use influencers, community leaders, and media to create a demand for safe helmets, while stigmatizing nonstandard helmets.

### ■ Hold system operators accountable for people's right to be safe on the road

**4. Demand Accountability:** NGOs should advocate for manufacturers, international traders, retailers, and motorcycle transport providers to cease production, trade sale, and use of helmets that do not meet safety standards.

**5. Engage with Governments Using Accountability Tools:** NGOs can use this white paper and the Accountability Toolkit to support governments in implementing helmet standards.



A motorcycle rider in Kenya.

## UN agencies

**1. Align on Global Helmet Standards:** The UN, WHO, and other international bodies must collaborate to establish helmet standards that prioritize safety, affordability, and comfort, setting aside institutional barriers.

**2. Engage with and Listen to Countries Facing Barriers:** Global organizations should actively listen to the challenges countries face in implementing UN Regulation No. 22 and provide tailored support.

## Private sector

**1. Prioritize Safe Helmet Production:** Helmet manufacturers must prioritize producing safe helmets that are both affordable and comfortable, making them accessible to all riders. Through responsible business practices, companies can build consumer trust and encourage demand for safe helmets.

**2. Establish Domestic Manufacturing:** To reduce costs and prices, helmet manufacturers should explore local production of safe helmets.

**3. Implement Safety as Workplace Policy:** Companies that rely on motorcycle transportation—such as moto taxis, delivery services, and other transport businesses—should include the wearing of safe helmets as part of their occupational health and safety (OHS) policies for workers (including employees and contractors).

**4. Monitor and Publicly Report Safety Compliance:** Companies should actively monitor and publicly report the wearing of safe helmets by their staff as well as any motorcycle crashes involving workers (including employees and contractors). This transparency fosters accountability and highlights the importance of safety measures.

**5. Partner with Governments:** Collaborate with governments to prevent the circulation of unsafe helmets.

## Funders

**1. Support Helmet Testing and Certification:** Funders should allocate resources to cover costs associated with independent helmet testing and certification.

**2. Back Advocacy Efforts:** Financial support for NGOs engaged in advocacy can bolster government efforts to regulate and enforce helmet standards.





A motorcycle rider and passenger in India participating in community consultations conducted by the Alliance and member NGOs.

# BEHIND THE MESSAGES

## How we developed this white paper

The key messages and key asks in this white paper were established through a combination of approaches.

### Desk research

We collated figures from global road safety publications, scientific journal articles, and digital media stories on motorcycle use, deaths, and trends. We also studied data and information on helmet standards, use, and prices, as well as what influenced people's choice of helmet.

### Interviews with recognized global experts in helmet safety

Interviews with experts from UN agencies, funders, private sector entities, and NGOs working directly with governments helped us to understand the primary issues in motorcycle helmet safety, the global resources available to assist governments in implementing helmet standards, and implementation barriers, including what has already been tried and what needs to be tried to overcome these barriers.

## Key informant interviews

Using prepared questions, we conducted semi-structured interviews with NGOs with strong experience in helmet advocacy. These NGOs—in Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Mexico, India, Nepal, and Vietnam—helped us to ascertain challenges in achieving safe helmet access and insights from each country's efforts to implement safe helmet interventions.

## Community consultations

We partnered with five Alliance member NGOs from five countries to conduct community consultations with motorcycle riders. These NGOs went out to local streets where motorcycle riders are commonly found and spoke with everyday riders, including male and female commuters, delivery riders, moto-taxi riders, and leisure riders, to gain insights directly from them about their helmet choices. Consultations followed a common set of questions, and NGOs were equipped through a guide and briefing session to ensure consistency of information gathered.

A total of 63 participants were asked about the reasons for selecting their helmet, whether it displayed brand and certification labels, the importance of recognized safety standards, the ease of finding helmets that meet these standards, the balance between price and safety when making a purchase, and financing helmets. While the findings should be interpreted with an understanding of their limitations, including a relatively small sample size and potential biases stemming from the convenience sampling method and self-reported data from riders, they provided insights into aspects where official data appeared to be lacking.

## Workshops

We designed and ran workshops at international forums to further explore the primary issues and highlight common themes and solutions across countries. These included two sessions at the 15th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion (Safety 2024) pre-conference workshops:

- Leaving No One Behind—Powered Two-Wheelers Safety in the Sustainable Development Agenda, hosted by the Asian Development Bank and the Asia Pacific Road Safety Observatory (31 August 2024)
- Ensuring Safe Helmets for All, a “walkshop” organized by the Alliance (1 September 2024)

We also held a workshop at the First Latin American Regional Meeting of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety:

- Session VI, Road Safety and Motorcycles in the World (6 November 2024)

Names of individuals and organizations involved in the interviews and consultations can be found in the Thank you and acknowledgements section. More detailed findings can be found on our website: <https://www.roadsafetyngos.org/act-now/helmet-advocacy>. A summary can be found below.







