

ISG Secretariat: Room 209-210 Building A9 - 2 Ngoc Ha, Hanoi – Tel: (84-4) 733 6610 – Fax: (84-4) 733 6624  
[Mailto:isginfo@fpt.vn](mailto:isginfo@fpt.vn) – Website: <http://www.isgmard.org.vn>

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*Information and experience equal knowledge,  
please share your knowledge with us!*

**1. Vietnam Consultative Group Meeting A Government-Donor Mid-year Review**

**Nha Trang, June 10, 2006** - Representatives from the Government of Vietnam, 22 donor countries, 13 international agencies, 4 international NGOs, and the private sector gathered for the informal mid-year Consultative Group (CG) meeting in Nha Trang during June 9-10, 2006. They reviewed the state of Vietnam's economy in the first 5 months of 2006, and discussed the implementation of Vietnam's next 5-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006-2010, the preparation for the post-WTO accession period, and the status for reforms in key sectors. In a separate session, they discussed mechanisms to strengthen anti-corruption efforts, public administration reform, and legal and judiciary development. They also assessed the effectiveness of Official

Development Assistance (ODA). Earlier mid-year meetings have been held in Hue in 1998, Hai Phong in 1999, Da Lat in 2000, Hoi An in 2001, Ho Chi Minh City in 2002, Sa Pa in 2003, Vinh in 2004, and Can Tho in 2005.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Pham Gia Khiem opened the meeting by taking stock of the challenges facing Vietnam. "The meeting is taking place at a defining moment. With tremendous efforts, we have fulfilled the important task to conclude bilateral negotiations for WTO accession with all partners. The National Assembly will debate and approve the 5-year Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2006-2010, at its ongoing session. The Plan reflects the harmony of factors needed for sustainable development, gives strong emphasis to social issues, poverty reduction and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. However, a plan is only as good as the outcomes it results

in. We look forward to donors' continued support to our efforts to monitor the progress of this Plan, and remain committed to raising aid effectiveness in line with the Ha Noi Core Statement. Going forward, it is imperative to strictly implement the Anti-Corruption Law, adopted by the National Assembly recently, and to investigate and handle corruption cases in a timely and open manner," said the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) provided an update on recent socio-economic developments in Vietnam, noting the strength of the economy in spite of challenges from natural hazards, such as drought, flooding and Avian influenza. The Government also provided donors with an overview of the new 5-year SEDP, its results framework and ongoing efforts to more closely link the plan to annual budgets. Donors commended Government for the openness of the process to prepare the SEDP, which included consultations not only within government and with mass organizations, but also of the grassroots level and with donors. Delegates emphasized the importance of building capacity at the provincial level and in line ministries to implement the SEDP. They took note of preparations of the Ministries of Rural Development, Education, Health and Transport to implement the new SEDP, and recommended that similar processes be carried through in other line ministries.

Full details can be obtained at:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/VIETNAMEXTN/0,,menuPK:387585~pagePK:64032538~piPK:141113~theSitePK:387565,00.html>

Source: WB

## 2. Vietnam Innovation Day awarded 55 community initiatives to support disadvantaged children and youth

**Hanoi, June 16, 2006** - The 2006 Vietnam Innovation Day competition, on the theme of "Innovations for Disadvantaged Children and Youth" today awarded 55 community projects, totaling above \$500,000. Each winning project will get a grant of up to \$10,000 in seed money to test their innovative ideas and to scale up efforts to bring about quality education, improve life of disadvantaged children and

youth in Vietnam, as well as ensuring their active participation in community activities that affect their lives.

The competition, jointly organized by the Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children (PEDC) under Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the World Bank, was open between February and April and attracted 244 proposals of which 34 were selected as finalists for PEDC project grants and 59 were selected as finalists for the World Bank managed Vietnam Innovation Day grants.

This year's Vietnam Innovation Day was organized around the theme of "Disadvantaged Children and Youth", which was chosen to raise public awareness of difficulties and risks faced by disadvantaged children between the ages of 4 and 14 and youth between the ages of 15 and 24 and provide support to them.

