

Remarks of Vikrum Sequeira, Senior Advisor, Bureau of Energy Resources, Department of State
Vietnam-U.S. Business Partnership for Energy Development
November 3, 2015, Washington, DC

Thank you, Ambassador Pham. It is my pleasure to be in the Vietnam House today for the Vietnam-U.S. Business Partnership for Energy Development.

2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam. I am really impressed by the progress that we have been making, and look forward to continued U.S.-Vietnam cooperation in the future. We are excited to build upon this deep and important relationship by increasing our cooperation in energy sector development.

Vietnam's electricity demand is projected to grow at a rate of 10-12 percent per year for at least the next decade. Renewable and cleaner energy can help stabilize budgets, reduce energy imports, and lower carbon emissions in the region.

Our goal is to work together to create a large, vibrant, open energy market in Vietnam with high levels of private investment in the development of renewable energy and electrical efficiency technologies. This includes wind, biomass, solar, waste to energy, and increased energy efficiency. This will support sustainable economic growth and reduce the vulnerability of the power supply in Vietnam.

The U.S. and Vietnam have already taken important steps toward realizing this goal.

At the seventh East Asia Summit in 2012, the U.S. and Vietnam, along with other partners in the region, launched the U.S.-Asia Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership (USACEP). We have committed to support Vietnam's goal to develop a competitive power market to meet the growing demand for electricity. This includes a USTDA-sponsored technical assistance effort for large-scale wind power integration and increased coordination between U.S. clean energy companies and Vietnam.

In May of this year, ENR's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Mary Warlick signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the development of the electricity market in Vietnam. The Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Electricity Regulatory Authority of Vietnam have done an exceptional job in taking steps to prepare the design of the competitive wholesale market.

As we move forward in energy cooperation, we must continue to work together on climate change. Vietnam is one of the most vulnerable nations in the world to the impacts and effects of climate change. We will continue focusing our assistance to Vietnam on adaptation, on clean energy, and sustainable development in order to address Vietnam's vulnerability to this global threat.

At the last Meeting of the Lower Mekong Initiative in August 2015, the U.S. and Vietnam emphasized multilateral work in energy, and recognized that energy, food, water, climate change, and security are linked. We are moving forward on the Smart Infrastructure for the Mekong (SIM) initiative – a technical and scientific assistance program for environmentally sound, socially equitable infrastructure, clean energy, and land and water use.

In sum, both of our countries share the goal of bringing cleaner and more reliable sources of energy to the Asia Pacific region, and competitive markets provide the opportunity to do that. We look forward to continuing to working together, sharing our experiences, and providing technical support to move the U.S.-Vietnam relationship forward, to improve energy efficiency, and to drive economic growth.