

**Remarks by AmCham Vietnam Executive Director Mary Tarnowka
Meeting with HCMC People's Committee Chairman Phan Van Mai
Realizing HCMC's Socio-Economic Visions Towards 2030
HCMC ITPC Event, March 22, 2022**

Chairman Mai, distinguished guests, I am honored to be here today to represent AmCham Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and our more than 550 corporate members and 2000 individual business representatives throughout Vietnam. Together with AmCham Hanoi and AmCham Da Nang, AmCham is one of the largest and most influential business associations in Vietnam, with more than 650 corporate and 2500 individual business representatives. Together, we account for billions of dollars of investment, tens of thousands of direct and more than one million indirect employees, more than 30% of HCMC's exports and a significant portion of Vietnam's tax revenues.

AmCham Vietnam is committed to supporting sustainable growth and innovation in HCMC. We believe HCMC can continue to attract and grow investment in high-value manufacturing, while at the same time developing its services economy, particularly the digital economy, financial services, and healthcare. Critical for both the manufacturing and services sector will be building infrastructure for sustainable growth and educating a globally competitive workforce.

AmCham and our members are invested in Vietnam and optimistic about the future. Even back in November, as Prime Minister Chinh recently noted, 80% of our members were positive or very positive about long-term prospects in Vietnam. We value Vietnam's commitment to living safely with the virus and welcome the recent reopening to international travel and tourism. Increased mobility will enable recovery both of the Tourism and Hospitality sector, as well as the broader economy. We are also excited about the direct flights between HCMC and San Francisco with Vietnam Airlines and soon, hopefully Bamboo Airlines, too, which can enable closer trade and investment and people-to-people ties between our two countries.

From a macro perspective, the key now is to ensure a positive regulatory environment, not only to attract new investment, but to grow the investment already here. At AmCham, we state our interest in enabling a fair, transparent, predictable, and efficient regulatory system that values innovation. That means administrative reform, streamlining of regulations, more e-approval processes, stability and consistency in master plans, and ensuring investment license renewals and approvals for expansion of investment go smoothly, so that Vietnam generally and HCMC in particular can retain and attract investment in an increasingly competitive global environment. ***We want to partner on administrative reforms and smart city/e-government solutions.***

Vietnam, and particularly HCMC and the Southern economic region, remains attractive for investment in high-value manufacturing because of its geographic proximity to source and consumer markets, integration into the global economy through a network of Free Trade Agreements, stable political system, and its young, tech-savvy,

workforce. A large percentage of AmCham members are in the manufacturing sector, including high-tech companies like Intel and First Solar with over \$1 billion in investment each, footwear and apparel companies like Nike, and companies producing high-quality consumer products like Suntory Pepsico, Coca Cola, P&G, Kimberly Clark, and Mondelez. ***AmCham members want to develop more resiliency in supply chains in Vietnam through increased partnership with local SME manufacturers, including through digital transformation and other capacity building programs.***

As HCMC looks ahead, it will be important to build infrastructure to support sustainable growth. On the physical infrastructure side, that means cleaner energy, increasingly demanded both by foreign investors wanting ethical, green supply chains, and by HCMC's own residents who want a better quality of life. It also means improved transportation infrastructure, in terms of roads, airports like Tan Son Nhat and Long Thanh, ports, and waterways, as well as mass transportation, and more safe places for bicycles and ebikes, or pedestrians to walk. It means more energy-efficiency in construction. ***AmCham and our member companies are eager to partner with HCMC on building infrastructure to accelerate its green transition.***

Digital infrastructure, in terms of a holistic regulatory environment that enables continued cross-border data flows and cybersecurity, and physical infrastructure including green data centers and subsea fiberoptic cables, will help Vietnam unlock the full potential of its digital economy by creating an enabling environment for HCMC's growing community of entrepreneurs and innovators. They are making HCMC one of the region's most dynamic startup communities, with an increasing number of unicorns. AmCham is proud of our innovative entrepreneur members and the increasing number of Vietnamese startups benefitting from U.S. technology partnerships, U.S. investment, and in some cases, U.S. education and work experience. ***Our member companies want to partner to facilitate digital transformation and a cashless economy to drive post-pandemic recovery.***

We support HCMC's plans to strengthen its financial markets and develop HCMC as a Regional and ultimately International Financial Center. We encourage financial sector reforms that will lead to "Emerging Market" vs. "Frontier Market" status for Vietnam's capital market in the assessment by MSCI and FTSE. We encourage reforms to attract an investment grade sovereign rating for Vietnam. As Environment, Social, and Governance criteria increasingly become global standards, Vietnam will need to have a regulatory system that facilitates members meeting these criteria. Increased use of Globally Accepted Accounting Principles and other governance standards will make it easier both for foreign companies to find local partners, and for Vietnamese companies to invest or list overseas.

AmCham and our healthcare member companies have partnered with Vietnam and HCMC through the pandemic. Now we want to be strategic partners to promote healthcare and wellness, attract high-value investment, and ensure that Vietnamese residents retain access to lifesaving drugs and medical devices. AmCham's Healthcare Committee members represent global leaders like Pfizer, MSD,

Medtronic, GE, and Abbott, as well as local leaders like Pharmacity, healthcare startups like Thuocsi and Docosan, and service providers like Victoria Healthcare, SOS, and American Chiropractic Clinics. We want to support the health and wellness of residents of HCMC, enabling them to live more productive, happier lives.

All Vietnamese parents know that education is the key to the future and sacrifice for their children's education. AmCham's members include top universities with strong U.S. ties like Arizona State University and Fulbright University Vietnam, as well as top international schools, and e-learning/professional development companies. ***AmCham is dedicated to partnering to ensure a globally competitive workforce, both through developing the talents of new graduates and through lifelong learning.*** We also have longstanding scholarship programs, the AmCham Scholarship Program, with over 20 years of history and 1000 alumni and the Women in Engineering Scholarship Program, with more than 10 years of history and almost 400 alumni. Last Saturday, we held our charity ball which supports these scholarship programs, part of the efforts of our members to give back to communities where we live and work. They demonstrate AmCham Vietnam is Invested in the Future.

AmCham is optimistic about the future of Vietnam and HCMC. Chairman Mai, we look forward to partnering with you to drive innovation and sustainable growth in Ho Chi Minh City and throughout the southern economic region through 2030 and beyond.