



The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) Southeast Asia Convention

Hội nghị Đông Nam Á Hội Đồng Xuất Khẩu Gỗ Cứng Hoa Kỳ (AHEC)

June 25, 2019 • Hanoi, Vietnam • Sheraton Hanoi Hotel

Ngày 25 tháng 06 năm 2019 • Tp. Hà Nội, Việt Nam • Khách sạn Sheraton Hà Nội

Media Release

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Over 250 attend the American Hardwood Export Council's Southeast Asia Convention in Hanoi to explore trade opportunities with the US

The American Hardwood Export Council Southeast Asia Convention was hosted in Sheraton Hanoi and was deemed a highly successful and productive event among American hardwood exporters, media and business.



With opening remarks from Mr. Ha Cong Tuan, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and a welcome from Mr. Robert Hanson, Agricultural Counselor from the Agricultural Affairs Office of the US Embassy in Hanoi, the American Hardwood Export Council's first convention in Hanoi was a forum to facilitate new connections.

Mr. John Chan, Regional Director for the American Hardwood Export Council Southeast Asia & Greater China, spoke of the importance of Vietnam to the global timber industry. Commenting on the goal set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of timber product export



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growth of US\$20 billion by 2025, he stated that Vietnam's thriving timber products industry's appetite for American species is expected to continue to grow. The volume of timber exports from the US to Vietnam to feed manufacturing increased by 17.5% in 2018 with further double-digit growth expected in 2019.

These sentiments were backed up by Mr. Scott Seyler, Chairman of the American Hardwood Export Council. He emphasised the important role of Vietnam in the context of the Southeast Asia region as the largest importer of American timber species (79% share). A later presentation by Mr. Judd Johnson, Managing Editor of the Hardwood Market Report reinforced this with data showing that in 2019 Vietnam overtook Canada as the second largest market destination for US exports of hardwood lumber after China. The current strained trade relations between the US and China and their adverse impact on the market were a topic of interest throughout the day and provided a useful context for delegates to review and consider the opportunities this presents for Vietnam.

Mr. Michael Snow, Executive Director of AHEC and Professor Scott Bove of the University of Wisconsin shared with the audience the story of American hardwoods including the exemplary forest management in the US and high quality processing of the timber. The vast range of species and their application and suitability for furniture and architectural applications alike were discussed. The aesthetic appeal of various American hardwood species and their contemporary application in furniture design were demonstrated in a highly visual presentation by John Kelly, Director of Hospitality for Kaiser, one of Vietnam's largest furniture factories. The presentations concluded with an entertaining foray into the topic of lumber grading by National Hardwood Lumber Association Chief Inspector Dana Spessert. Mr. Spessert's informative and lively presentation made it clear why American hardwood lumber is of such a high quality given the demanding standards applied by the independent grading system that exists in the US.

The day concluded with a networking session where 35 hardwood exporting companies from across the US were able to meet and discuss business with delegates.



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Mr John Chan said of the event *“It could not have been more successful. We were very fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and engaged audience. We’d particularly like to thank The Vietnam Timber and Forest Product Association (VIFORES) for their support in promoting this event and to their Vice Secretary General Mr Ngo Hoai for his invaluable contribution in chairing the convention. Mr Ernie Koh, the Executive Director of Koda Ltd and Immediate Past President of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council made an excellent co-chair and I’d like to thank him for his ongoing commitment to American timbers. We continue to be excited of the prospect of the economic growth of Vietnam and look forward to enduring and mutually beneficial business partnerships”*

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