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Remarks by USAID Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg Workshop Presentation of the In-Pile Thermal Desorption Environmental Remediation Design to the Government of Vietnam

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HANOI, May 8, 2012 -- It is a privilege to join all of you this morning at the beginning of this important partnership, as the U.S. Government presents to the Government of Vietnam preliminary designs for a thermal treatment system to be used in the clean-up of dioxin from Agent Orange at Danang Airport. This is a significant milestone and part of a joint project between USAID and the Government of Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense.



USAID Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg addresses the dioxin workshop in Hanoi. Photo: R. Nyberg, USAID

As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted while visiting Vietnam just over a year ago, the dioxin in the ground is "a legacy of the painful past we share." However, the project we will undertake, as our two nations work hand-in-hand to clean up this site, is, again to quote the Secretary, "a sign of the hopeful future we are building together."

Indeed, through this meaningful activity, as well as our cooperation in areas such as HIV/AIDs, climate change and higher education, our nations are working together to take us toward an even more solid and fruitful partnership.

This project is also a telling example of key new reforms USAID has put in place under President Obama's administration. In particular, this project showcases two important pillars of our reform efforts.

First, it demonstrates USAID's renewed commitment to pioneering science, technology, and innovative approaches to development challenges.

In-Pile Thermal Desorption - or IPTD -- is proven technology already applied in the United States, Europe, and Asia to clean hazardous waste sites and ensure a clean and productive environment for millions of people and for the next generation. IPTD is proven to reduce dioxin to levels at or below the goals of this project, and USAID is proud to partner with the Government of Vietnam in its use.

Second, USAID is committed to promoting new business and the role of entrepreneurs - not always government - in solving big problems.

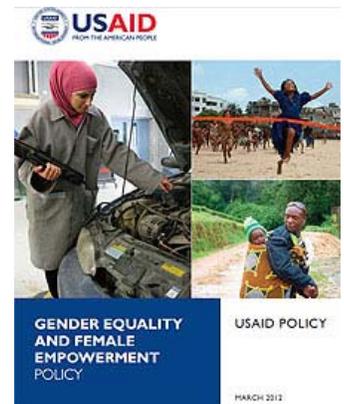
Throughout our history, America has encouraged a culture of entrepreneurship and risk-taking which create and sustain the efficient network of small businesses that is the backbone of any economy. Under reforms in place at USAID, we are seeking to make small businesses and non-organizations - both U.S. and Vietnamese - the backbone of our development effort. We are doing this by finding new partners and increasing the number of contract awards made to small businesses and non-governmental organizations.

TerraTherm - the firm contracted by USAID to design and implement the remediation strategy for this Project -- is one of America's most exciting new firms. Over the past decade, under CEO Ralph Baker, TerraTherm has developed and patented new methods, proven the applicability of thermal remediation, and completed numerous dioxin remediation projects worldwide, including on military bases.

Working alongside TerraTerm and the other U.S. contractors on the clean-up site will be a number of Vietnamese businesses and organizations. By working shoulder to shoulder we can learn from other and build capacity to better protect the environment. We firmly believe that development assistance is more effective and sustainable when local organizations bring their expertise and experience and join us in carrying out the work.

Around the world, no government or civil society organization has a monopoly on good ideas, ground truth, resources, or moral authority.

I applaud the Government of Vietnam, particularly Office 33 and the Ministry of National Defense, for their strong collaboration with the U.S. Government on this project.



I wish you all a productive workshop and successful clean-up effort. I am confident that our joint activities under this project will lead to even stronger ties in the years ahead and a better life for both of our peoples. Thank you.



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