Details can be obtained from the World Bank office or <mailto:isginfo@fpt.vn>

Source: WB

## 3. Central Asia Regional Conference on Avian Influenza Control and Human Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Senior officials from development agencies and governments of all Central Asia countries and Kazakhstan, as well as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Mongolia, and Russian Federation are gathering for the first time at a large-scale regional conference to strengthen collaboration across national borders for improving preparedness to reduce the impact of avian influenza and a potential flu pandemic.

At the meeting, 12-13 June, senior government officials are to develop a regional plan of priority actions with a set of key progress monitoring indicators. UN System Influenza Coordination experts will present findings from a Global Data Gathering Exercise that assessed in May 2006 planning and preparedness for the diseases at national, regional and global levels.

Source: ADB

## 4. Senior Officials Discuss Avian Flu Priorities for Central Asia

**Almaty, Kazakhstan:** A two-day Central Asia Regional Conference on Avian Influenza Control and Human Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response, cosponsored by ADB, concludes 13 June in Almaty.

Senior government officials from human and animal health, preparedness, and contingency planning sectors from Central Asian countries, as well as Afghanistan, People's Republic of China, Mongolia, and Russian Federation, have been gathering with experts from development agencies to discuss global strategies to improve country and regional preparedness to reduce the impact of avian influenza and potential flu pandemic in this region.

The conference has presented an opportunity for the region's policymakers to enhance cooperation to review pandemic preparedness planning, sector-specific guidance, and multi-sectoral coordination to strengthen the capability of animal and human health experts to respond to avian influenza.

Experts outlined the influenza epidemiological situation and recommended strategies for public health surveillance and control of avian influenza in animals as well as in humans. The conference also presented findings from a Global Data Gathering Exercise that assessed in May 2006 planning and preparedness for the disease at national, regional, and global levels.

Half of the 10 Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries have detected the virus (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russian Federation). During the most recent CAREC-meeting held in Urumqi, China, on 10-11 April, the member countries recognized the urgency to strengthen regional collaboration, as well as involve all responsible government agencies and international organizations to stem the social and economic impact of avian influenza outbreaks, and the potential public disruption due to an influenza pandemic.

The conference was co-sponsored by ADB, CAREC, Center for Disease Control and Prevention and US Agency for International Development (USAID), OIE, the European Commission, United Nations System agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNSIC, WHO), and the World Bank.

Read the full news release in English at [http://www.adb.org/media/articles/2006/10\\_038-avian-flu-health/press-release-en.pdf](http://www.adb.org/media/articles/2006/10_038-avian-flu-health/press-release-en.pdf)

**Source:** ADB

## 5. APEC agriculture, finance experts meet in Nha Trang

**Khanh Hoa -7-6-2006:** Financial experts and Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) delegates gathered in southern Khanh Hoa Province's coastal city of Nha Trang on Thursday for a two-day meeting.

The meeting, which drew the participation of nearly 90 delegates from 21 APEC member economies and three international organisations, aims to review APEC's co-operative work with Viet Nam on preparations for the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting (FMM) to be held in Ha Noi in September.

At the meeting, financial officials from the 21 APEC economies discussed plans for the coming time and exchanged views on microeconomic and financial reforms in the region and the world.

Viet Nam and other APEC members, as well as international financial organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), heard recommendations for improving the next FMM.

The meeting also examined the working group's reports on reviewing APEC's financial co-operation process and proposed several reforms to achieve more effective results.

Members of APEC's Agricultural Technical Co-operation Working Group (ATCWG) also met in Nha Trang this time focusing discussions on the development of plans to contain bird flu and foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks.

At the meeting, which ran from June 13-14, APEC officials also discussed projects proposed to be financed by APEC in 2007. The meeting also saw the election of a new ATCWG chair for the 2007-09 term.

Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Bui Ba Bong said that regional co-operation in the agricultural sector had promoted the sharing of scientific and technical advances among APEC member

economies in the service of the region's development.

**Source:** VNS

## 6. ADB Launches New Medium-Term Strategy to Strengthen the Poverty-Reducing Impact of its Assistance

**Manila, Philippines** - ADB has launched its new medium-term strategy at (<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/MIS/2006/Medium-Term-Strategy-II.pdf>), covering 2006-2008, to strengthen the poverty-reducing impact of its assistance. To this end, it has adopted five priorities: (i) catalyzing investment, (ii) strengthening inclusiveness, (iii) promoting regional cooperation (<http://www.adb.org/Countries/cooperation.asp>) and integration, (iv) managing the environment (<http://www.adb.org/Environment/default.asp>), and (v) improving governance (<http://www.adb.org/Governance/default.asp>) and preventing corruption.

