



Japanese Emperor to Visit Vietnam, Trump-Abe meet to discuss U.S.-Japan FTA

FEATURES



Japanese Emperor's visit to boost rapport

The first ever visit to Việt Nam by a Japanese Emperor and Empress is a historical event of great significance that will reinforce mutual trust and friendship, says a senior Japanese official. Speaking to the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) ahead of the historic visit, Hatsuhsa Takashima, press secretary to Emperor Akihito, recalled the long-standing relationship between the two countries.



Trump, Abe meet to discuss bilateral Free Trade Agreement

along the lines of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hatch's recommendation. Senator Hatch said the Trans-Pacific Partnership can be ratified under President Trump even if it begins as a bilateral deal with Japan, emphasizing that his plan would be in accord with Trump's pledge to pursue fair, bilateral trade deals instead of larger regional ones.



Vegetable, fruit exports to struggle

The domestic vegetable and fruit industry will face obstacles in maintaining sustainable growth in export value at the current high level, according to the Việt Nam Vegetable and Fruit Association. Total national export value of vegetables and fruits reached US\$2.4 billion in 2016, a year-on-year increase of 30 per cent. Export value is expected to increase to \$3 billion this year.



HCM City and Hanoi lead e-business index

HCM City and Hanoi continue to lead Vietnamese localities in e-commerce, The Việt Nam E-commerce Association (Vecom) announced at the 2017 Việt Nam Online Business Forum in Hà Nội on Friday.

The announcement came from the 2016 e-Business Index (EBI), based on a survey from more than 3,500 businesses in 54 provinces and cities across the country.



ANZ paints rosy outlook for VN economy

Viet Nam is likely to have something to crow about during the Year of the Rooster as several factors will facilitate socio-economic growth, ANZ Vietnam said on Friday.

In a press briefing titled "What lies ahead in the Year of the Rooster?" experts from the Vietnamese branch of the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. outlined their views of the global and regional economy, as well as a detailed outlook for Viet Nam in 2017.



Vietnamese SMBs take advantage of online business trend to enhance competitiveness

E-commerce with multi-channel selling has become a popular method in the world which helps small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) optimise their operations.

"Online retail in Vietnam will continue to accelerate in the upcoming period as domestic and foreign retailers now move towards multichannel with considerable investment in online retail," said Nguyen Ngoc Dung, vice president of the Vietnam E-commerce Association (VECOM) at the Vietnam Online Business Forum 2017 (VOBF) in Hanoi today.



Foreign investors show interest, will Vietjet's shares fly high?

Vietnamese budget airline Vietjet Air will start trading 300 million shares on the Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange (HoSE) on February 28 at VND90,000 (\$3.9) per share.

As Vietnam's largest private airline nears its landmark initial public offering, foreign investors contemplate buying the remaining 25 per cent of the 49 per cent foreign ownership limit. As previously reported by VIR, only 24.39 per cent of foreign ownership has been reached as of January 12.

Events, Meetings, Special Offers



Advanced Purchase Promotion to North America from HCM City

Korean Air, is one of the world's top 20 airlines and carried more than 24 million passengers in 2015. Korean Air operates over 460 flights per day to 132 cities in 46 countries on six continents with a fleet of 174 aircraft including ten A380s. With its modern aircraft and over 20,000 professional employees, Korean Air offers customers convenience and comfort. Korean Air's award-winning offerings of Korean and international meals and state-of-the-art inflight entertainment system provide passengers with a memorable inflight experience.



Mar 9 Walmart Women Owned Business Supplier Selection

The event will contribute to your understanding of the requirements for companies to join Walmart's global supply chains, and help to increase the number of Vietnam companies that integrate into the global economy, and join global value chains. After a Walmart briefing, there will be face-to-face business appointments with Walmart's representatives.

We're looking to source all type of products from any qualified suppliers whether you're women owned business or not.



Mar 10 The Revival Of South East Asian Manufacturing. What this means for Vietnam?

Australian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (AusCham) is pleased to host its "Revival of South East Asian Manufacturing". This event will be held on 10 March, 2017 at Hotel Nikko Saigon, 235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1, HCMC. Please contact events@auschamvn.org for registration.



