

## Vietnam UPDATE

January 2010-March 2010

### UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

- April 2010: Ministry of Justice study mission in Washington, DC, and San Francisco, CA
- April 2010: Malaysia girls soccer delegation in Portland, OR, and San Francisco, CA

### RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- February 2010: USVTC submits a grant for a Vietnamese girls basketball sports program
- February 2010: USVTC and Baruch College submit Climate Change Fellows grant
- January 10-20, 2010: USVTC and STAR host a Vietnamese Labor delegation in Washington, DC, and San Francisco, CA

### USVTC and STAR Vietnam host a Vietnamese Labor Delegation in DC and California

USVTC and STAR Vietnam hosted a study mission from the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in Washington, DC, and San Francisco, CA, on January 10-20, 2010.

The objective of the mission was to learn from the legal framework and institutions. This is in order to help amend the labor code to meet with the new conditions of an economy in a transition while reflecting international standards and best practices in labor issues.



Furthermore, the mission is important because Vietnam is in the process of applying for GSP with the United States; labor issues are one of the most important sets of issues in determining GSP status.

MOLISA is the lead agency in developing the revised Labor Code. The current Labor Code was issued in 1994, when Vietnam was first implementing its sweeping reform program, 'Doi moi,' and developing a market economy.

At that time, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) dominated the economy; most workers worked for the public sector. Consequently, the Labor Code 1994 mainly regulated industrial relations in SOEs.

Since then, equalization of SOEs, massive foreign investment and increased international integration have transformed the economy. Many parts of the Labor Code 1994 are inadequate to deal with current conditions.

Consequently, the National Assembly has made revision of the Labor Code 1994 a high priority. A good legal framework for labor issues will protect the workforce, especially women, and enhance the competitiveness of Vietnam. Vietnam is currently integrating into the world's economy and it is important that Vietnam's laws reflect international standards and best practices in labor issues.

### **USVTC Applies for Climate Change and Sports Grants**

USVTC recently applied for two new grants from the United States Department of State. One of the proposals, in partnership with Baruch College, focused on creating a group of fellows from Indonesia, Australia, China, Japan, and the United States to examine best practices and strategies in combating climate change. The other, from The International Center Sports Corps, focused on using girls' basketball as a cultural exchange with Vietnam.

The two grants represent a continued interest by USVTC in climate change issues and sports exchange programs. USVTC has held two climate change conferences in Vietnam, in April 2009 and October 2008. USVTC has held sports exchange programs in Vietnam and Malaysia and, in 2009, received a grant to pursue a similar program in Indonesia.

### **USVTC Continues Climate Change Work with EDF and Others**

USVTC and EDF continued the second phase of their climate change work on "Assisting Vietnam's Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy."

The program was the second phase of a joint EDF-IC climate change program in Vietnam to include USVTC activities in partnership with EDF.

USVTC is continuing its work on climate change by submitting grant requests to the Department of State and the GE Foundation looking to further fund projects that support the transition of Vietnam to a low carbon economy.

One of these proposed programs is a climate change fellows program, proposed with Baruch College, which would discuss best practices and strategies for communication and policy regarding climate change issues.

Activities for this proposal would include workshops, seminars, and internships for fellows in New York City which would be organized by Baruch College over a four week period.

Also, the program would include a week in Washington, DC, where the fellows would attend workshops and conferences, including a fellow's congress at the Department of State.

The other proposal is a request by USVTC, working in partnership with BSR; Sidley Austin, LLP; EDF; as well as STAR Vietnam as appropriate, to promote energy efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon economy while protecting the Vietnamese economy.

The grant proposes working with the Vietnamese government on their energy efficiency laws and environmental tax laws to show effective means to convert to a low-carbon economy without causing economic damage.

The program would include workshops and seminars on best practices led in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City by BSR, as well as a study mission to be held in Washington, DC, and California in mid 2010.

USVTC has already held two climate change conferences in Vietnam and has a commitment to climate change working with EDF. The first climate change conference was held in October 2008, the second conference in April 2009.

For more information, please see our website.