A motorcycle rider in Kenya.

# SUMMARY FINDINGS

## Nonstandard helmets are found even in countries with helmet standards.

Desk research suggested that even in countries with helmet standards, motorcycle riders still use nonstandard helmets, which was attributed to minimal enforcement of the helmet standards.

A study across nine countries showed that **54% of observed helmets lacked certification, and 49% were deemed nonstandard**, and it noted that despite some of these countries having laws against nonstandard helmets, enforcement was minimal.<sup>4</sup>

A study across 12 countries reported that **despite 83% of motorcyclists wearing helmets, nearly half used nonstandard ones**; it highlighted that while helmet laws increase helmet use, they do not guarantee compliance with helmet standards, and stronger enforcement is needed.<sup>5</sup>

Data from 98,021 two-wheeler users at 15 locations revealed that although overall helmet use was 92%, **only 24% wore standard helmets**, with 26% of drivers and 20% of pillion riders using nonstandard “cap helmets.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Road Traffic Injuries Research Network Multicenter Study Collaborators, Ackaah, W., Afukaar, F., Agyemang, W., Anh, T. T., Hejar, A. R., Abdul, G., Gururaj, G., Hidalgo-Solórzano, E., Hajar, M., Hyder, A. A., Inclán-Valadez, C., Kulanthayan, S., Norton, R., Otero, W., Owoaje, E. T., Peden, M., Rajam, K., Razzak, J. A., . . . Yu, J. (2013). The use of non-standard motorcycle helmets in low- and middle-income countries: A multicentre study. *Injury Prevention*, 19(3), 158–163. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040348>

<sup>5</sup> Singh, P., Li, Q., & Bachani, A. (2024). 436 The determinants of non-standard motorcycle helmet use: A multi-country ecological study. *Injury Prevention*, 30, A90–A91. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2024-SAFETY.214>

<sup>6</sup> Sukumar, G. M. (2022). 365 Data-driven advocacy to strengthen implementation of standard helmet use in Bengaluru, India. *Injury Prevention*, 28, A54–A55. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2024-SAFETY.214>



“Our 2020 study in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam, revealed that 90% of surveyed motorcyclists’ helmets failed to meet national safety standards. This data prompted the provincial Traffic Safety Committee, the Traffic Police, and the Market Surveillance Department to enhance enforcement of helmet safety regulations and to spearhead an intersectoral action plan to combat the prevalence of substandard helmets.”

— Mirjam Sidik, Chief Executive Officer, AIP Foundation

Motorcycle helmet testing empowers countries to control and enforce the market to ensure that all helmets for sale in a country meet a standard.<sup>7</sup> Consultations with global helmet experts highlighted that weak regulations and enforcement throughout the manufacturing process and in commercial settings, including transport services, allow nonstandard helmets to be available, fueling a growing crisis of injuries and fatalities.



“Allowing unqualified or novelty helmets to be offered for sale is like allowing cars to be sold without adequate seat belts. Just like a seat belt, the helmet is a safety device that needs to work properly during the crash. The use of unqualified or uncertified helmets only adds to the growing crisis of motorcycle related injuries and fatalities. Governments need to allocate the resources necessary to properly test motorcycle helmets and to protect consumers by confirming helmet certification and compliance prior to entry into the country.”

— Terry Smith, Principal Scientist, Galeatus, LLC

NGOs interviewed as key informants noted that helmets, manufactured or imported, do not necessarily meet standards in some countries because the motorcycle helmet market is not controlled and enforced by the government. The interviews highlighted the need for helmet testing laboratories in individual countries.



“That [enforcement] is where it fails, and more needs to be done, at the moment with customs when helmets are imported.”

— Ana Villarreal (former Director of Public Policy, Institute for Transportation and Development Policies), Mexico

<sup>7</sup> United Nations. (2016). *United Nations Motorcycle Helmet Study*. [https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/publications/WP29/United\\_Nations\\_Motorcycle\\_Helmet\\_Study.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/publications/WP29/United_Nations_Motorcycle_Helmet_Study.pdf)



## People rely on certification labels and brands, but not all helmets have them, and not all labels are trustworthy.

Riders we spoke with in the community consultations indicated that they rely on certification labels to assess helmet quality (see Figure 3). Yet, not all of the helmets owned by the riders we spoke to featured these labels (see Figure 4).