Mar 16 Best Practices in Automation of Trade Compliance

The import and export of goods across country borders and custom free zones are often represented by countries as free flowing and with the lack of trade barriers. However, the need for a country to protect its own industries, its markets and its jobs leads each country to implement its own tariff schedules, controls, rules and forms in its own language which complicate the business of cross border trade.

Automation of the process of cross border trade will help reduce the complexity and ensure that your company will stay compliant with all country regulations while moving goods. This session will highlight the challenges, the best practices in automated trade management; and where automation can bring the highest value to your business.



Mar 16 Seminar "Vietnam Integration Opportunities Growth"

You are cordially invited to the seminar "**Vietnam Integration Opportunities Growth**". This seminar will be held from 13:30pm to 16:00pm on March 16, 2017 at Shangrila Hotel, 89 Soi Wat Suan Plu, Bangkok, Thailand. Complimentary upon Registration. For registration, please contact

Ms. Hong Anh - Phone: +84 932 345 188. RSVP by 8 March 2017.
For more information, please [click here](#).



Mar 16 Methods of Creating Systematic Corporation Innovation

Define and showcase of methodologies used by US corporations, regional corporations, and large organizations to spur transformational change through innovative practices, and provide guidelines for how to effectively build systematic innovation for competitive advantage in the challenging new world of tacit knowledge.

Registration before 5pm Tuesday, March 14, 2017

Contact: **Ms. Huong** | 0979 729 742 if you need any further information.



Mar 17 NVM Group's Workshop: New Regulations On Managing Foreign Labor In Vietnam @ Grand Hotel Saigon

Keep tracking the changes of new regulations and provide the detailed guidance on process, procedures and documents on issuance of work permits to foreign labor in Vietnam in 2017.

#Speaker: Mdm. NGUYEN THI HAI VAN - Director of Department of Employment, MOLISA & Mr. PHUNG QUOC VUONG - Deputy Director of Department of Foreign Labor Management, MOLISA



Mar 22 AmCham Palooza Party at Hotel Equatorial

AmCham will continue its series of monthly informal networking events at the coolest and latest nightspots in Ho Chi Minh City.

The monthly Palooza Party is a platform to develop new friendships, networking opportunities and information exchange.

Come and join us for a night of casual networking, meet other professionals, bring your business cards!



Mar 27-28 Asia Pacific Business Outlook

Now in its 30th year, Asia/Pacific Business Outlook (APBO) is North America's premier event for business leaders who want to expand their trade and investment in the Asia/Pacific region. The USC Marshall School of Business and the U.S. Department of Commerce have been working together on APBO since 1988 to help exporters and investors take advantage of tremendous opportunities and overcome challenges in the constant changing economies of Asia. ...



2017 AmCham Discount Program

The AmCham Discount Program is a mutually beneficial opportunity for both Discount Partners and AmCham Members who are representatives of companies doing business and living in Vietnam.

By offering AmCham Members special discounts on services or products, Discount Partners can enjoy marketing opportunities through listing freely and/or placing an advertisement on the [Discount Handbook](#) & [Online](#).

JOIN US: Become a Member of AmCham Vietnam - HCMC

***NEW OFFER:** Application fee will be waived for companies having a D-U-N-S® number.

Expand your business by joining us! We currently have almost 500 organizations represented by 1,000 representatives. They are multinational firms, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs. **Benefits include:** Networking, Information-Sharing, Advocacy and Problem Solving, visibility and Corporate Exposure.

Contact **Ms. Sam Hoang** for joining or additional information on membership.





Marketing Opportunities with AmCham HCMC

AmCham HCMC offers many opportunities to market your company's products and services to AmCham members, the business community and the general public. Our services include:

- Event Sponsorship
- Event Management Support
- Network (Advertise) on www.amchamvietnam.com: 720K views/yr; 360K visitors/yr (avg. 60K / 30K views/visitors per month) and **11.2K twitter followers**, 9.5K facebook fans (and 60K+ views/month) 5.7k LinkedIn followers.
- Announcement in Weekly Email: 4.8k AmCham company representatives and subscribers.

