OPENING REMARKS BY DR. VU NGOC ANH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF VIET NAM CUSTOMS

Mr. Paul Van Son, Director of the Office of Export Control Cooperation, Bureau of Non- Proliferation, US Department of States

Mr. Michael Michalak, US Ambassador to APEC

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the great honour to be on behalf of the leaders of the General Department of Viet Nam Customs to be here with you today at the opening ceremony of this APEC Conference on Export Control. Viet Nam is honoured to be co-sponsor of this important event.

Firstly, on behalf of Viet Nam delegation and myself, I would like to express my thanks to the host economy and the organising board for the excellent preparations and the hospitality extended to all delegations to this conference.

As we are already aware, at the APEC Ministerial Meeting in 2004, our Ministers adopted the APEC Key Elements for Effective Export Control Systems, and at the same time, agreed to further implement other cooperative activities to facilitate trade, flow of goods and prevent the illegal trafficking of weapons of mass destructions. The implementation of APEC commitments in export control as well as in other areas is on voluntary and flexible basis, according to conditions and circumstances of member economies. In order to effectively implement these commitments, member economies, especially the developing economies of APEC, needs technical assistance for capacity building. We are of the view that the Conference today is such an activity given this will be a good chance for experts in customs and trade management area to exchange information on policy, legal framework, practice as well as their experience in export control from their own economies.

We all know that APEC is a forum of 21 dynamic economies in Asia-Pacific which is of great importance in international trade. The prime target for APEC is to establish a free trade area by 2010 for developed and 2020 for developing member economies. This points out that trade cooperation in general and trade facilitation in particular among member economies take a vital role to the development of each member economy as well as the whole region. Over the past time, APEC has gained encouraging results in the promotion of trade. Since 1998, the average tariff rate reduced from 17% down to 6%. Export volume increases by 113%. These achievements have contributed to economic, commercial relationship and development of the whole region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since its accession in 1998, Viet Nam has been an active member of APEC, continuously supports the promotion of trade and investment in Asia-Pacific as well as the cooperation efforts to further enhance regional security. Being fully aware of the role of APEC, Viet Nam will be the host of APEC activities in 2006, including the 18th APEC Ministerial Meeting and the 14th APEC Leaders Meeting. As the host of APEC 2006, Viet Nam undertakes to enhance the establishment of APEC as a dynamic, prosperous and safe community.

] Viet Nam is willing to further push up trade, investment and cooperation in science and technology for the interest of all nations, we are also fully aware of the importance of the prevention of any intention to make use of activities in these areas for development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our consistent position is to push up disarmament, prevention of proliferation of WMD. In such direction, Viet Nam has acceded to international legal instruments which prevent the proliferation of the WMD, we also support the initiatives aiming at prevention of WMD, in conformity with the provisions of international arrangements on WMD, in the principle of respect for national independence, sovereignty, and international laws. The enhancement of the proliferation of WMD also requires us to respect other commitments in trade facilitation and technology transfer for peaceful purposes.

Viet Nam pledges not to provide any assistance of any form to non-state actors who have the intention to develop, acquire, produce, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their launch systems. In practice, Viet Nam has adopted and implement a comprehensive legal framework to ensure the implementation of its commitments, Viet Nam not only prohibits the non-state actors, but our Government itself is also not involved in these activities. The legal framework covers a lot of areas: from setting out the control list, rules for obtaining permissions to legal provisions on customs control and trade management. The General Department of Customs also enters into several cooperative arrangements with other customs administrations and international organisations in fighting illegal cross-border trafficking of illegal goods, counter-terrorism, prevention of trans-national crime.

Our delegations hopes to have an active contributions to the success of this Conference. We would like to express our thanks to delegations from member economies for your presence and hope for your active participation in this Conference.

Finally, I would like to convey to all of you my best wishes for good health and happiness.

Thank you for your attention./.