The new strategy is also designed to make ADB operations more selective and focused. It is the second in a series of medium-term strategies designed to flesh out the approach of the Long-Term Strategic Framework: 2001-2015 for shorter time periods, adjusting operational priorities in response to evolving conditions in each period.

"The new medium-term strategy sets out our vision of being an institution that is more effective and responsive to the needs of a region that is rapidly changing," ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda says. "It will strengthen the impact of our assistance on poverty reduction, and better support the efforts of developing member countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals."

The strategy emphasizes the importance of improving the investment climate as a prerequisite for sustaining high growth, job creation and rising productivity, the key levers for raising incomes and reducing poverty.

The strategy underlines the importance of rural infrastructure development and social development for strengthening inclusiveness and the poverty-reducing impact of growth. It also places a priority on support for regional cooperation and integration as a platform for

reinforcing country level efforts to reduce poverty and cross-country disparities.

Securing the poverty reducing benefits of growth has to be combined with environmental sustainability. The strategy, therefore, aims at increasing ADB's assistance for environment protection, particularly for energy efficiency and urban environment improvement.

As the poor are often the worst victims of weak governance, the strategy has identified strengthening governance and preventing corruption as priorities. ADB is working closely with other multilateral development banks to develop a common framework for preventing corruption.

Apart from its five priorities, the new strategy also discusses several adjustments in ADB's operational model. In future the core operational sectors will include road transport, energy, urban infrastructure, rural infrastructure, education (<http://www.adb.org/Education/default.asp>), and financial services. ADB's role in leveraging additional development investment through financing partnerships is emphasized, as well as the strengthening of project implementation to achieve development results.

**Source:** ADB

## 7. Agricultural sector prepares for WTO

**Ha Noi:** Viet Nam's agricultural sector is taking steps to improve the competitiveness of farm products to help growers secure a strong footing in domestic and foreign markets once the country joins the World Trade Organization (WTO), said Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat.

In an interview with the Vietnam News Agency, he said the sector has implemented plans of action aimed at restructuring agricultural and rural economic production models to develop more streamlined operations.

The ministry has carried out numerous initiatives designed to encourage the application of biotechnology, generate new varieties of crops and livestock, develop rural economies and infrastructure, enhance productivity and quality, and improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry

sectors, Phat said.

It has also worked to improve the level of qualification among workers and managers in the sector by proposing the government fund education and training programmes for specifically-targeted beneficiaries, he added.

Discussing future plans, Phat said the ministry would strengthen agricultural development promotion management, build a system to update farmers on current crop prices, tighten institutional management and ensure growers have access to sufficient materials for agricultural production.

Minister Phat said he believed that the state always created favorable conditions for domestic and foreign businesses of all economic sectors to invest in agricultural and rural development. The country would continue to draft new laws in order to create a more transparent legal framework, he added. Many Vietnamese agricultural products - including rice, coffee, rubber, tea, pepper, cashew nuts and tropical fruits - can compete favorably with products from foreign countries, he said, adding some of these products have already taken leading positions in the world markets in recent years.

Viet Nam has adjusted policies to conform to international practices and to create an equal investment environment in order to attract more foreign investment in the agricultural sector, said Phat. The country now has 781 foreign-invested agricultural projects with a combined registered capital of over US\$1.75 billion.

However, he warned the agricultural sector may face difficulties when Viet Nam accedes to the WTO, as many of its products are not competitively priced and are not trademarked. Many local farmers, especially those in remote areas, may lose their jobs if local companies cannot compete profitably and are forced to cut production, the minister said.

**Source:** VNS

## 8. Linking small farmers to markets

**Bali -17-06-2006:** Vietnamese farmers face many difficulties in getting easy access to markets, which causes their farm produce to earn them less money than expected, a representative from CRS Viet Nam told an

international seminar on linking small farmers to markets held in Bali, Indonesia, last week, entitled "Enhancing Capacities of NGOs and Farmer Groups to Link Farmers to Markets."