Online media articles, identified by desk research, revealed that helmets with counterfeit labeling and branding are easily available, especially on online shopping platforms,<sup>8</sup> making it nearly impossible for riders to easily distinguish safe from unsafe helmets.

Key informants also noted the difficulty in telling a safe from an unsafe helmet. This makes it hard for riders to choose a helmet that would keep them safe. It also makes it difficult for enforcement officers to control the helmets available on the market.

**“There is no way to know a quality helmet, even for our traffic police. ... Today, if you put standard helmets side by side with a substandard one, who would tell the difference? ... No one is able to tell the difference.”**

— Grace Wahome, Master in Community Development Consultant and Head of Stakeholder Relations, Kenya National Helmet Wearing Coalition, Transaid, Kenya



<sup>8</sup> Fitz-Gibbons, M. (2019, July 25). Special investigation: Lookalike fake helmets have never been more dangerous. Motorcycle News. <https://www.motorcyclenews.com/advice/buying-selling/fake-crash-helmet/>  
 Bicycle Retailer and Industry News. (2023, July 20). CPSC: Xinrter and SQM brand helmets fail to meet federal safety standards. Bicycle Retailer and Industry News. <https://www.bicycleretailer.com/recalls/2023/07/20/cpsc-xinrter-and-sqm-brand-helmets-fail-meet-federal-safety-standards>  
 Devitt Insurance. (n.d.). Real vs. fake motorcycle helmets. Devitt Insurance. <https://www.devittinsurance.com/guides/a-guide-to-motorcycle-helmets/real-vs-fake/>  
 ITV News. (2019, July 12). Call for action on shocking trade in fake crash helmets: ITV News investigation. ITV News. <https://www.itv.com/news/2019-07-12/call-for-action-on-shocking-trade-in-fake-crash-helmets-itv-news-investigation>

Figure 3. When you're buying a motorcycle helmet, how can you tell if helmets are of good safety quality?

