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USAID SUPPORTS VIETNAM'S EFFORTS TO SPEED CUSTOMS CLEARANCE WITH NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW WORKSHOP

HANOI – More than 60 Vietnamese government officials specializing in international trade today concluded a workshop to implement a National Single Window that will streamline cargo transfer and enhance trade efficiency by 2011.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored the workshop in partnership with the Association for Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Single Window initiative and in collaboration with the General Department of Vietnam Customs.

The National Single Window speeds customs clearance and the release of cargo by enabling data for imported goods to be submitted, processed and cleared in a single integrated process. Vietnam and other ASEAN member states have agreed to create their National Single Windows by 2012 in order to build an ASEAN Single Window (ASW). The ASW will link all ASEAN member states to increase regional trade and economic growth.

"Today's gathering of Vietnamese leaders and technical experts is an important step along the road to economic integration in ASEAN," said U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael W. Michalak. "It will improve ASEAN's ability to trade effectively and profitably with the rest of the world."

Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Finance, Do Hoang Anh Tuan emphasized Vietnam's and ASEAN's commitment to facilitating trade when he joined Ambassador Michalak at the workshop's launch. "Trade has been the engine of poverty-reducing growth in Vietnam," he said. "The National Single Window will create favorable conditions for business in this country and is part of our commitment to ASEAN integration."

ASEAN's Assistant Director of Market Integration, Quang Anh Le, was joined by a panel of experts from Indonesia, the Philippines and the United States who discussed challenges and experiences in single window implementation with Vietnamese officials.

The USAID ASW project, based in Jakarta, is assisting ASEAN establish a regional single window to meet its goal of establishing the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

The two-day Hanoi workshop marked the first time the USAID ASW project has assisted a national single window program, underscoring the U.S. Government's commitment to supporting Vietnam's economic development and regional economic integration.

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