AmCham Companies are offered 3 complimentary announcements a year.

- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Directory
- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Discount Handbook
- Advertising on AmCham Discount Online



AmCham Premium Membership Packages

The AmCham Premium Membership comes with a range of membership dues, which include events, advertising, and other exclusive benefits. One all-inclusive Premium Membership annual, semi-annual, or quarterly billing simplifies your company's administration efforts. Premium Membership Benefits include:

- Logo on "Premium Membership" banner on AmCham website homepage
- Logo on "Premium Membership" banner in Weekly Update Email
- Company profile on the "Premium Membership" page on AmCham website
- Corporate profile on screen during cocktail reception at Members' Nights
- Special recognition/Thank You Page in Membership Directory
- Special recognition at all business events' backdrop/banner
- Special recognition in all email signatures

For full information on benefits of each package, please click [HERE](#) or contact [Cindy Tran](#).

News and Issues



Long Hau Industrial Park begins a new year with ebullient atmosphere in construction site and inter-regional projects

From the early days of new year 2017, construction projects in Long Hau Industrial Park was operated with exciting and expeditious atmosphere. Beside some businesses started up their construction project, the others still continued to complete unfinished plans from the days before Tet.



The Landmark

The Landmark - New Staff Announcement

Ms. Momoko Hanamura has joined The Landmark as the new Marketing & Leasing Manager. Hailing from Japan, Momoko joins us at The Landmark with over 8 years of experience in hospitality management and sales, having worked in Myanmar, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City.



WhatsApp's New Feature Continues Facebook's Snapchat Mimicry

Facebook offered \$3 billion to buy the ephemeral messaging app Snapchat in 2013. Snapchat's founder, Evan Spiegel, turned down the offer.

Ever since, Facebook and some of its top apps - including Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger - have been trying to tap into the explosively popular photo-sharing features pioneered by Snapchat.



2011-16: VN gains almost \$60b in footwear export

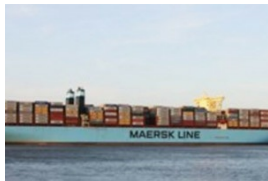
Việt Nam's export value for leather and footwear gained stable growth every year during the 2011-16 period to reach US\$57.5 billion in total.

Under statistics from the General Department of Customs, export value reached \$6.5 billion in 2011, \$7.3 billion in 2012, \$8.4 billion in 2013, \$10.3 billion in 2014, \$12 billion in 2015 and \$13 billion in 2016.



APEC links key to tackle disasters, says official

Regional connectivity should be strengthened to devise more initiatives to cope with the "new norm of natural disasters" facing APEC members, a Vietnamese official said yesterday. During the 11th meeting of APEC's Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG) in Nha Trang, Khánh Hòa Province, Water Resources Deputy Director Trần Quang Hoài briefed participants about natural disasters in Việt Nam, which have become increasingly frequent and severe recently.



Triple-E container ship docks at Cai Mep international terminal

Margrethe Maersk, a Triple-E container ship which is the world's largest, docked at Cai Mep International Terminal (CMIT) on Monday - a milestone in Vietnam's navigation history. With the arrival of Margrethe Maersk, CMIT, located downstream Cai Mep River of the southern province of Ba Ria-Vung Tau, is the first port in Vietnam and the 19th in the world to be able to handle an 18,300-TEU Triple-E vessel, according to the Sai Gon Giai phong (Liberated Saigon) daily.



Planning in a time of unseen variables

How will US President Trump's policies affect Vietnam's inbound foreign investments, trade, and forex rates? Barry Weisblatt, head of research at Viet Capital Securities, digs into the question on everyone's minds.



Deputy PM out to aid local retailers

Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung has asked ministries and authorities to help support local retailers while better managing the operations of foreign retail firms. The wholesale and retail market is developing rapidly with large potential and attracting the attention of both local and foreign investors, according to a recent note from the Government Office.



Food safety need practical measures

Practical and specific measures are needed instead of general and vague directions from authorities to ensure clean production and food safety. The statement was made by National Assembly Vice Chairman Phung Quoc Hien during a meeting held by the 14th National Assembly Inspection Committee with the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) on the implementation of food safety policies and law from 2011 to 2016.



