

In the morning of March 13th, 2013 in Hanoi, the Vietnam Women’s Union, the World Bank in Vietnam and the UN Women in Vietnam officially launched the “Vietnam Women’s Innovation Day 2013” (VWID 2013) Program with the theme “Women’s Economic Empowerment”.

Present at the launching ceremony were Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa, Member of the Party’s Central Committee and President of the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU), Mrs. Victoria Kwakwa, World Bank Country Director for Vietnam, Mrs. Suzette Mitchell, UN Women Country Representative for Vietnam; representatives from foreign embassies in Vietnam, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, various ministries, sectors & branches, central agencies & organizations; the VWU vice-presidents, members of the VWU’s National Executive Committee, representatives from provincial women’s unions in the North and journalists from central and Hanoi media agencies.

In her opening remarks, the VWU President Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa emphasized “Women’s empowerment is an important approach to achieve gender equality. The facts show that when women’s knowledge and skills are improved to enable them to participate more equally in economic activities, their roles and status are acknowledged and recognized by the society... In light of economic difficulties in Vietnam and the region, women’s economic empowerment is an urgent and critical issue which requires own efforts of each woman and the responsibilities of branches, sectors of different levels and the society as a whole...

Women’s innovation has the wide effects which contribute to creating a dynamic society with many ideas & initiatives to foster the society’s development

”. The VWU President confirmed “

The Vietnam Women’s Innovation Day 2013 is an opportunity for those with ideas and efforts in economic development to meet and share with each other, as well as policy makers their experiences, solutions and innovations, and to network in a cooperative economy...

The VWU, World Bank, and UN Women in Vietnam jointly organize this event to express our determination of cooperation for the sake of gender equality in Vietnam”.

The President hoped that Women’s Innovation Day would be an important milestone in the process of cooperation between the Vietnam Women’s Union and other international organizations as well as the Committee for the Advancement of Women, ministries/agencies and the media agencies to promote equality, advancement of Vietnamese women in the social and family life.

The World Bank Country Director for Vietnam, Ms. Victoria Kwakwa, emphasized the importance of close coordination between development partners and the Government in making progress in gender issues in Vietnam. “ *This is*
the first time the World Bank coorganizes the VID with two partners – the

Vietnam
Women’s
Union

and UN Women. I am delighted about this partnership and confident that it will enhance the impact of this year’s VID in promoting women’s economic empowerment.”

Speaking at the event, Ms. Suzette Mitchell, Country Representative of UN Women in Vietnam, stressed that *“The Vietnam Women’s Innovation Day 2013 offers us opportunities to identify women’s empowerment initiatives that think “outside the box” and act beyond existing, predefined parameters and traditional interventions. Taking into account the innovations, we can improve the lives of women and girls in Vietnam and make gender equality a reality”.*

She said, to increase their economic opportunities, Vietnamese women need access to more and better jobs, a business climate that supports them in starting and doing business, a financial sector that gives them access to financial services tailored to their needs, and greater livelihood security in times of economic slowdown. This is especially true for women living in rural areas and ethnic minority women.

The VWID 2013 is to select, reward and showcase innovative individuals or women’s collectives in economic field in the last 3 years. The program also seeks and supports initiatives of economic empowerment for women: Women entrepreneurs (including women being owners and/or managers of enterprises and owners of household businesses); Women’s Empowerment in Business and Production; and Decent Work for Women. At least 20 awards, each worth a maximum of USD 15,000 will be presented to the most innovative and practical proposals for implementation.

The program will be conducted from March to October 2013 and concluded on the Vietnam Women’s Day 20th October 2013 with 3 major activities: Seeking and supporting innovative proposals which are capable of empowering and enhancing economic capacity of women; Honoring innovative products of women in economic development by means of exhibiting and awarding typical innovative products; and Holding a conference to honor women with good economic achievements, and a forum to exchange views and share experiences.

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