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## U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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### **USTDA AWARDS GRANT TO VIETNAM FOR FLOOD FORECASTING AND EARLY WARNING PROJECT**

HANOI, VIETNAM (August 14, 2009) – Today, the USTDA awarded a grant to the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) in Vietnam to establish the foundation for a disaster management system that will mitigate the impacts from natural disasters, a national priority. The system will help to forecast floods, assess their impacts, and disseminate warnings to the appropriate disaster managers and civil authorities.

USTDA funding in Vietnam is focused primarily on disaster management, water treatment sludge disposal, and intelligent highway system design. With this USTDA assistance, Vietnam will improve its flood early warning capacity and mitigate the negative effects of such natural disasters.

Signing the agreement on behalf of the U.S. government, USTDA Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak awarded the \$582,853 grant to MARD during a ceremony held in Hanoi, while Director General Le Van Minh represented MARD to sign the grant agreement. MARD's Minister Dr. Cao Duc Phat and U.S. Ambassador Michael Michalak witnessed and were present at the ceremony.

“The USTDA-supported project will strengthen MARD's flood forecasting, early warning and disaster management capabilities,” Zak stated at the event.

“This technical assistance will enable MARD and the DMC to develop an effective system that will become the core component of Vietnam's disaster management infrastructure.” said Zak.

MARD is the lead administrative body responsible for flood control programs and oversees the Disaster Management Center (DMC), which serves as the executing agency to implement the strategies for the flood and storm control. MARD has chosen the Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) of the University of Hawaii in Maui as the contractor that will provide the technical assistance.

Due to its geographical location, Vietnam is prone to various natural disasters, including typhoons with high winds, floods, and landslides. Flooding in particular has had

devastating effects on Vietnam's infrastructure and communities, thus emphasizing the need to implement a strategic plan for disaster mitigation.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

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