Vietnam among the most vulnerable to cyber threats

Viet Nam was named the nation facing the second-highest level of cyber security risk in Asia Pacific markets by a Microsoft Asia report on Thursday. The Asian branch of the American computer giant released regional findings from the Security Intelligence Report (SIR), Volume 21, a twice-yearly report that provides unique insights into the threat landscape to help organisations learn about trend data in industry vulnerabilities, exploits, malware and web-based attacks.



Infrastructure boosts Dong Nai property market

The property market is booming in the southern province of Dong Nai of thanks to its excellent infrastructure. The local Department of Construction said 250 property projects were developed recently, 15 by foreign investors and involving a minimum investment of US\$10 million.

These office sensors can track employees wherever they go



It happens all the time. The owner steps away for a few hours and all semblance of order in the office breaks down. Everyone jumps up and socializes. Hey, why not? The boss is gone for a while. She's never going to find out, right?

Not so fast. The Internet of Things age is here. Sensors are now entering the workplace, tracking inventory, monitoring temperatures, turning off lights...and keeping an eye on when employees are at their desks and when they're not.

Top APEC meet next week in Nha Trang



The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum will hold its first event of 2017 with the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM1) to be held from February 18 to March 3 in the central coastal city of Nha Trang.

2017 expected to be better for investment funds



Investment funds are expected to perform better this year, following the successful 2016, on expectations that more individual investors will purchase their own investments, reported *Đầu tư Chứng khoán* (Securities Investment) newspaper. Two factors that will make investment funds attractive to individual investors this year include the trading of some 1,500 companies in the securities market, which will bring investment opportunities to individual investors.

Vietnam to boost ties with US: Ambassador



Vietnam attaches importance to promoting relations with the new administration and Congress of the US, towards further developing the Vietnam-US comprehensive partnership in a practical, effective, stable and long-term manner, the Vietnamese ambassador to the US said. Ambassador Pham Quang Vinh made the statement at a reception in Washington DC on February 10 for more than 70 advisors and assistants of key offices and committees of the US Congress of the 115th tenure.

Enterprises see opportunities in 2017



Trần Văn Mỹ, general director of Phong Điền Scavi Company, said that his company is building an industrial centre specialising in textile and garment at the Phong Điền Industrial Park Huế City. The first hub of its kind in Việt Nam was in fact run on a trial basis in 2015 and 2016. Mỹ said the facility is due to be put into operation in the second quarter of this year, bringing together various segments involved in textile production such as feedstock, fabric accessories, design, fashion illustration and finally production of large volumes of finished products for exports.

APEC senior officials' meeting crucial to boost regional connectivity



The first APEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM 1) in 2017 holds a significant meaning in reasserting APEC's determination to boost cooperation for growth and connectivity in the Asian-Pacific region.

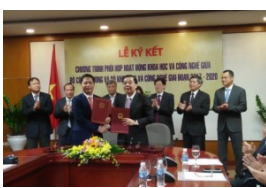
Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Le Hai Binh was speaking at a regular press conference in Hanoi on February 9 to inform reporters about Vietnam's external activities in the coming time.

January 2017 FDI higher year-on-year



Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Viet Nam reached US\$1.42 billion from the beginning of the year until January 20, according to data from the General Statistic Office. The amount exceeded FDI during the same period in 2016 by 6.6 per cent. During this time, Viet Nam attracted 175 newly-approved projects with total registered capital up to \$1.24 billion, up by 37.8 per cent in terms of project number and 23 per cent in terms of capital compared with the same period last year.

MoST & MoIT agree to science and technology cooperation



The Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) have signed a cooperative program on science and technology coordination between the two ministries in the 2017-2020 period.

Recognizing its important role, the industry and trade sector has already applied science and technology to its industrialization, modernization and sustainable development efforts.

PwC: Vietnam is set among star performers



By 2050, six of the seven largest economies in the world could be emerging markets. This is according to the latest report from the PwC economists on the theme of the World in 2050: The long view: how will the global economic order change by 2050?

