

**W**ithin a decade, Tân Thuận along the Saigon river has developed from a poor HCMC suburb into an industrial center known by investors from all over the world.

The 300-hectare Tân Thuận EPZ was developed in 1992 at Tân Thuận Đông village with its three sides surrounded by the Saigon river. It isn't far from Tân Thuận, Bến Nghé and HCMC Container Ports and enjoys convenient communications. The Tân Thuận Development Company has spent over US\$89 million developing this village into the first successful EPZ in Vietnam with infrastructure of international standard. We could say that this EPZ achieved all four targets first set by the Government: attracting foreign investment, promoting foreign trade, facilitating technology transfer and creating new jobs.

Up to March 31, 2000, 148 investors from 10 countries and territories have put US\$584.5 million in their businesses here. Ninety-eight factories have officially come into operation and exported their output to 44 countries all over the world and the export business have so far brought them in US\$1.22 billion. The Tân Thuận EPZ become an important foreign exchange earner accounting for 16% of export earnings by the foreign sector. From labor-intensive in-

dustries, Tân Thuận EPZ started to develop hi-tech ones and facilitated transfer of new technologies and managerial skills. Modern techniques in making bicycle were transferred and developed well here and in the near future they will help develop the local engineering industry.

A lot of jobs are also created in Tân Thuận. Over 24,000 workers are employed here and some 1,000 of them have taken training courses abroad. The development of the Tân Thuận EPZ also accelerates the urbanization here. This suburb of HCMC has become the 7<sup>th</sup> District with its strength in trading and industrial production.

The Tân Thuận EPZ is recognized by the Government as the first successful EPZ in Vietnam and awarded a complimentary honor from the PM and a Labor Medal from the State President. It is also considered as a model of economic development in Vietnam and visited by many leaders from home and abroad.

The Tân Thuận EPZ is the only EPZ in Vietnam that got admission to the WEPZA. In 1999, it was ranked first among EPZs in Asia-Pacific by *Corporate Location* published by the Euromoney Organization and awarded the ISO 9002 by the BSI. These facts show that the Tân Thuận EPZ has been recognized by the international community. The most

valuable recognition it gets, however, is the trust from both local and foreign business circles. Up to March 31, 2000, 68 out of 98 factories have increased their capital by US\$151.3 million and rented 20.5 hectares more to expand their production scale.

Not feeling satisfaction with the past achievements, the Tân Thuận EPZ is preparing itself for the new century by building a re-export trading center and a software technology park, and changing from labor-intensive industries to technology-intensive ones. Officials from the Ministry of Science-Technology and Environment considered it as the first EPZ that starts to strive for high technology. In realizing the development plan for South Saigon, the Tân Thuận EPZ has played a leading role and started to produce good effects on the development of the whole Southern Vital Economic Zone.

Speaking of Tân Thuận today, ones usually picture the first, the best and the most successful EPZ in Vietnam which was appreciated by many foreign investors and organizations. To maintain its leading role and contribute more to the national economic development seems to be the most important task for the Tân Thuận EPZ in the coming century. ■

## TÂN THUẬN EPZ BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

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