Participating in the seminar was the representative the Institute for Research and Co-operation, another Viet Nam-based NGO. The representative said Vietnamese farmers had exerted themselves to earn better incomes by making their products more presentable in the market. The Institute strived to conduct surveys and studies to find how farmers could best group themselves together for their mutual benefit in the market.

The seminar, co-sponsored by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Belgium-based VECO Indonesia, was attended by about 50 participants representing various NGOs, development groups, market players and interested parties, as well as support service sectors from different parts of Southeast Asia. VECO Viet Nam Country Representative Marco van Grinsven and his Programme Officers.

The seminar served as a venue for discussing and articulating pressing issues and concerns on agricultural marketing and how best NGOs and farmers' groups could enhance their roles in assisting their small producer beneficiaries to ensure greater returns from their produce.

The participants recognised the emerging roles of NGOs, farmer groups and the farmers themselves in the context of new market requirements. Keynote speaker Rene Salazar of the Philippine-based SEARICE admitted that civil societies and organisations are facing new challenges by bringing primary producers into mainstream markets, as one needs to balance the interest of the market with the welfare of the farmers.

Another keynote speaker, Dr. Andrew Shepherd of FAO, cited several factors that affected successful linkages, and further asserted his analysis of each factor linking farmers to markets to guide NGOs and farmer groups working in these development areas.

**Source:** VNS

## 9. New fund to promote investment

**Ha Noi:** The Ministry of Planning and Investment's VND30 billion (US\$1.9 million) Investment Promotion Fund will be launched

next month, said Nguyen Anh Tuan, Deputy Director of the ministry's Foreign Investment Agency (FIA).

The fund was established to mobilize capital from domestic and international companies and promote Viet Nam as a destination for investment, he said.

He added that so far Viet Nam's image has not been advertised properly overseas due to a sheer lack of funding. If the Government wanted to set up representative offices abroad to serve investment promotion contact, it must allocate funding for such activities.

Tuan said that while the fund is being launched with funding coming exclusively from the state budget, future capital is expected to be sourced from foreign-invested projects.

The Viet Nam Investment Fund (VIF), the nation's largest, was launched earlier this year with initial financing of VND1.6 trillion, and is scheduled to operate for 10 years.

Specialized investment funds, such as the real estate-oriented VinaLand Fund and the Mekong Enterprise Fund, which invests in private Vietnamese companies, are also emerging as a growing trend in Viet Nam, he said.

A number of existing funds are also stepping up investment promotions in order to attract more foreign investment into the country, including Vietcombank fund management joint venture project and Galaxy's Viet Nam Pioneer Partners.

According to the ministry, a total of 82 foreign direct investment projects with a combined registered capital of \$236 million, were licensed in May, bringing to 281 the number and \$2 billion the value- of FDI projects registered since January this year.

**Source:** VNS

#### 10. Israeli agro-tech delegation to sign cooperation agreements with Vietnamese universities

A delegation from "International Center for Agricultural Studies in Israel" visits Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City from June 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 to look for prospects of cooperating with Vietnamese universities in sending Vietnamese students to attend on-spot training and academic studies in the field of agriculture at Granot's facilities in Israel.

The delegation consists of Mr. Yaron Tamir-the general manager and Mr. Tzevi Caminker-the chairman of agro-studies.

The delegation is to meet with leaders of Ministry of Education and training, and visit Hanoi Agriculture University and Ho Chi Minh Nong Lam University. The delegation is expected to sign Memorandums of Understanding with 4 universities: Hanoi Agriculture University, Thai Nguyen Nong Lam University, Ho Chi Minh Nong Lam University and Can Tho University.

The **International Center for Agricultural Studies in Israel** is part of the Granot Group-the leading agricultural enterprise in Israel. The Center provides advanced studies and training in various agricultural areas to foreign students coming from many countries. So far, the Center has signed Memorandums of Understanding with Universities in Myanmar and the Philippines.

For more information, please contact: Vu Tu Manh, press and information officer at: Tel: 04-8433140, ext 129; Mobile: 0912 765 871; Fax: 04-8435760; mailto:vutumanh@gmail.com; Israeli Embassy

**Source:** Israeli Embassy

#### 11. Viet Nam Celebrates The International Year Of Desertification 2006

**Ha Noi, 17 June 6, 2006** - Today, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) jointly organize a national meeting to celebrate the International Year of Deserts and Desertification 2006.

