



Hanoi Headlines

December 2009

US and Vietnam Sign Agreement on Health and Remediation Programs

The U.S. Government and Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE) signed an agreement on December 16 that lays the framework for implementing environmental health and remediation programs. Specifically, the memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlines the coordination framework between the implementing agencies -- MONRE's Office of National Steering Committee 33 and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

According to the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Michael Michalak, "this MOU marks an important milestone and a new level of commitment in working together to find new and innovative solutions to a complex problem." The MOU covers activities funded by \$6 million in U.S. Congressional appropriations in 2007 and 2009.

"This document marks the formalization of an exceptional partnership with Office 33," said USAID Representative Francis A. Donovan.

To date, USAID has financed projects with East Meets West Foundation, Save the Children, and Vietnam Assistance to the Handicapped to provide health, educational and social services to people with disabilities in Danang. This funding also supports work with other donors to help Danang Province gather more information about its disabled populations and develop programs to meet their needs. Also as part of the \$6 million, the US firm, CDM International, in association with Hatfield Consultants, has



With support from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Save the Children delivers household kits to needy family members in central Vietnam, hard hit this year by a series of strong typhoons and tropical storms that claimed nearly 300 lives. Photo courtesy of Save the Children.



As U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Michael Michalak, looks on, USAID Representative Francis Donovan congratulates Dr. Lai Minh Hien of Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment on the signing of a memorandum of understanding on environmental health and remediation. Photo: Richard Nyberg, USAID

begun an engineering design and planning effort to develop an environmentally sound approach to dioxin containment at Danang Airport based on international standards.

US Relief Aid Reaches \$1 Million

USAID has provided \$1 million in emergency relief efforts this year in Vietnam. In the wake of Typhoon Ketsana, which slammed into Vietnam's central provinces in late September and claimed 163 lives, the Agency contributed \$750,000 in support to victims. The Vietnamese Red Cross and Save the Children distributed relief items, including household and hygiene kits, to over 80,000 Ketsana victims immediately after the storm. A cash relief program is currently under way to help families in several coastal provinces recover.

Typhoon Mirinae hit nine provinces in central Vietnam on November 2, claiming the lives of 123 Vietnamese and stranding thousands more. The latest contribution of \$250,000 from the American people through the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies funded basic emergency relief items such as blankets, water containers, cooking pots, mosquito nets, soap, and water purification tablets for more than 28,000 people badly affected by the typhoon.

In official correspondence on December 16, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said the Vietnamese people "highly appreciate and sincerely thank the Government and people of the United States for providing their condolences and emergency assistance of one million dollars to help support the people in affected areas to stabilize their life and address the heavy consequences caused by Ketsana and Mirinae Typhoons."

USAID Unveils New Avian and Pandemic Influenza Initiative

USAID has launched a new project to help boost Vietnam's capacity to detect, prevent and control avian and pandemic influenza in animals and humans. The initiative builds on four years of U.S. support in Vietnam for avian and pandemic influenza programming and will work in close collaboration with the Government of Vietnam, other partners such as the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization, to implement a coordinated avian and pandemic influenza program for Vietnam.

The project focuses on the provinces of Can Tho, Ha Nam, Hung Yen, Kien Giang, and Quang Tri to create policy dialogue to bring best practices and lessons learned at the district and commune levels to the national level to help leaders better understand the realities in the field and inform their decision making.

Project implementers will work with the focus provinces to develop pandemic preparedness plans and roll out a community-based surveillance system in which community health collaborators, health providers, and the private sector are trained on early detection, early reporting and early response to suspected avian influenza outbreaks.

The project will also provide clinical training in infection control and case management for health providers at commune, district, and provincial levels. Funding during the first year will be US\$3.65 million.



USAID-financed refrigerators are inspected and shipped to 715 communes in five provinces in Vietnam to help local veterinarians store poultry vaccines. The refrigerators are part of a two-year, provincial-level operational research project to identify best practices and policy guidance on safe, effective, and sustainable poultry vaccination to limit bird flu transmission. Photo: Richard Nyberg, USAID

For more news about the activities of USAID in Vietnam, visit:

<http://vietnam.usaid.gov>

PEPFAR Artists Stage HIV/AIDS



Popular Vietnamese singer Pham Duc Toan (above), a PEPFAR Vietnam Goodwill Friend, and dancers (below), entertain guests attending events sponsored by PEPFAR and the U.S. Embassy to mark World AIDS Day in Hanoi on December 1 and in Ho Chi Minh City on December 7. Photos: Richard Nyberg, USAID



USAID Launches Project to Prevent Human Trafficking in Mekong Delta

On December 2, USAID launched a two-year, \$500,000 project to reduce the vulnerability of communities in the Mekong Delta to human trafficking by increasing awareness of safe migration strategies and increasing the quality of care and support available to victims of trafficking. Partnering with the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences and The Asia Foundation, the project integrates safe migration into school and Community Learning Centers' curriculum. It also brings together education officials, schools, communities, universities and mass organizations to promote and increase public awareness on how people can migrate safely and avoid the risks associated with trafficking. USAID has supported anti-trafficking activities in Vietnam since 2005.