Vietnam could be the world's fastest growing large economy in 2050, rising to 20th in the global GDP rankings by that date, the report stated.

Environmental protection tax hike hurts firms



The Finance Ministry (MoF)'s proposal to almost triple the environmental protection tax on oil and gas consumption would reduce businesses' competitiveness against foreign firms, according to the Việt Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). VCCI sent their comments on draft amendments and supplements to the environmental protection law to the ministry expressing concerns on the proposed tax hike.

The case for renewable energy



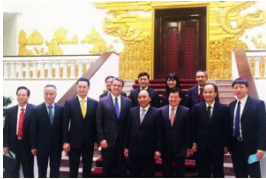
With innovations making renewable energies more affordable than ever, it forces the question - are old technologies like coal actually cost-effective when you correct for all factors? Policy change, reforms, and public education could open the doors to the private investment needed to make the change to sustainable energy sources. John Rockhold, head of the Vietnam Business Forum's Power and Energy Working Group and executive director of ABBO Investment Consultancy & Engineering JSC, shared his opinion on the country's future energy plans.

Vietnam to grant e-visas to citizens of 40 countries



beginning Feb 1, 2017. According to Decree 07/2017-NĐ-CP, 25 Jan 2017, procedures for applying and payment will be done online. It will take 3 days to process applications for an e-visa valid for 30 days. The visa does not require letters of guarantee or invitation. This could substantially boost international visitors and FDI. The regular one-year validity, multiple-entry visas will continue to be available to U.S. Citizens.

Trade Facilitation Agreement will go into effect when two more countries



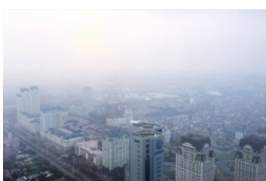
ratify the agreement. 108 have ratified already, and it will go into effect when 110 countries have. When Vietnam implements all the provisions, TFA will lower trade costs in Vietnam by 20%, making a sharp improvement in Vietnam's global competitiveness.

Traceability programs improve food safety in HCM City



HCMC vice chairman Le Thanh Liem asserts that the traceability program for pork and vegetables is of paramount importance to ensure that local consumers can have clean foods, especially during the upcoming Lunar New Year when the food demand surges. Liem added that the program is not just about pork and vegetables, but other products in modern shopping

Air Quality Index provides daily updates



amid growing concerns that air pollution in Hanoi has been worsening and reached dangerous levels. Hanoi's air has been repeatedly ranked as "unhealthy" and at times "hazardous," which means everyone should avoid being outdoors



U.S. to withdraw from TPP; negotiate bilateral free trade agreements

On Jan 23, a Presidential Memorandum directed U.S. Trade Representative (Robert Lighthizer, nominated but not yet confirmed) to "withdraw the United States as a signatory to TPP." The Memo also directed USTR to "begin pursuing ... bilateral trade negotiations to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages."



Public-private cooperation to develop Vietnam's tourism sector

Vietnam has not always done a good job of marketing itself as an international travel destination, but a recently launched tourism website is aiming to inspire tourists to visit the country. It may also point the way forward for a new model of the public sector leveraging off private sector expertise.



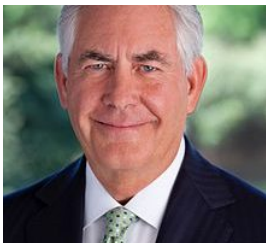
Sustainable Seafood

Nationally prominent chefs, fishermen, academics, and activists call on consumers to choose local species of fish when possible to protect the long-term vitality of harvested seafood and the well-being of the oceans. Some key numbers: 70 to 80% of global fish populations are not sustainably fished. 90% of seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported. 2% of that is inspected by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration..



U.S., Vietnam team up for food safety

The High Quality Việt Nam Products Business Association, the American Chamber of Commerce in Việt Nam and the Washington-based Global Food Safety Forum signed a memorandum of understanding on co-operation in food safety. The US imports 15% of its food, 20% of vegetables, 50% of fruit and 80% of seafood, according to the U.S. FDA, which has established an International Food Safety Capacity Building Plan to train foreign governments and food producers on U.S. requirements for food safety.



