

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

How are you?

My sixth Vietnam Journal as a JICA expert is about the MOU agreement and Women's Day in Vietnam.

1. MOU AGREEMENT

What is "MOU"?

MOU stands for "Memorandum of Understanding," which is an agreement between two or more parties. Recently, some related parties got the MOU for matters including the Project's operations and each contracting party's role in the Plan Development for Sewage Works of Nam Dinh City.

The MOU includes the agreement's contents after a cover page of signing. Its primary items are backgrounds of the operation, purpose; materials; schedule; report; Vietnamese roles, and future discussions.

The purpose and materials of the operation, schedule, and report in MOU are almost the same as the TOR (Terms of Reference) I mentioned in my previous newsletter. The MOU describes the role sharing of each related party, which is different.

Though MOU is no legal binding force, signing MOU is considered to allow related parties to be much more aware of their involvement in the Project.



Photo 1: Signing MOU agreement

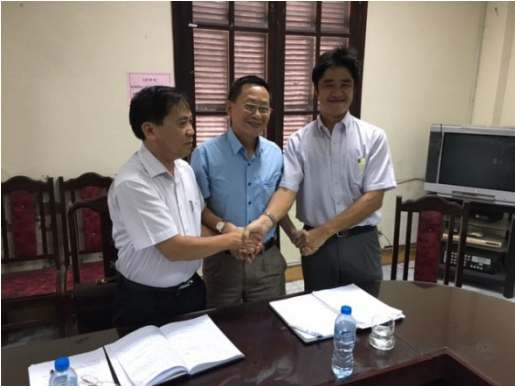


Photo 2: After the signing. From the left, Mr. Chi, the Vice Chair of CPC, Mr. Tuan, the Vice Director of DOC, and Mr. Wako, the JICA Expert.

This time, related parties of the MOU agreement were ATI (Agency of Technical Infrastructure) of MOC (Ministry of Construction), DOC (Department of Construction) of Nam Dinh Province, CPC (City People's Committee) of Nam Dinh City, VSC (Vietnam Sewage Center) project team of JICA. The other day, three representatives, except for absent ATI, signed the MOU agreement (photo1&2.)

The Nam Dinh Project, which has completed the development of TOR, contracts with consultants, and MOU agreement with stakeholders except for ATI, is proceeding through the phase of practical operations.

2. WOMEN'S DAY IN VIETNAM

Have you heard of "Women's day in Vietnam"?

In Vietnam, people celebrate women's day twice a year. One is International Women's Day on March 8; the other is National Women's Day on October 20.

International Women's Day (Ngày Quốc tế Phụ nữ) is a well-known anniversary, especially in the present/former socialist countries, while not very popular in Japan. National Women's Day is called "Women's Day in Vietnam (Ngày Phụ nữ Việt Nam)" to separate from March 8.

Women's day in Vietnam originates from the establishment of the Anti-imperial Women's Society, the current Vietnam Women's Union set up on October 20, 1930, when Ho Chi Minh established the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Therefore, in Vietnam, people think about women's issues and respect them more seriously on October 20 than on March 8. Many workshops, seminars, or forums to discuss women's issues and awards ceremonies are held on the day.



Photo 3: Women's day sale



Photo 4: Women's day lunch

On Women's day in Vietnam, there is a tradition that men send small gifts to their close women, such as wives, girlfriends, mothers, etc. A popular gift is flowers, especially roses. So the price of roses jumps by more than twice as much as usual when Women's day gets closer. While many people choose shampoos, face washes, and candies as

affordable gifts; some want to send fancy gifts recently. Many pieces of jewelry or clothing shops get to have a Women's day sale (Photo 3.) On the other hand, some men show appreciation by doing housework for their wives or mothers instead of sending gifts.

In our office, Expert Wako proposed that men invite women to lunch (photo 4.) At the lunch table, a female employee asked me if we also had a women's day in Japan. "Every day is like Women's day to me," I answered with tricks.