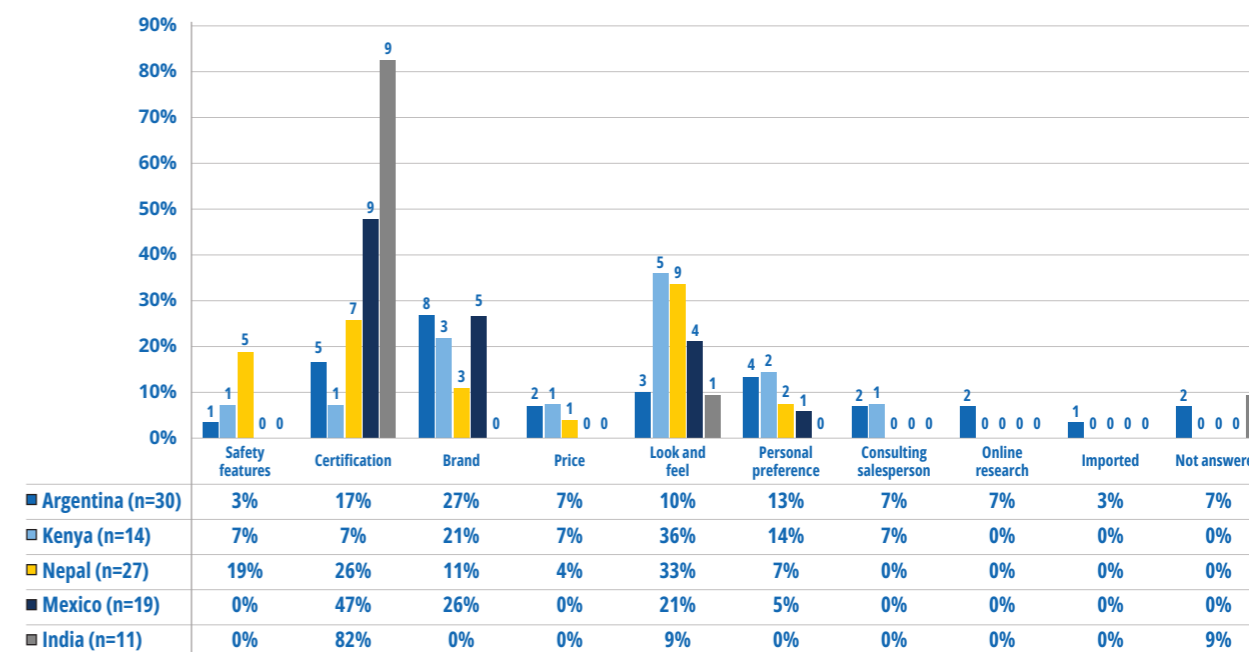
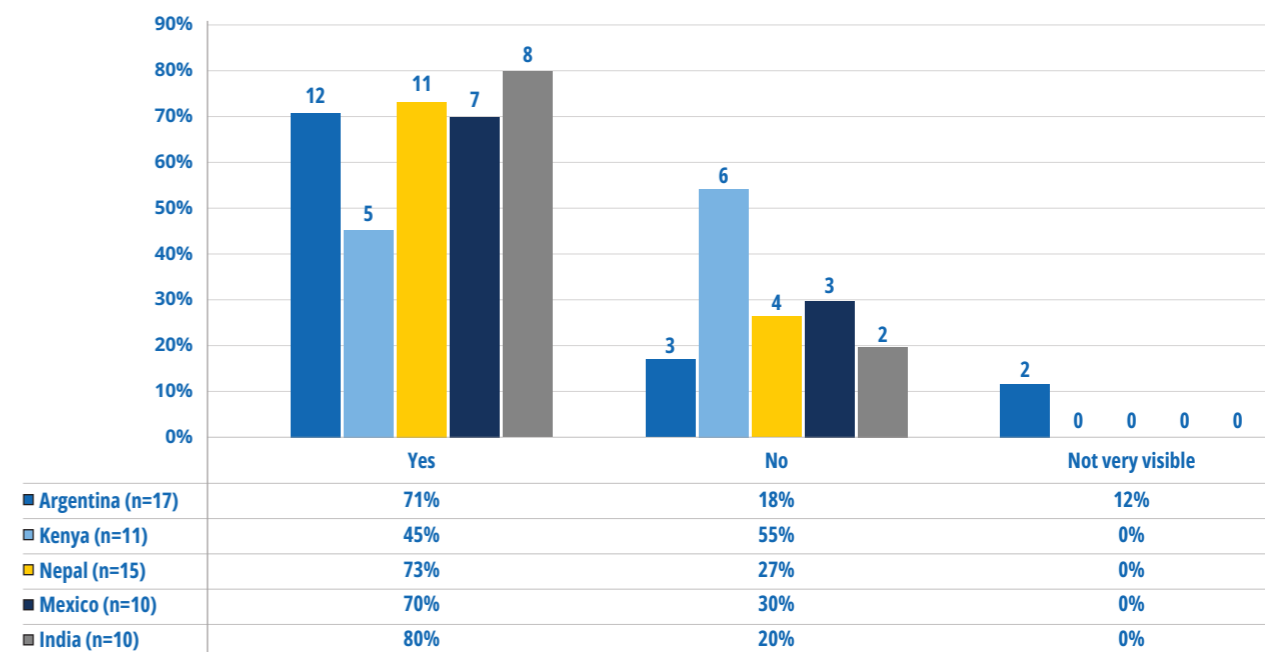


Figure 4. Does your helmet show the brand and a certification label?





## Nonstandard helmets are generally cheaper than standard helmets.

Desk research identified that nonstandard helmets generally cost less than standard helmets, creating a price attraction for nonstandard helmets.

A study across nine countries estimated that nonstandard helmets were 2–3 times cheaper than standard helmets.<sup>9</sup>

