

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman**

For Immediate Release

June 25, 2008

Fact Sheet

United States Assistance to Vietnam

The United States provides substantial assistance to promote development, freedom, and good governance and to provide health and humanitarian assistance to Vietnam.

The United States and Vietnam are effective partners in economic reform, combating disease, and improving the lives of millions through many U.S. programs, including the work of the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). United States assistance to Vietnam supports a more open economy, promotes civil society, freedom, and the rule of law and helps vulnerable populations. The growth and evolution of U.S. assistance during the last decade reflects the deepening U.S.-Vietnam relationship. In FY 2008, total U.S. assistance to Vietnam is planned at approximately \$129 million. In recognition of the collaborative relationship it has established with Vietnam, the United States Government has recently delegated full authority to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Vietnam to plan and manage its assistance there. Highlights of USG programs in Vietnam for 2008 include:

- **Support for Continued Economic Reform**

The United States supports Vietnam's transition to an open market economy by strengthening trade and investment liberalization, particularly by making those legal reforms needed to implement commitments in the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and WTO accession agreement. The Support for Trade Acceleration (STAR) project focuses on legal and economic reform vital to the transition to a market economy, and it was the principal source of assistance to Vietnam in preparing for implementation of the BTA and WTO commitments. The Vietnam Competitiveness Initiative (VNCI) focuses on improvement of the business climate and competitiveness and government-wide regulatory and administrative reforms. These programs will continue, with increased funding, in 2008.

- **Better Governance and Rule of Law**

The United States' assistance programs aim to promote the rule of law, transparent legislative processes, education, and enhancing the opportunities for an active civil society. The STAR project has laid the groundwork for broader reforms leading to a stronger and more effective Judiciary and National Assembly. The United States and Vietnam will begin collaboration on new and enhanced governance programs in 2008, with estimated funding of \$5.3 million.

- **Support for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups**

United States assistance in this area targets the disabled, ethnic minorities, victims of natural disasters, and victims of trafficking, and preventing and mitigating the effects of environmental degradation. Since 1989, we have given \$43 million in assistance to help people with disabilities, war victims, displaced children and orphans. In 2008, the United States will continue to support anti-trafficking programs, particularly in more remote Mekong Delta provinces. We will also support Vietnam's efforts in disaster mitigation and emergency response. We will offer assistance on environmental issues critical to enhancing the quality of life in Vietnam, including sustainable water and sanitation activities, protection and management of forest reserves, combating the illegal trade in wildlife, and promoting regional cooperation in the Mekong River Basin.

- **Containing and Reversing the Spread of HIV/AIDS, Avian Influenza and Drug Addiction**

U.S. Government efforts to assist Vietnam in combating HIV/AIDS and avian influenza are extensive and effective. As one of 15 focus countries under PEPFAR, Vietnam is slated to receive approximately \$89 million in FY2008. As of March 31, 2008, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for 11,809 people in Vietnam, and provided care to 3,976 orphans and vulnerable children last year alone. Our programs reach more than 43,000 people affected by the HIV/AIDS virus. Vietnam has achieved considerable success in recent years in combating avian influenza, particularly by use of extensive poultry vaccination campaigns. As one of the largest donors, the United States has contributed over \$30 million since 2005, with \$12.4 million in FY 2008 alone. In May 2008, Vietnam launched six pilot methadone clinics in Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City, funded primarily by the United States, to combat heroin addiction.

- **Humanitarian Mine Action Programs**

In 1989, the United States began to provide assistance to landmine survivors and other war victims in Vietnam. In 1998 the United States broadened its aid to include clearance of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), mine risk education, research and development on new means to clear mines and ERW, and the provision of over \$10 million worth of demining equipment over subsequent years. The United States has since become the largest donor of humanitarian assistance for mine action programs in Vietnam, having invested over \$47 million to date in a broad spectrum of programs to enable Vietnam to improve its national capacity to deal with mines and ERW, and to help it become free from their humanitarian impact ("impact free"). For 2008, the U.S. Department of State alone will provide \$2,575,000 to continue to help Vietnam clear ERW and mines, receive ERW/mine risk education, and assist ERW/mine survivors.

- **Agent Orange/Dioxin Remediation**

Since 2000, the United States has spent over \$2 million to study the health and environmental effects of Agent Orange/dioxin and to assist Vietnamese scientists in capacity building for their study of this issue. Most recently, U.S. assistance has helped the government of Vietnam to investigate, characterize, and treat dioxin contaminated soils at a former U.S. air base.

The United States is now programming an additional \$3 million for environmental remediation and health activities in Vietnam. Earlier this month, the United States announced that it is seeking concept papers from qualified non-governmental organizations interested in designing and implementing model projects to support people with disabilities in Danang and surrounding areas. The United States will also soon hire an environmental advisor to support public health and environmental remediation efforts in Vietnam, with a focus on health-related programs and support for environmental remediation efforts in areas surrounding former U.S. air bases where large quantities of dioxin were stored and handled.