**REMARKS**

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| Dr. Ho Thanh My Phuong, SEAMEO RETRAC Director; Associate Professor Anna Parkin, Dean, International and Marketing Office, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University; Ms. Nguyen Thi Mai Huu, Director of the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project, MOET, Vietnam; distinguished guests, professors, and participants. On behalf of the U.S. Consulate, Vietnam, it is my honor to welcome you all to the 8th Annual International Conference on TESOL“*ELT IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES*” organized by SEAMEO RETRAC and Curtin University. |  |

At the Regional English Language Office – known as RELO - we are delighted to once again support this conference. This year, we have brought over English Language Specialist, Ms. Amy Christensen from New Mexico, who will be presenting both a workshop and a plenary talk at the conference. I hope everyone will have a chance to enjoy her sessions and benefit from her expertise.

In addition this year, RELO has also provided travel grants for a small group of distinguished primary school Master Trainers from Quang Binh province. We are delighted that they are here to present their action research findings.

Finally, we are especially pleased that RELO and the U.S. Consulate were able to provide support to SEAMEO RETRAC to sponsor the registration of over 100 English language teachers from rural areas throughout Vietnam. We hope having a wide variety of educational institutions represented here will add to the quality of the conference.

Supporting the prestigious SEAMEO RETRAC / Curtin University ELT conference is only one of the programs that the U.S. Government offers English language teachers. In your conference program, you can learn more about RELO programs and resources, such as Forum English teaching journal and the American English website ([AmericanEnglish.state.gov](http://www.AmericanEnglish.state.gov)).

Why do we offer numerous programs for English language teachers? We do so because we know that investing in the professional development of English Language Teachers is an investment in Vietnam. We know that well trained teachers are the catalysts for change. With well trained teachers there are more dynamic classrooms; classrooms filled with students who are engaged and who are inspired to think critically about our world. With well trained teachers there is a whole new generation of students inspired to learn. Well trained teachers spark curiosity about our world and help students to solve global challenges. An investment in teachers is an investment in a better future.

And so teachers, colleagues, I do hope that the ideas presented here during this conference spark your imagination. I hope you will gather ideas and inspiration to help you make changes in your own classrooms. And importantly, I hope you will share everything you learn over the next two days with all of your colleagues back home.

I would like to thank all of the organizers of the conference and the presenters for their dedication to the field. Wishing all participants a very productive and inspirational two days.