

Marc Townsend, Chairman, AmCham Vietnam (HCM City)

**Opening Remarks at the MOU Signing Ceremony
to Establish the Vietnam Trade Facilitation Alliance (VTFA)**

Friday, December 12, 2014, 5:50 - 7:30 pm
New World Saigon Hotel, 76 Le Lai, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City

Ms. Anne Aarnes, Acting Assistant to the USAID Administrator,
Mr. Vo Tan Thanh, Deputy Secretary General of VCCI, and Director General of VCCI in
HCM City,
Ms. Claire Pierangelo, Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy Vietnam,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In Bali last December, Vietnam and the United States joined other WTO Members in signing the draft WTO Bali Package, including the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

In Geneva this June, the World Bank, together with USAID and other development agencies, announced the Trade Facilitation Support Program to help developing countries revise their trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes and systems in a manner consistent with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Together with business associations, including VCCI, VITAS, HAWA, LEFASO, VASEP, LBC, and others, AmCham has joined USAID/GIG and the General Department of Vietnam Customs (GDVC) to organize several seminars over the past three months to discuss enhancing the customs-business partnership in Vietnam and implement the TFA.

It was proposed to establish a Vietnam Trade Facilitation Alliance (VTFA) to engage in formal, consultative relationships, with well-organized, results-oriented participation by business associations and domestic and foreign invested companies with the GDVC and other GVN agencies.

In cooperation with USAID, VCCI, and other business associations in the VTFA, we want to share international best practices, including more than 25 years experience based on the U.S. Customs Modernization Act of 1993, implementing regulations for the North American Free Trade Agreement and other FTAs, and the especially the "Commercial Operations Advisory Committee to the U.S. Customs" (COAC).

We are honored that the U.S. Agency for International Development has recognized and decided to support this initiative, and I would like to invite Ms. Claire Pierangelo, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, to introduce the Acting Assistant Administrator of USAID to deliver remarks.

Thank you.