"I do not oppose TPP" - Secretary-designate Rex Tillerson

"I share some of (Trump's) views regarding whether the agreement that was negotiated serves all of America's interests best," he added during his lengthy confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But he did not mention TPP in his opening statement.



ExxonMobile-PetroVietnam sign Ca Voi Xanh natural gas deal

ExxonMobil signed two agreements January 13 relating to the Ca Voi Xanh (Blue Whale) gas project offshore Vietnam. The project could fuel at least four power plants shortly after scheduled first gas in 2023. "The Ca Voi Xanh field is located about 80 km offshore central Vietnam and is an important natural gas discovery in Vietnam that has the potential to fuel the country's economic growth." PVEP said the project could supply enough gas for power plants with total capacity of 3 GW and also allow expansion for the petrochemical or power sectors. It said total investment in the project chain could be \$10bn, contributing \$20bn to state coffers.



SCS [Bien Dong] Reserves and Resources - U.S. EIA

Energy Information Administration estimates the South China Sea contains approximately 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in proved and probable reserves. Conventional hydrocarbons mostly reside in undisputed territory. Undiscovered resources could be greater. In November 2012, the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) estimated the area holds around 125 billion barrels of oil and 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in undiscovered resources, although independent studies have not confirmed this figure.

Jan 14 Ambassador Osius: Vietnam-U.S. Relations in 2017



Ambassador Osius will share highlights of the past year and the outlook for Vietnam-U.S. relations in 2017. Following the momentous events of 2016, including the Presidential Visit in May and the U.S. General Election in November, and looking forward to APEC 2017 in Vietnam, as well as the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, what can we expect about Vietnam-U.S. relations, especially trade and investment relations?

Seafood Import Monitoring Program Final Rule



to combat fish fraud and illegal fishing was issued on Dec 8, 2016. The rule requires that fish species most often passed off fraudulently or at risk of illegal fishing be tracked from their source of origin before they can be imported to the United States. It requires retention of supply chain data by the importer of record and extends an existing NMFS requirement to obtain an annually renewable International Fisheries Trade Permit (IFTP) to import the seafood and seafood products regulated under this rule.

New Congress will focus on domestic issues, Cabinet confirmations



Congressional Republicans plan quick action on several of their top priorities - most notably a measure to clear a path for the Affordable Care Act's repeal. Perhaps the first thing that will happen in the new Congress is the push for deregulation. Also up early: filling a long-vacant Supreme Court seat, which is sure to set off a pitched showdown, and starting confirmation hearings for Mr. Trump's cabinet nominees.

Vietnam to apply extensive area code changes in 2017



Area code changes in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Dong Nai, Binh Duong, and a number of other provinces will take place on June 17, 2017. The new area codes will be applied for 59 cities and provinces in three phases, from February 11 to June 17, with steps taken to ensure the change will not confuse the public, the Ministry of Information and Communications announced. But there are other concerns, such as the need to reprint packaging or business cards once numbers are changed, costing quite a sum.

Weekly Updates Archive 2006 - 2016



Launched in August 2006 to answer many questions about Vietnam's accession to the WTO, the Weekly Update Emails provide news updates, upcoming events, explanations of details of trade and investment agreements, developments in laws and regulations affecting the business environment in Vietnam. Click the link for to visit the archives and look back over the years. Links to more than 10,000 documents providing background on a wide variety of topics, from Vietnam's WTO Accession in 2006-2007, revision of the Labour Code in 2008-2012, to the TransPacific Partnership and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement from 2013 and ongoing.

Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit awarded to AmCham Vietnam - HCMC



At AmCham's 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner on September 18, 2014, Vice Chairman of HCMC People's Committee Le Thanh Liem handed the Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit to AmCham Vietnam - HCM City and to Mr. Herb Cochran, Executive Director for their excellent performance in supporting and promoting trade and investment in Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam.



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AmCham Vietnam | herb.cochran@amchamvietnam.com | <http://www.amchamvietnam.com>
New World Hotel Saigon #323
76 Le Lai Street, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City

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