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Water pollution and its consequences in Vietnam

ベトナムにおける水質汚染とその影響

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Surface water accounts for 81.7% of Vietnam territory that plays a key role for the wildlife and people developments. However, in the early economic development phase, Vietnam is experiencing the water quality decrease. The main reason for this is the spreading of contaminated water. The preventions and water protection laws seem to be inefficient and ineffective. The contaminated surface water harmfully affects the economy, even the community's health damaged, chaos, securities threaten. The most noticeable example is the FORMOSA environmental disaster that leads to a large number of fish carcasses, chaos in communities. There are not only flaws in law enforcements, but also official documents. Some environmentalists blame for prioritizing GDP development goals, civil servants' irresponsibility. Besides this, the legal system lacking the scientific and technological principles, lacking in-depth and specific; too complicated, scattered, overlapping, indirect, inadequate forms, content, lack of clear responsibilities ... etc, leading to feasibility and effectiveness. The contents of the provisions of the two main laws to regulate the field of environmental protection in general, the water environment in particular, the Law on Environmental Protection 2014 and the Law on Water Resources 2012 are mainly general principles, in order as not specific, detailed. The content of the law is heavy on the perspective from the management aspect of state agencies but has not paid enough attention from the perspective of the subjects governed by the law, including

businesses, citizens and the community; such as the right to sue in court on law violations in the field of water environmental protection. Not determined the right role and importance of wastewater treatment technology; lack of financial policies and sanctions for research and development of water treatment technologies to meet production models in our country. The main contaminating sources mainly are industrial factories, handicraft villages, urbanizations, chemical fertilizer and pesticides, mining. The contaminated water mainly affects marine animals, birds, ecosystem structure, and even human beings. In terms of the economy, this damages mostly the aquaculture industry, agriculture, and tourism.

Most urban wastewater enterprises do not own the wastewater system assets, but operate the system under the mechanism of a “work order from the city authority” and are paid directly from the city budget. The current practice of providing the enterprises with a fixed annual budget for operations does not allow the enterprises to invest in research and development or in the optimization of the wastewater system. Appropriate policies and incentives are not in place to encourage private sector participation in the wastewater sector from both financial and operational perspectives. In particular, inadequate tariffs and the lack of an effective regulatory system are principal barriers for private sector entry. The benefits of public awareness tend to be ignored by most urban wastewater companies. Sanitation investments tend to be top-down and subsidized with limited participation by communities. This results in an inadequate understanding within the community of the environment and public health benefits of a well-designed and operated wastewater system. The outcome is less willingness to pay to achieve cost recovery and a reluctance to connect to the wastewater system.

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