

**Congratulatory Remarks - MoU Signing Ceremony**  
**between American Planning Association - International Division**  
**(APA-ID) & Vietnam Urban Planning and Development Agency**  
**(VUPDA)**

**Tuesday, November 21, 2023; 08:30m**

Mr. Trần Ngọc Chính – VUPDA President, Former Deputy Minister of Construction

Mr. Jing Zhang – Chair, APA-ID

Good morning!

On behalf of the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, I extend a warm congratulations on the occasion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the American Planning Association - International Division (APA-ID) and the Vietnam Urban Planning and Development Agency (VUPDA)!

This MoU signifies our shared commitment to development and sustainability.

As you may know, we are in the middle of an exciting time in U.S.-Vietnam relations. During President Biden's historic visit in September, our two countries charted a new course, with an upgrade to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the highest level for U.S.-Vietnam relations.

A key focus of this upgraded relationship is a shared vision for supporting innovation-driven, inclusive economic growth.

Earlier this month, Consul General Susan Burns attended the U.S. - Ho Chi Minh City Smart Cities Dialogue and Networking Event. The event featured eleven U.S. companies that highlighted their technology solutions and expertise in helping HCMC re-start their work on smart cities technologies.

The signing of this MoU today will pave the way for even more collaboration among urban planners and planning educators in the two countries for a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for all.

I am thrilled to know that the partnership between APA-ID and VUPDA was made possible with the tireless effort of Ms. Mai Nguyen, a U.S.-exchange alumna.

Mai and her Humphrey host institution - the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have worked closely with various colleagues in academia and industry professionals in Vietnam and the U.S. since 2022 to initiate and facilitate knowledge exchange and project partnership among planners and planning educators in the two countries.

The U.S. - Vietnam relationship is strengthened by the cooperation among individuals like Mai and among organizations such as APA-ID and VUPDA.

I eagerly anticipate the positive impact from this partnership.

Thank you.