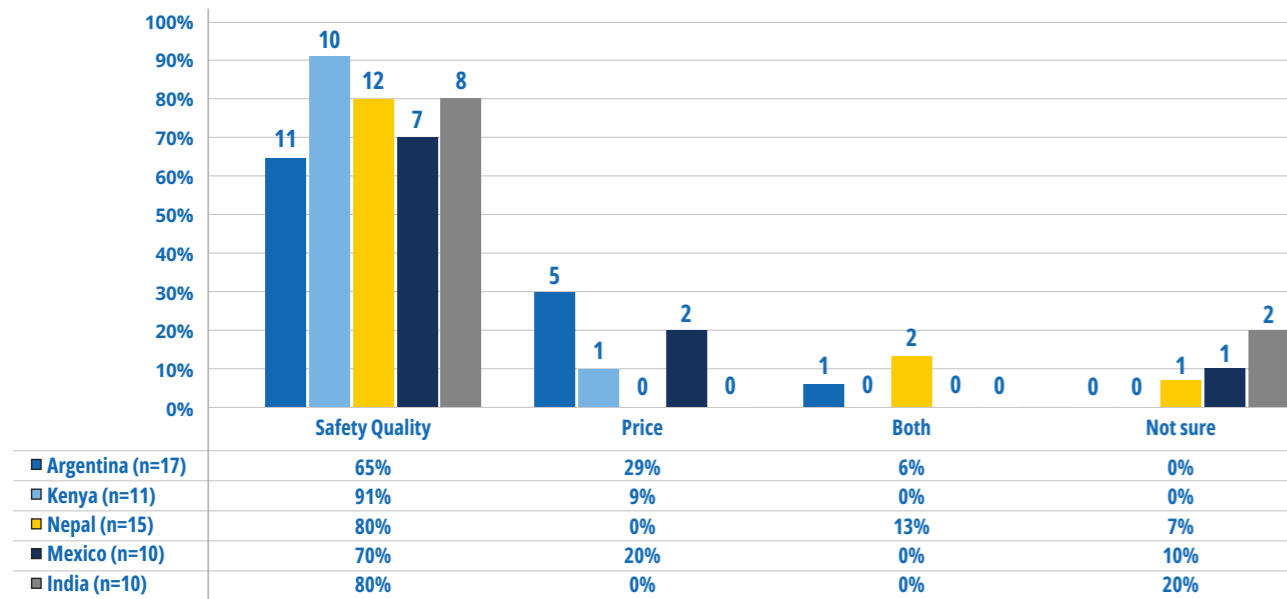
A study in Lebanon found that 64% of helmets inspected lacked certification; it also indicated that riders who spent less than \$15 on helmets were more likely to wear noncertified helmets, suggesting a correlation between lower cost and poor helmet quality.<sup>10</sup>

Of the retail outlets in Ghana surveyed between March and April 2021, 13.3% sold both standard and nonstandard helmets, and 8.6% sold only nonstandard helmets; standard helmets typically cost between US\$8.50 and US\$17.00, while nonstandard helmets were below US\$8.50.<sup>11</sup>

Riders are prepared to pay for safety, but prices need to be accessible. Riders questioned in the community consultations reported that they put greater importance on the safety quality of helmets than on price (see Figure 5). They reflected on the value of their own safety, with comments such as “How much is your head worth?” illustrating the personal weight of this consideration. They also emphasized the importance of helmets meeting safety standards, recognizing their potential to save lives (see Figure 6). In Kenya, however, riders questioned were not familiar enough with “safety standards” to rate their importance.

When asked more about helmet prices in the community consultations, riders gave a wide range that they considered reasonable (see Figure 7). More riders told us they did not struggle to pay for their helmets, except in Kenya, where more riders told us they experienced some difficulty (see Figure 8). Helmet prices need to be accessible to suit everyone’s different needs.

