

PERMANENT MISSION
of the
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
to the United Nations Office
and Other International Organizations at Geneva



MISSION PERMANENTE
de la
REPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE DU VIETNAM
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des autres Organisations Internationales à Genève

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STATEMENT
by **H.E Mr. Dao Viet Trung**
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs
at the **High-Level Segment of the 61st Session of the United Nations**
Commission on Human Rights
Geneva, 16 March 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Vietnamese Delegation extends to you, Mr. Chairman, our congratulations on your election to the noble position at this Session. I am convinced that under your excellent stewardship, the 61st Session of United Nations Commission on Human Rights will be crowned with great success, contributing to the promotion of dialogues and international cooperation on human rights. The Vietnamese Delegation stands ready to work closely with you and other members of the Board and contribute actively and responsibly to the common endeavours to make this Session a fine success.

I also take this opportunity to commend His Excellency Ambassador Mike Smith for his efforts and contributions to the 60th Session of the Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

We are here to review what have been done over the last year in fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that each and every one in the world is able to enjoy the most fundamental human rights as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Over the past year, the world continued to face numerous threats to the protection of human rights. Wars and conflicts in Iraq, the Middle East, Africa and wide-spread terrorism have deprived tens of thousands of innocent people of their life. Poverty, epidemic, natural disaster, drugs and transnational crimes are threatening the right to life and the right to development of millions of people in the world. As a nation that had undergone centuries of struggle to gain independence and is now striving to achieve strong, rapid and sustainable development goals, Viet Nam is fully aware of the supreme human rights, namely the right to live in freedom in a peaceful and independent country. Accordingly, we share the common concerns over the above-mentioned problems of the world.

Proceeding from our own experience, Viet Nam holds that it is essential to take a comprehensive approach in addressing the issue of human rights in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects. It would be an one-sided approach and does not fully and comprehensively represent the most fundamental human rights if priority is given only to civil, political rights and individual freedoms without paying due attention to economic, social and cultural rights .

As such, for Vietnam, human rights protection represents both a goal and a driving force in the cause of national construction. It is Viet Nam's consistent position to take a people-centered approach in our economic and social policies in which human rights promotion and protection are considered an important factor to achieve sustainable development in the process of the country's industrialization and modernization. "A strong country with wealthy people, and a just, democratic and advanced society" is always the ultimate goal that we strive for. All for the people is also a spirit embedded in every policy that Vietnam follows. To that end, the Vietnamese legal system has been built to meet international principles and standards on human rights. In 2004, despite numerous challenges, Viet Nam continued to record important achievements. Peace and stability were firmly maintained, rapid economic growth achieved and people's life substantially improved. Particularly, all economic, cultural, social, civil and political rights of every one continued to be guaranteed.

Since 2001, the Vietnamese economy has grown on average by 7.4% per year and 7.6% in 2004. National Programmes on Employment have made important progress. Between 2001 and 2004, more than 5.87 million jobs were generated, of which 1.55 million jobs were created in 2004 alone. Those economic achievements demonstrate Viet Nam's resolve to protect human rights, especially in the economic field.

Viet Nam has also gained remarkable achievements in reducing poverty and raising the quality of the people's life. According to the United Nations, Viet Nam is taking the lead in poverty reduction. The poverty rate has fallen from 58% in the 1992-1993 period to 8.3% in 2004. Through its tireless efforts, Vietnam has achieved the Millennium Development Goal on poverty reduction, well ahead of the 2015 target. This is indeed a spectacular progress on human rights in such a developing country as Vietnam. And we are now sharing our experiences with African countries through tri-partite cooperation arrangements, in which the FAO, Non-Aligned Movement and the Francophonie Organization are active parties.

The civil and political rights of the people are also strictly respected and protected. The State of Vietnam creates all necessary conditions for its citizens to participate in the state and social management, which are considered one of the most important rights of citizens. In the 2002-07 National Assembly and the People's Councils elections on 25 April 2004, the turnout was over 99%. This extremely high turnout is the result of the people's increased awareness of their right to elect their representatives in governing the country.

In a nutshell, Vietnam is proud of the tremendous achievements recorded in 2004 in promoting the fundamental rights of the people.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights is entrusted with the mission to ensure that all human rights are enforced to the fullest all over the world. Vietnam always does its utmost to make contributions to the work of the Commission. It is our hope that the Commission will continue to work more effectively to live up to the expectations of member countries. In that connection, Vietnam commends the efforts by the UN Secretary-General's Senior Expert Group in making the Report on "Threats, Challenges and Changes", which recommended ways to reform the operation of the Commission. Vietnam believes that the Commission's work should be carried out in a balanced manner without being politicized. It is regrettable that the Commission in recent years has emphasized too much on civil and political rights, while failing to pay sufficient attention to economic, cultural, social and development rights. In many instances, the Commission has been abused by some countries and NGOs as the forum to name and shame, put pressure on developing countries on human rights issues. We therefore believe that it is high time for the Commission to be reformed. Reform of the Commission machinery is necessary but far from enough. The Commission must be reformed in its approach to human rights issues. Ideological

confrontation, double standards, selectivity and hidden political agenda must be replaced with dialogue and cooperation on all human rights issues. Therefore, the Commission must be turned into a forum for all countries, big or small, from North or South, to exchange views, conduct dialogues and work together on an equal footing to find solutions to human rights issues. Vietnam supports efforts to strengthen international human rights cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, on the basis of equal, constructive, mutual-respect and understanding dialogue for the common goal of promoting and protecting human rights. We are also of the view that no country is allowed to use human rights as a tool to create confrontation with and impose political pressures on other countries, or use them as preconditions in economic and trade relations.

In that spirit, Vietnam is ready to hold dialogues and cooperate with all countries on human rights issues of mutual concern. In the past year, Vietnam conducted useful human rights dialogues with the EU, Australia and Norway, and received many foreign delegations to exchange experiences in the promotion and protection of human rights. Vietnam, in collaboration with Canada, China and Norway, also successfully hosted a human rights Symposium with the participation of over 20 countries. Vietnam is committed to expanding these international cooperation activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Human rights are the common values of mankind. The development of human rights is the best reflection of how progressive and civilized the human society is. These rights can only be secured in a world of peace, justice, cooperation and development, a world where all human values are respected. We need to join hands in surmounting all challenges to achieve these noble goals.

Thank you Mr. Chairman./.