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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to development, Surya Deva, on his visit to Viet Nam

Comments by the State*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Updates and Comments of Viet Nam

1. Promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development is the consistent policy of Viet Nam. Viet Nam always places the people in the centre of all development strategies as the owner, the driving force and the beneficiary.
2. This strong commitment is enshrined in the Constitution and effectively implemented throughout the domestic legal framework and political system. Over the past decades, Viet Nam has made significant progress in achieving sustainable development and fostering the enjoyment of human rights by the people. Viet Nam attaches great importance to better ensuring the right to development so that everyone can participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.
3. Viet Nam always stands ready to work with Special Procedures. The visit to Viet Nam of the Special Rapporteur (SR) on the right to development Surya Deva in 2023 was a success. During this visit, the Special Rapporteur had many fruitful and frank meetings with leaders and representatives of central, provincial and local authorities, agencies, people's organizations, members of business community and the academia in Viet Nam.
4. Viet Nam thanks the Special Rapporteur for his observations and recommendations, especially on Viet Nam's achievements, commitments, and visions in promoting national development in all aspects, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), eradicating poverty, and realizing the right to development. Viet Nam highly appreciates the Special Rapporteur's goodwill, cooperation, and constructive spirit before, during and after the country visit and in the process of drafting the country visit report thereafter.
5. In view of the official report of the Special Rapporteur on the country visit to Viet Nam submitted to the 57th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Viet Nam has some updates and comments as follows:
6. Viet Nam adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of the SDGs, with 115 specific goals tailored to the conditions and priorities of Viet Nam. After the adoption of the NAP, 17/22 ministries and 51/63 provinces issued their respective National Action Plans on SDGs implementations. These NAPs were complemented by major National Target Programs on sustainable poverty reduction, rural development, biodiversity, socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas, and green growth. As a socialist state, Viet Nam places the people at the centre of development and attaches great importance to the needs of persons in vulnerable situations, providing social welfare, reducing social inequalities and development gaps within the country. The State allocates a great deal of resources to socio-economic development and poverty reduction programs, especially for 1,500 poor communes in special need during the 2021 - 2025 period.
7. According to the latest Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme, Viet Nam continues to ascend in its Human Development Index (HDI) rankings, climbing from 115 to 107. Importantly, Viet Nam is among the few lower-middle-income countries with a high HDI index.
8. The country is ranked 46th out of 132 economies in the Economist Intelligence Unit's latest Business Environment Rankings (BER) and 41st in the Global Peace Index by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP).
9. On 01 October 2021, Viet Nam adopted the National Strategy on green growth for the 2021-2030 period with a vision to 2050, aimed at restructuring the national economy, renovating growth model, promoting prosperity, environmental sustainability, social equity, making the transition to a green, carbon-neutral economy and limiting global temperature increases. This Strategy has 4 main pillars: reducing greenhouse gas emissions; greening the economy; promoting greener lifestyle and more sustainable consumption; green transition on the basis of equity, inclusiveness and resilience.
10. This National Strategy plays an important role in meeting Viet Nam's commitments to net-zero emissions by 2050 and other commitments made under the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26).

11. Women are assuming more and more positions of leadership and decision-making at central, provincial, municipal, local levels and in the business community. Women account for 30.26% of members of the 15th National Assembly, the first time that this ratio has exceeded 30% in the last 45 years since the 6th National Assembly of 1976-1981. There are 12/63 provinces and central municipalities whose ratio of women members of the National Assembly ranges from 50% to 66.7%. Currently, Viet Nam's ratio of women members of the National Assembly ranks 4th among parliaments in Asia and 55th in the world. At the local levels, the ratio of women representatives in People's Council for the term 2021-2026 is higher than in the term 2016-2021, reaching 29% at the provincial level, 29.08% at the district level, and 28.98% at the commune level. In the executive branch, 13/22 ministries have women in top leadership, including 4 women ministers; 47/63 provincial administration have women in top positions.

12. In 2023, according to the World Economic Forum, Viet Nam's gender equality index ranked 72nd out of 146 countries, moving up from its 87th position in 2021.

13. Viet Nam recently adopted its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and has surpassed the set target for women's participation in peacekeeping operations.