**Figure 5. Which is more important to you - the price or the safety quality of the helmet?**

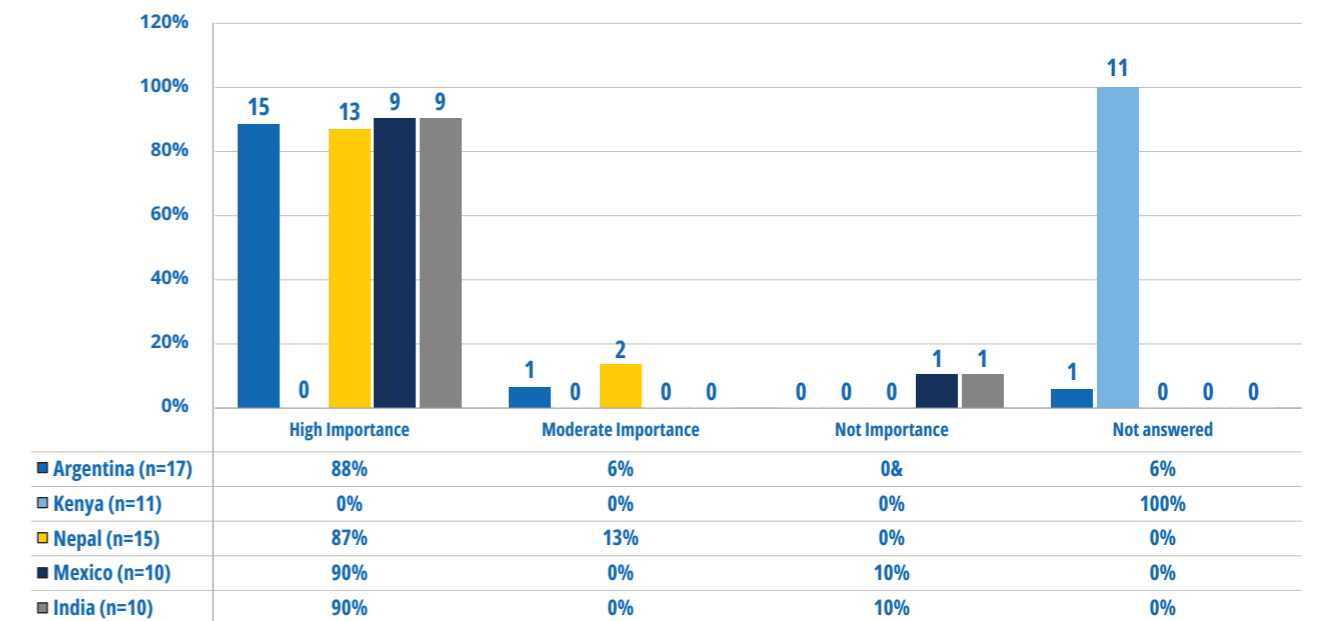


<sup>9</sup> Road Traffic Injuries Research Network Multicenter Study Collaborators, Ackaah, W., Afukaar, F., Agyemang, W., Anh, T. T., Hejar, A. R., Abdul, G., Gururaj, G., Hidalgo-Solórzano, E., Hajar, M., Hyder, A. A., Inclán-Valadez, C., Kulanthayan, S., Norton, R., Otero, W., Owoaje, E. T., Peden, M., Rajam, K., Razzak, J. A., . . . Yu, J. (2013). The use of non-standard motorcycle helmets in low- and middle-income countries: A multicentre study. *Injury Prevention*, 19(3), 158–163. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040348>

<sup>10</sup> Akl, Z., Akl, M., Eriksson, C., Gifford, M., & Koustuv, D. (2018, September 27). Evaluating helmet use among motorcycle drivers in Lebanon. *The Open Public Health Journal*, 11, 393–400. <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874944501811010393>

<sup>11</sup> Adjei, B. N., Nakua, E. K., Donkor, P., Amisshah, J., Gyaase, D., Enuameh, Y., & Mock, C. (2023). Determinants of motorcycle helmet availability and cost in retail outlets: Outcomes of a market survey in northern Ghana. *BMC Public Health*, 23, 771. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15695-8>

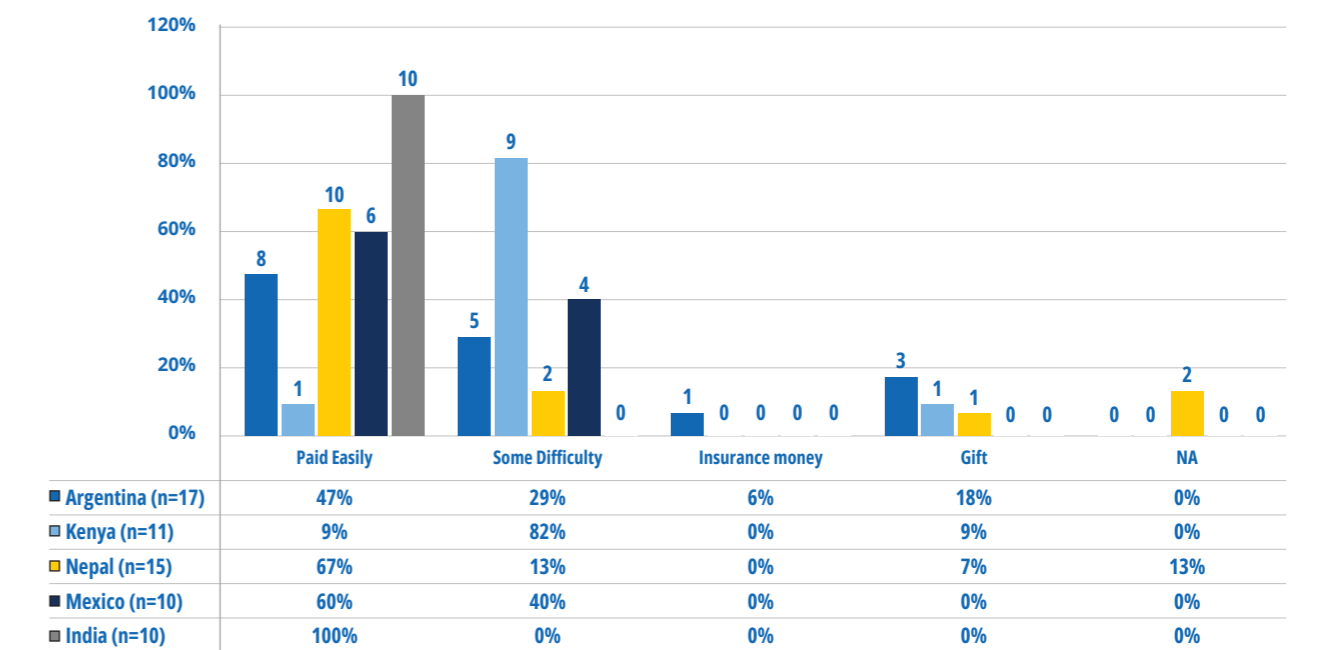
**Figure 6. How important is it to you that your helmet meets a recognized safety standard?**



