**Vietnam Business Forum**

The VBF has been active since the summer holiday wound up and HCMC-Hanoi travel has resumed.

The Management Board has had its last monthly meeting by physical presence in Hanoi on Thursday, August 25th, and discussed three main topics: (1) The proposed meeting with the Prime Minister (subsequently confirmed on the 17th of September in hybrid format); (2) back dues from the Korean Business Chamber, and (3) preliminary thoughts on ways to restructure the VBF to enhance its efficacy in the new circumstances; among other things.  Minutes of the meeting should be available from the Secretariat.

At the Working Group level, several key events have taken place.

First, the Cybersecurity Law and its implementing rules were discuss by the Investment & Trade Working Group.

Second, the Tax & Customs Working Group held a meeting to go over its issues list with a large and engaged group of representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the General Department of Customs, etc.  At the same time this Working Group had been discussing with the USAID funded “Nathan Project” regarding what activities it may usefully engage Vietnam Customs with in its remaining few months.

Third, the Power & Energy Working Group continued with its ongoing talks that have finally lead to the issuance this week of Power Development Plan VIII.  This important document is available in Vietnamese and English for those who are interested, as well as a detailed summary in Power Point format.

Other Working Groups, including the Environmental WG, the Tourism WG, the Banking WG and the Capital Markets WG have each been pressing ahead with their respective issues and counterparties.

For the Prime Minister meeting on the 17th, AmCham members from the entire Chamber have input their issues and suggestions, with Mary and Adam cooperating to get the final draft letter by the deadline this week, and that letter will serve as the basis for the AmCham remarks (noting however the limited time for oral presentations in the actual meeting).

Looking forward to the regular Semi-Annual Forums, the Board agrees that the new structure worked well last time and could be repeated, such that there would be only one “High Level” Forum each year, and two “Technical Sessions” in which we get Vice Ministerial level interface on the detailed issues that continue to vex our members.  Budgeting is a topic of ongoing discussion however since this new template costs more than the old Semi-Annual VBF format and further discussions will be had on that.

On the subject of budget, the Secretariat seems to be over-stretched supporting the Working Groups and arranging the Prime Minister and semi-annual events, so, again pending budgetary considerations, an additional staff may be sought.

Please contact Fred Burke in his capacity as AmCham Representative to the Board of Management if you have any questions or suggestions.  Otherwise, we should prepare to discuss and prioritize issues of concern to our members at the upcoming AmCham National Issues Retreat in Hoi An on October 15th.  I hope to see you all there.

Fred

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