



## PRESS RELEASE

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### HEAD OF GENEVA INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR HUMANITARIAN DEMINING VISITS VIET NAM

Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan will strengthen international cooperation in Unexploded Ordnance clean up when he hosts Ambassador Stephan Husy, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and President of Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (IC-VVAF) Ms Virginia Foote on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

On March 27<sup>th</sup> in Hanoi, Ambassador Husy and Ms Foote co-sign a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the National Mine Action Standing Board of the National Mine Action Program (Program 504) represented by two Deputy Heads including Commander in Chief of the National Defense Ministry's Engineering Corps Major General Pham Quang Xuan and Vice Minister of Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) Mr Bui Hong Linh.

Also on March 27 a round table discussion among stakeholders on mine action in Vietnam is jointly organized by MOLISA, GICHD and IC-VVAF.

Ambassador Husy said: "The GICHD values this Memorandum of Understanding with Vietnam, particularly as the Government has made mine action a priority, which Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung highlighted in a key meeting with members of the National Mine Action Steering Committee on February 26<sup>th</sup>."

"Vietnam still faces enormous challenges from unexploded ordnance (UXO) and other legacies of war, has made tremendous progress in addressing these challenges. It is engaging effectively with the international mine action community."

"Vietnam has been a pioneer because, so far, it has cleared landmines and unexploded ordnance largely using its own resources. Now it is engaging more with the international community. We look forward to supporting Vietnam's efforts, while also learning from its experience with landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war."

The United States has been instrumental in fostering openness and global integration of Vietnam's mine action program, particularly through its long-standing support of IC-VVAF which has close historical relations with the Vietnamese Government.

U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam David Shear noted: "As the largest international supporter of mine action in Vietnam, the United States believes this MOU will further enhance our collective partnership and complement such achievements as the Vietnam Government's formation of the National Steering Committee on Mine Action and development of a 2010-2015 National Action Plan."

IC-VVAF President Ms Virginia Foote said: “This is an unprecedented partnership between the National Mine Action Standing Board of Vietnam and international agencies, to jointly conduct innovative survey and clearance methods, to develop national mine action standards, to set up quality management systems, and other strengthening capacity programs. This is an important new step that promotes closer cooperation to address the consequence of war in Vietnam. There is much work to be done.”

She said GICHD would host the global Secretariat for the forthcoming Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Ambassador Husy said the Cluster Munitions Convention would be relevant to Vietnam given the millions of unexploded “bombies” still littering the Vietnamese countryside and mountainous areas.

The GICHD plays a number of key roles within the international mine action sector: it hosts the secretariat to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and will host the secretariat to the Convention on Cluster Munitions when it is established; it maintains the International Mine Action Standards on behalf of the United Nations; it developed and supports the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) in over 50 countries, including Viet Nam; and it provides expert advice to countries around the world which are affected by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

Working in partnership with IC-VVAF and other mine action organisations, the GICHD has had an active program of support for Viet Nam since 2009. In March 2013 alone, the GICHD and IC-VVAF have:

- Worked with the Ministry of Defence on the design for a pilot project on Quality Management for mine action
- Consulted with members of Executive Office 504 on the mandate and organisation of the new Viet Nam Mine Action Centre (VNMAC)
- Launched a pilot project on new approaches to survey and clearance with BOMICEN, Engineering Command, VVAF and Norwegian Peoples Aid

In the coming months, GICHD and IC-VVAF will also support Vietnamese mine action officials on the finalisation of the draft Viet Nam Mine Action Standards and will undertake a study on a database to support

Vietnam’s programs of assistance to landmine/UXO victims and other persons with disabilities.

Ambassador Husy’s visit comes just before Vietnam’s National Mine Action Day (March 30th), as part of the global Mine Action Day (April 4<sup>th</sup>), which for 2013 Vietnam will feature the theme of “Mine Action For Peace”.

In April, delegations of Vietnamese officials will visit Geneva to attend two key international meetings hosted by the GICHD: the annual meeting of National Program Directors followed by the Intersessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

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## PHOTOS OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN GICHD, VVAF AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



Training on Quality Management  
in Vietnam Mine Action



Workshop in Development of Vietnam  
Mine Action Standards



GICHD expert joined the Pilot Project on  
the application of Land Release Process  
in Thanh Hoa province



Meeting between IC-VVAF, Ambassador Husu,  
Director of GICHD and Ministry of Foreign Affairs



MOU Signing Ceremony Cooperation on the Reduction of the Impact  
of Landmines and explosive remnants of war between GICHD, VVAF & MOLISA

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