**Figure 7. What is a reasonable price for motorcycle helmets of good safety quality?**

Country (n)	Price (US\$)
Argentina (17)	50 - 400
Kenya (11)	15 - 80
Nepal (15)	15 - 265
Mexico (10)	55 - 275
India (10)	10 - 20

**Figure 8. Did you have enough to pay for your helmet easily or did you experience any difficulties putting together funds to buy your helmet?**





NGOs interviewed as key informants in Mexico and India referred to studies they had conducted.<sup>12</sup> They found that while many helmets they examined had labels, based on the low prices that these helmets were sold at, they could not be certified helmets with legitimate labels. Key informants in Mexico and Nepal also suggested that riders seem to use price as a guide to decide if a helmet is really a standard helmet and make the assumption that real standard helmet prices are unreachable, so choose the helmet with the lowest price.



A motorcycle rider in India participating in community consultations conducted by the Alliance and member NGOs.

<sup>12</sup> Not all studies are published but a reference is available here: [Instituto de Políticas para el Transporte y el Desarrollo \(ITDP\). \(2023\). Uso de cascos seguros en México: Análisis situacional](https://www.itdp.org/publications/uso-de-cascos-seguros-en-mexico-analisis-situacional)

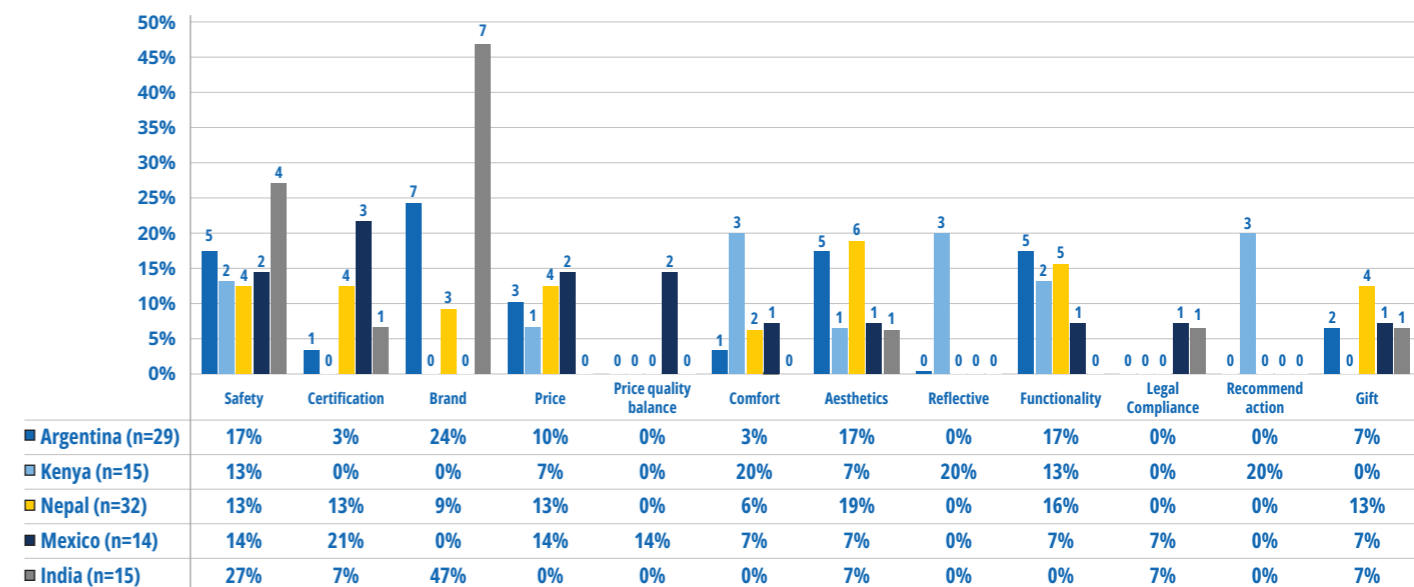
## Helmets must be comfortable and attractive as well as safe.

