

Ladies and gentlemen,

Prime Minister Chinh, Minister Dung, esteemed guests, and colleagues

The British Chamber of Commerce extends its sincere gratitude to the Vietnamese government and related agencies for their unwavering support of businesses, particularly in navigating the challenges posed by economic headwinds.

Over the past 50 years, the collaboration between Vietnam and the United Kingdom has made remarkable achievements. The commitment to extend and elevate the strategic partnership has instilled confidence among businesses and individuals, fostering collaboration for mutual benefit, both now and for generations to come.

We applaud Vietnam's dedication to zero net emissions and sustainable development, as well as the government's endeavours to champion this agenda. The UK private sector stands ready to contribute significantly across key sectors such as energy, finance, pharmaceuticals, and consumer goods.

The recent adoption of the Power Development Plan 8 ("PDP8") showcases Vietnam's strong commitment to decarbonization. In alignment with our collective goal of sustainability, we recommend the swift implementation of PDP8, particularly in relation to the development of LNG, solar and wind together with the development of legal regulations to enable such implementation, for example regulations that relate to the Direct Power Purchase Agreement ("DPPA"). To further support this initiative, we recommend the coordinated implementation of the Joint Energy Transition Platform (JETP), aligning it with PDP8 and ensuring the readiness of specific pilot projects, particularly in offshore wind energy.

The UK private sector commits to supporting the Vietnamese government in its sustainability efforts, advocating for the development and implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and promoting a circular economy in plastic waste management. The UK has considerable experience in this area and our recommendations include incentivizing the use of recycled plastics (PCR) in packaging, creating a competitive advantage for these materials, encouraging manufacturers to utilize PCR in their production, and developing the recycling industry to promote a circular economy.

The development of an International Financial Centre (IFC) in Vietnam, supported by the UK-Vietnam IFC Working Group, is a game-changing initiative. To ensure its success, we recommend recognizing the vital role of the Financial Services industry in fuelling

Vietnam's domestic and export economy and promoting Vietnam's economic capabilities in overseas markets. Vietnam should improve the capacity and conditions for industry operation and growth in line with international standards and practices, pursuing favourable policies in accounting, taxation, securities, and banking. The importance of achieving emerging market status for Vietnam's capital markets and the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) throughout Vietnam are key considerations and we, and UK businesses, stand ready to support the Vietnamese government in achieving these objectives.

We highly value the efforts and progress of Vietnam's government on administrative reform. Stronger moves are still needed to better serve businesses and people. Specifically: a) removing advertising pre-approval requirement, transitioning to post-market control; b) Strengthening e-government in managing promotion activities and notification c) simplifying procedure and timeline for obtaining trading license d) consistency between central and local regulations.

We appreciate the innovative ideas and efforts to enhance access to healthcare outlined in the draft revised Pharma Law and Health Insurance Law, including recognising international appraisal results to accelerate local drug registration, and expanding health insurance coverage to include NCDs screening, among other initiatives. To build on these progressive approaches, we strongly propose the automatic extension of drug marketing authorizations to prevent disruptions in medicine supply and the regular updating of the National Reimbursed Drug List by law to ensure patients' access to new medicines. To attract more FDI and technology transfer in life sciences in Vietnam, we highly recommend further regulatory harmonisation for faster approval of clinical trials, providing meaningful incentives for pharmaceutical R&D and manufacturing in drug registration and procurement, creating an enabling environment with effective IP protection, and ensuring adequate FIE rights.

With regard to foreign investment in general, addressing regulatory challenges, such as foreign exchange controls, licensing delays, and the need for consistency and predictability, is crucial. We are grateful for the trade arrangements Vietnam has with the UK, both through the UKVFTA and the CPTPP. Vietnam should avail itself of international treaties to streamline its foreign investment process and remove, as over 100 other countries have done, requirements for foreign documents to be legalised for use.

Attracting global talent to Vietnam still faces challenges, particularly in the inconsistent visa and work permit application process. Given strong competition in the region, Vietnam should continue to ease the burden for talent and other visitors (such as tourists) and accelerate progress on digital application processes and the use of technology at airports.

In the tourism sector Vietnam has not been as quick as our neighbouring competitors to adjust to the post covid reality and Vietnam needs to consider urgent measures to keep pace with the growth seen by our neighbouring competitors, to include further visa exemptions to major target markets e.g China, India, developed Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Canada and USA. We also need to consider longer-stay visas for retirement travel and retirement visas for those wishing to retire in Vietnam.

British businesses express optimism about contributing significantly to Vietnam's economy across all sectors. We urge the government to ensure robust and consistent policy-making to foster an environment where businesses can grow and develop with confidence.

Thank you.