The theme of this celebration is "The beauty of desert - and the challenges of desertification". The message alerts the world's citizens that deserts are magnificent with their endless sandunes and sunshine. Yet, desertification poses serious challenges for mankind.

It is estimated that 9.34 million hectares of land in Viet Nam are degraded, that's more than five times the area of Nghe An, Viet Nam's largest province, and a substantial part of that is prone to desertification. Over the past 10 years, drought has caused severe impacts in the agricultural and forestry production in many areas, especially in the central regions and highlands of Viet Nam. According to FAO and UNESCO, Viet Nam has 462.000 ha of

coastal sand area, of which 87.800 ha is sand dunes and moving sand.

"Desertification can be effectively tackled through strengthened community participation and cooperation at all levels. It should be everyone's responsibility", said Mr. Bernard O'Callaghan, IUCN Viet Nam Programme Coordinator and Acting Country Representative.

To ensure successful implementation of the United Nations Convention on Desertification, the Government of Viet Nam has formulated a National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Desertification 2002-2010. The NAP is closely linked with a number of key strategies such as the Viet Nam's Agenda 21 on Sustainable Development Orientation, the National Strategy on Environmental Protection, the National Strategy on Forestry, the National Strategy on Comprehensive Development and Poverty Alleviation, and others. The major objectives of the NAP are: (i) to improve forest management; (ii) to strengthen land use and management; (iii) to enhance water resource management and mitigate drought impacts; (iv) to respond to the urgent needs of local communities in the drought prone areas. The four priority areas identified in NAP are: the Central Coastal provinces, the Northwest provinces, Long Xuyen quadrangle and the Central Highlands.

At present, there are 50 programme and projects on sustainable land management. Vietnam is working to establish a Country Programme Partnership for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) funded by the World Bank, the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), and the Trust Fund for Forests (TFF). As of March 2003, a separate operational programme on sustainable land management was initiated by GEF. Other bilateral and multilateral agencies such as UNDP, UNEP, GTZ, KOICA have been working with the Government to formulate and implement projects on Land Degradation and Desertification.

Mr. Subinay Nandy, UNDP Acting Resident Representative said: "The UNDP in Viet Nam is committed to continue and enhance assistance to combating desertification and the risks associated with drought, and to take part in the process of implementing the UNCCD and NAP in Viet Nam".

The International Year of Deserts and Desertification will last from June 17th, 2006 to June 17th, 2007.

For more information, please contact: Ms Pham Minh Thoa, UNCCD Focal Point, MARD.

Tel: 7332263, <mailto:mthoa-dfd@netnam.vn>

Source: UNDP

## 12. Desertification and drylands focus of this year's World Environment Day

**QUANG TRI, June 2, 2006** -- "Drylands are found in all regions, cover more than 40 per cent of the Earth and are home to nearly 2 billion people -- one-third of the world's population," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a recent statement. "For most dryland dwellers, life is hard and the future often precarious. It is essential that we do not neglect them or the fragile habitats on which they depend."

"Don't Desert the Drylands" is the theme of this year's World Environment Day and Viet Nam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and the Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee organized a National Celebration today for World Environment Day under the theme "Deserts and Desertification."

"It is estimated that 9.34 million hectares of land in Viet Nam are degraded, that's more than five times the area of Nghe An, Viet Nam's largest province," said United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Head of Environment Programmes, Mr. Koos Neefjes. "In the provinces of Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan, more than one third of the total land area will desertify without efforts to: live with the reality of droughts; adopt integrated river basin management and water conservation; move to integrated agro-ecosystems and; improve the sustainable water supply, especially to the rural poor."

Quang Tri was selected as the location for the Environment Day observances to draw particular attention of the government and all Vietnamese people to the central coast region where people are encountering drought, sand-dune movement, land degradation, and poverty.