14. In Viet Nam, 54 ethnic communities have been living together in harmony and unity for millennia, joining hands in defending our nation against foreign aggression and developing the country, together realizing Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, freely determining our political status and freely pursue our economic, social and cultural development. There is no indigenous people in Viet Nam, according to the broad understanding and the parameters of this term provided in several international treaties and UN documents.

15. Viet Nam's consistent policy is to ensure equality and solidarity and foster mutual respect among 54 ethnic communities for common progress. All ethnic communities, regardless of population size or level of development, are treated equally in terms of rights and duties in all areas of life, as guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. Together with all human and citizen's rights, ethnic minorities enjoy supportive measures as provided by law, especially related to the conservation and promotion of their traditional cultural values, spoken and written languages, and custom. 253 out of 498 intangible cultural heritages inscribed on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List belong to ethnic minorities, accounting for 50%. For the Intangible Cultural Heritages recognized by UNESCO, the number is 5 out of 15.

16. Viet Nam is a multi-religious country. Major religions in Viet Nam include Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Muslim, Caodaism, Hoa Hao Buddhism, etc... About 95% of the population follow a religion, belief or faith, including over 26.5 million religious followers, over 54,000 dignitaries, and more than 135,000 religious officers, with nearly 30,000 places of worship. Some sites and practices of belief have been recognized by UNESCO as world heritages.

17. Viet Nam consistently respects and ensures freedom of religion and belief, promotes equality among religions together with their cultural and moral values and contributions to national development. The 2013 Constitution affirms the right to freedom of religion and belief for all. The 2016 Law on Belief and Religion provides a solid legal framework to better ensure this right, in accordance with international treaties and reality in Viet Nam, and is consistently implemented across the country. New provisions of the Law and Decree No. 95 (2023) guiding its implementation simplify administrative procedures to facilitate activities of religious organizations and individuals. Legal framework, including the above-mentioned 2016 Law and the recent Decree No. 95, is applied equally to all.

18. In Viet Nam, ensuring the people's participation is a top priority in all policy formulation and implementation processes. *"People know, people discuss, people do, people inspect, people supervise, and people benefit"* is a matter of principle and is institutionalized by the 2022 Law on Implementing Democracy at the Grassroots Level. This Law regulates grassroots democracy, rights and duties of citizens, and responsibilities of agencies, organizations and individuals for greater ownership by the people of the design and implementation of policies and programmes. The space for the contribution of the people and

social, grassroots organizations is open and widening, with more than 70,000 people's associations in operation nationwide.

19. Another example is that the Law on Promulgation of Legal Normative Documents has many clear provisions to better ensure the requirements of transparency and participation of individuals and organizations in the policy-making and drafting stages. This law clearly defines the participating entities, with varying degrees of involvement, so that relevant authorities can adopt appropriate methods of soliciting opinions. It has supplemented clearer provisions on the social critique responsibility of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the process of drafting and promulgating legal normative documents. The law clearly stipulates the responsibilities of state agencies in applying various methods of public opinion collection at different stages, such as: direct opinion solicitation, sending draft documents for feedback, organizing workshops, dialogues, using mass media, or direct dialogue. For instance, when amending the Land Law in 2024, over 12 million contributions were received during the process of collecting public opinion. The consultations included not only citizens, authorities at all levels, people's organizations, businesses and the academia, but also Vietnamese overseas communities.

20. All relevant stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the implementation of SDGs and the promotion and protection of human rights in Viet Nam. In addition to participating in legislative processes, socio-political, professional, social and people's mass organizations, along with other NGOs and the academia work with the central and local governments to carry out development programs nationwide, ranging from food security, nutrition, child welfare, to employment, livelihood support, and education at local levels. They actively provide critique and review for policy and development programs with valuable inputs as well as conduct professional researches and surveys on the implementation of SDGs. Their role in disseminating state policies at the grassroots levels to priority target groups such as children, women, the poor, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities is also significant.

21. There is no undue limitation placed on organizations and individuals who operate legitimately, lawfully and contribute constructively to national development, including those advocating for climate change adaptation, green transition, and environmental protection. Viet Nam respects the rights and the responsibilities of individuals, groups or organs of society engaging in the protection and promotion of human rights. Viet Nam also believes and upholds that everyone is equal before the law. All violations of the law, no matter by whom, for any reason, will be dealt with to uphold law and order and the full enjoyment of human rights of each citizen in a safe, secure, and just society.