Desk research indicated across studies that among other factors, such as price and enforcement, helmet comfort was reported as a common influence on riders' choices to wear or not wear helmets.

Across different studies, discomfort was often cited as a reason for not wearing helmets, including those that meet UN Regulation No. 22.<sup>13</sup>

Riders in the community consultations told us that apart from safety, certification, and brand, they consider price, comfort, aesthetics, and functionality when choosing helmets (see Figure 9). Safety is an appeal, but it's not enough.

Figure 9. What are your reasons for choosing your helmet?



“Certification in accordance with UN Regulation No. 22 provides an easy identification as safe helmets. Safe helmets must be not only protective but also affordable and comfortable for people across all socioeconomic groups. UN Regulation No. 22/05 responds to all these needs, and provides assets to regulators for periodical inspections of helmet manufacturers. We hope that UN Regulation No. 22 and FMVSS No. 218, now part of the Compendium of Candidate of Future Global Technical Regulation of the 1998 Agreement, will be adopted at the global level.”

— Edoardo Gianotti, Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

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## NGOs can play an important role in advocacy for safe helmets.

Consultations with experts and interviews with NGOs pointed to the role of NGOs as advocates for safe helmets. Some NGOs interviewed as key informants had been specifically advocating to their governments for helmet laws that refer to or specify a standard, a legal ban on nonstandard helmets, or for domestic helmet testing laboratories. Examples of how some governments have responded include addition of helmet standards to the national road safety action plan and launch of a domestic testing laboratory.

“Saying to wear a helmet or just awareness is nothing. We have to change the entire environment, enforcement, policies required, and implementation. Only then can we say, ‘wear a good quality helmet.’”

— Rajni Gandhi, Founder and General Secretary, TRAX, India

“Our campaigns, supported by data and coalition-based action, have demonstrated that empowering NGOs to spotlight these dangers can lead to meaningful policy change and save lives. ... Our unwavering commitment to reducing substandard helmet use extends to combating the selling of fake or substandard child helmets. This practice is unethical, illegal, and no different than selling fake medications or fake baby formula.”

— Greig Craft, Founder and President, AIP Foundation

“Motorcycle deaths continue to rise across countries around the world, contributed by a lack of quality helmets available to motorcycle riders. Provision of safe and affordable helmets should become a focal point for public and political action. FIA Foundation and our NGO partners have been working across the world to elevate this issue through a variety of initiatives. Recently we’ve supported the adoption of an internationally recognized helmet standard in Rwanda, which was followed by the launch of Africa’s first helmet testing lab. This serves as an excellent example of how countries should control safety of helmets available for purchase at local markets.”

— Agnieszka Krasnolucka, Programmes Director, FIA Foundation

“The development and implementation of a national motorcycle helmet standard is a key countermeasure to reduce the frequency and severity of motorcycle-related death and head injury. GRSP recognizes the complexity of the process and stakeholders involved and has developed technical guidance to support government agencies to develop a robust national motorcycle standard and regulatory measures to facilitate its application and compliance. These resources can also support organizations advocating for safe and affordable helmets.”

— Britta Lang, Senior Manager, Global Road Safety Programmes, Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)

“Access to safe and affordable helmets is critical to improving motorcycle safety around the world. We’re honored to work with the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety to bring awareness to this critical issue.”

— Kristin Smith, Head of Global Road Safety Policy, Uber

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## Key informant interviews

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## Workshop participants

- “Leave No One Behind—PTW Safety in the Sustainable Development Agenda,” hosted by the Asia Development Bank and the Asia Pacific Road Safety Observatory (31 August 2024).
- “Ensuring Safe Helmets for All,” a “walkshop” organized by the Alliance (1 September 2024).
- Session VI, Motorcycle and helmet safety workshop held at the First Regional Meeting for Latin America of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety (6 November 2024).

Thank you to Uber for supporting this white paper.



A man in a Nairobi City County uniform, including a blue and black jacket with a logo and 'NAIROBI CITY COUNTY' text, is holding an orange motorcycle helmet. He is standing outdoors with trees in the background. The text 'Project sponsored by Uber' is overlaid on the image.

Project sponsored by **Uber**

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