"Improper and inappropriate management of lands has led to degradation and desertification in various parts of Viet

Nam. As a result, about 50% of the total 33 million hectares of natural land of the country has shown problems,” said the Minister of MONRE, Mr. Mai Ai Truc. “We need to initiate concrete actions to ensure sustainable land management, firstly by a full implementation and enforcement of the land law. I would like to request all authorities, sectors, associations, businesses and every individual initiate viable activities to eliminate land degradation and desertification.”

Every year the World Environment Day is celebrated by UN member states on 5 June. The main objective of these celebrations is to reaffirm the world’s commitment to environmentally sustainable and equitable development. It provides everyone with an opportunity to carry out activities that address environmental problems and issues within our own local context.

This year, Algiers, the capital of Algeria, has been chosen to host the world celebration. With its geography, history and culture inextricably bound with the world’s largest and best-known desert, the Sahara, Algeria is a good choice to highlight every facet of this complex environmental issue.

For further information, please contact: Mr. Dao Xuan Lai, Programme Officer, Tel: 942 1495 Ext. 178, <mailto:dao.xuan.lai@undp.org> Dang Huu Cu, Public affairs Associate, Tel: 942 1495 Ext. 179; <mailto:dang.huu.cu@undp.org>

For more information on World Environment Day, visit: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2006/english/index.asp>

**Source:** UNDP

### 13. World Bank approved \$100 million to support reforms in Vietnam

**Washington DC, June 23, 2006:** The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors approved \$100 million in no-interest loan for Vietnam to support the country’s efforts to reduce poverty.

The fifth Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC 5) provides direct support to the government budget in recognition for the progress accomplished in policy reforms over the last year, across several important areas:

**Transition to a market economy:** The Credit endorses measures to increase internal and

external competition and improve efficiency and resource allocation in the economy. Policy actions under the credit help improve the regulatory framework for private sector development, and enhance transparency and accountability in State-owned enterprise operations and in the banking sector. The credit supports the initiation of fundamental changes in the financial sector, designed to transform the State bank of Vietnam into a modern central bank, to strengthen the commercial orientation of State-owned commercial banks, and to develop capital markets.

**Inclusive and sustainable development:** The PRSC also recognizes measures to promote human development through upgrading the quality of education (especially in poor zones), promoting inclusive education for children living with disabilities, improving the access of the poor to health services, and helping secure asset ownership through the implementation of the new Land Law. The proposed credit also recognizes important policy measures leading to more sustainable management of natural resources, including through strategic environmental assessments.

**Building modern governance:** The proposed credit supports actions to implement the government’s public financial management reform agenda. More effective public resource allocation is being achieved through better coordination between plans and budgets and through the adoption of Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks. New budget allocation norms increase the coherence between capital and recurrent expenditures, and will channel more resources to poorer provinces. The planning process has been considerably strengthened through broader consultation with stakeholders and greater focus on development outcomes. An anti-corruption law targets greater accountability in public finance and public administration. The credit also endorses the ambitious agendas of the legal and judiciary system development strategies. Numerous bilateral and multilateral donors have expressed their support to the PRSC process in Vietnam. Nineteen of them have participated in the preparation of this credit, and have been actively involved in the policy areas where they are stronger. Subject to confirmation, the following donors intend to

contribute resources to the PRSC 5 operation through grant finance or parallel lending: the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Switzerland, while not co-financing, provided financial support to the coordination of the process.

**Source:** WB

#### 14. Conference on trade reputation and quality of agricultural products

**In May and June 2006:** MARD's Department of Agro-forestry products processing and Salt Industry held three conferences to guide implementation of the issues relating to registration, selection and popularizing of Vietnamese goods, agro-forestry products of high quality and with reputation trademark in 2006 in the three regions of the country (in Hanoi on 30 May; in Binh Dinh on 2 June and in HCMC on 6 June).

During these conferences, representatives from Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDs), and some enterprises trading in agro-forestry products were instructed and informed of the regulation for registration and selection, the needed steps of appraisal to get their products of high quality and reputation certified. As planned, by June 2006, DARDs will have completed establishment of their local selection committees, so they will be able to receive registration files from local enterprises. From 5 September 2006, Ministerial Committees will receive the registration files and complete the selection, so Vietnamese products of high quality and reputation that meet out-set criteria will be certified by 25 October 2006.

**Source:** Department of Agro-forestry products processing and Salt industry-MARD

#### 15. Sub-Mekong region to maintain water flows and prevent floods

**HCMC 22 June 2006:** Ministers of Agriculture and Water Resources of the member countries of the Mekong River Commission signed an agreement to maintain water flows in the Mekong river region in an effort to fight against drought and floods.

Accordingly, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam will cooperate in maintaining the Mekong river water flows at an acceptable low level in the dry seasons, maintaining natural flows into the Lake Sea (Biển Hồ) in Cambodia. Also as indicated in the agreement, the countries in Mekong region should not discharge floods in reservoirs that cause man-made high floods in the lower areas in the floods season.

All the issues agreed are in accordance with the framework of the rules of the 1995 Agreement on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Mekong River Region.

Minister of MARD, Dr. Cao Duc Phat said maintaining of stable flows in the basin would reduce floods on the Mekong river. "Around-the-year regulation of flows has an important significance to the economies and societies in the lower area, particular the Cuu Long river basin of Vietnam" - said Dr. Phat.

The Chairman of the Mekong River Commission, Mr. Yongyut Tiyaipairat said all the countries need to get ready to fight against the exhaustion of the water resources. "If we use water resources in an effective manner and prevent adverse impacts, and preserve ecology balance, then the Mekong river will be of great resources to all the countries in the sub-region" - Mr. Yongyut emphasized.

**Source:** VN Express

#### 16. List of legal documents relating to the agriculture and rural development sector (issued in June 2006)

##### By the Prime Minister

1. Decision 813/QD-TTg dated 7 June 2006 by the Prime Minister on approval of the pre-feasibility report of the project "Forestry development for improved livelihoods of Central Highlands.
2. Decision 136/2006/QD-TTg dated 8 June 2006 by Prime Minister on approval of the project on institutional arrangement and reforms of State-owned agro-forestry enterprises under management of Tay Ninh's Provincial People Committee.
3. Decision 138/2006/QD-TTg dated 16 June 2006 by the Prime Minister on approval of the project on institutional arrangement and reforms of State-owned agro-forestry enterprises under

- management of Thanh Hoa's Provincial People Committee.
4. Decision 142/2006/QD-TTg dated 19 June 2006 by the Prime Minister on approval of the project on institutional arrangement and reforms of State-owned agro-forestry enterprises under management of MARD.
  5. Decision 144/2006/QD-TTg dated 20 June 6 2006 by the Prime Minister regarding application of the quality management system ISO 9001: 2000 in the Government administrative agencies.

#### By MARD

6. Circular 42/2006/TT-BNN dated 1 June 2006, guiding implementation of some articles specified in the Decision 394/QD-TTg dated 13 March 2006 by the Prime Minister regarding encouraging investment in building and expanding facilities involved in slaughtering, preserving processing of domestic cattle and poultry, and focal industrial slaughtering facilities.
7. Decision 43/2006/QD-BNN dated 1 June 2006 on issuance of the Regulations on international exchange of scarce animal genes.
8. Decision 45/2006/QD-BNN dated 6 June 2006 on publicizing the list of supplemental vaccines, bio-finished products, microorganism, chemical substances allowed for use in veterinary in Vietnam in 2006.
9. Decision 46/2006/QD-BNN dated 6 June 2006 on publicizing the list of supplemental vaccines allowed for use in Vietnam in 2006.
10. Decision 47/2006/QD-BNN dated 6 June 2006 on issuance of the regulation on management of home-raising bears.
11. Decision 48/2006/QD-BNN dated 9 June 2006 on quarantine uniforms, badge, strap, signpost, and cards.
12. Decision 49/2006/QD-BNN dated 13 June 2006 on issuance of the regulation on marking animals transported within the country, exported and imported.
13. Decision 50/2006/QD-BNN dated 14 June 2006 on regulating the functions, tasks, mandate and organization of the Center for Appraisal of Agriculture and rural development Safety Technical under management of the MARD Department of Agro-forestry products processing and salt industry.
14. Decision 51/2006/QD-BNN dated 16 June 2006 regulating the conditions for importing, trading and allocating, provision of foot-and-mouth vaccines.
15. Decision 52/2006/QD-BNN dated 23 June 2006 issuing the regulation on quality of plants seeds.

**Source:** Department of Legislation-MARD