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INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Note verbale dated 20 April 1979 from the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit to him herewith the report on the care given to the disabled persons in Viet Nam, provided by the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam requests that this report, which is related to General Assembly resolution 32/133, be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 79 of the preliminary list.

* A/34/50.

ANNEX

Report on the care given to the disabled persons in Viet Nam

1. Though Viet Nam is an economically underdeveloped country which had to undergo 80 years of living under French colonialism, it always considers the work of taking care of the life of the people in general and the disabled in particular an extremely important task of the State. The Government of Viet Nam, fully conscious of the fact that the people are the masters of the society, has attached the same respect for the right of the disabled as for that of other ordinary people; it also created all conditions for the disabled to enjoy equality. In Viet Nam, the disabled persons' right to equality has been manifested in the care given to them by the State and mass organizations in health, education, vocation with a view to rehabilitating the disabled to the maximum of their remaining capabilities and enabling them to take part in the labour life and in the general activities of the society. Along with the care given to the disabled, Viet Nam attaches a constant importance to the disability prevention measures in other aspects such as in production, protection of mother and child, transportation, entertainments, physical culture and sports.

2. The rights to labour, health care, social insurance of every Vietnamese citizen, including the disabled, have been confirmed in the 1946 Constitution and the 1959 revised one of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. On 26 November 1966, the Government Council of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam promulgated Circular No. 202 containing concrete provisions on the care given to the disabled persons such as stipulating that administrations at the base level have to arrange employment for the disabled, organize production installations suitable to them (loans, exemption or reduction of tax, naming a special number of commodities to be produced by the disabled), set up institutions for the research of employment and manufacturing of everyday life tools and facilities for the disabled, issue regulations on supplying or selling prostheses to the disabled, receiving those affected by psychiatric disorders and assign to the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs the duty to open educational and vocational schools for the young disabled. The whole population takes part in the services for the disabled and mass organizations assist in the work along with the administration.

3. The Vietnamese State has always given good care to the workers' health, to the prevention of occupational diseases and labour accidents. In 1947, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam promulgated the first law of labour stipulating that all enterprises should put into practice measures ensuring labour safety and sanitation for the workers in production. In 1964, the Government Council of Viet Nam promulgated another law on the protection of labour, put into effect the setting up of a system of inspection of safety technique and protection of labour attached to the Ministry of Labour; each enterprise has its organization in charge of safety technique and protection of labour. In 1971, an institute for science of labour protection was established in Viet Nam; it had the task to study the causes of labour accidents and technical measures to protect labour. During

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the time of the resistance against United States aggression for national salvation, though many factories, enterprises and mines were atrociously destroyed, others had to be dispersed and scattered, the work of labour protection was given special attention and closely combined with the people's air defence. Since the liberation of southern Viet Nam, the Prime Minister of the Government issued continued circulars and directives on labour protection and improvement of the working conditions for workers. The Ministries of Labour and Health and the General Confederation of Trade Unions, working together with institutes for research, co-ordinate their efforts in studying about occupational diseases among the workers working in conditions where toxic contamination and intense noise are involved and take timely measures to combat the reducing of workers' labour capacity and prevent disability. In the event of a labour accident, the worker receives 100 per cent of his salary during the period of treatment; then, if he still is able to continue his work, he will get a subsidy or if he loses his labour capacity and has to stop working he will get a pension equal to 60 per cent of the salary he accrued before the accident: in case he has to shift to a new occupation and his new salary is inferior to the previous salary, he will get a subsidy equal to the balance, etc.

4. Benefiting from the guiding principle of prevention in the service of public health, and a network of health services reaching out over the countryside and being increasingly strengthened, with the developed work of protecting mother and child, and broad vaccination and continued dissemination of education on sanitation, many diseases causing disability have been reduced day after day, such as diseases causing blindness, paralysis fever etc. With regard to the paralysis fever among children, the administering in broad masses of oral taking of sabin preventive medicine has succeeded in reducing from 3.1/100,000 affected in 1961 to 0.75/100,000 in 1975 in northern Viet Nam.

5. Since the liberation of southern Viet Nam and national reunification, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has done its utmost in giving care to disabled victims of war and to handicapped children. In southern Viet Nam, centres of rehabilitation remaining from the old régime have resumed their operation and are strengthened, expanded and equipped with more facilities. Centres damaged by the war were repaired, such as the Quy Nhon Center. Every year, these centres received thousands of war victims to be rehabilitated. In northern Viet Nam, the Government has built rehabilitation convalescent house for victims of war, including special houses for those paralysed by spinal marrow infection, or those affected by cerebral wounds. Those who had chronic psychiatric diseases were rehabilitated in many provincial installations or installations belonging to the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs. To supply in time prostheses to the disabled persons, the Viet Nam Government has built, with the assistance given by the German Democratic Republic, the Ba Vi Centre of Plastic Surgery Technique in Ha Noi to produce semi-finished parts to supply to rehabilitation centres. A network of rehabilitation and plastic surgery centres is being gradually formed in the whole country: each centre in accordance to the population and geographical and economical conditions will cover a specific area from at least 3 million inhabitants up to at most 11 million. If the disabled has difficulties in financing artificial

parts, he can get them free of charge and if he has to take training exercise he will get supplementary food. Orphans who have serious disability such as deaf-mute, mental deficiency, mental diseases, paralysis, poliomyelitis, received care from State-run centres for over-all rehabilitation. The deaf-mute children are admitted to courses of general education, rehabilitation of hearing capacity, vocal drill and vocational training. Many such courses for deaf-mute have been organized in districts such as in Hai Phong or in precincts like in Ha Noi City. The former Lai Thieu Institute for the deaf-mute in southern Viet Nam (now the Thuan An School for the deaf-mute attached to the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs) has been expanded and provided with larger educational staff.

6. Vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons is the fundamental content and also a basic requirement in the services given to the disabled. Regarding disabled children and adults as well, work of vocational rehabilitation and arrangements of employment are entrusted to administrations at all levels. In many regions, there were production teams of the blind, deaf or paralysed: in agricultural co-operatives, considerate attention has been given for an appropriate use of the disabled persons' capacity. Therefore the disabled have a self-reliant life. For those who no longer have labour capacity, care was given to them by the State and mass organizations in their homes or in the disabled care centres if they have no support.

7. The Government of Viet Nam assigned the work of rehabilitation of the disabled persons to the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs and this Ministry has close relations with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, etc., to carry out their plan of rehabilitation.

8. In the very hard conditions of an economically poor country, just coming out of a long war and being aggressed by the Peking expansionists, suffering from natural calamities and floods, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam exerted every effort possible to take care of the disabled persons, create good conditions for them to enjoy equality with the entire population in politics, economics, culture. However, the above-mentioned difficulties put limitations to our work. Disability prevention in the fields of production, transportation, prevention of diseases from birth still has not yet achieved the full content of its programme; therefore there still exist labour and traffic accidents and diseases which should not have occurred if there were enough technical equipment and experienced specialized technicians. The remaining wrong ideas about liberalism, customs and practices in the daily activities of the population who is living in the period of shifting from small-scale production to larger scale production are causes of the inadequate observance of regulations and rules of safety in labour and in communication. The establishment of a legislation concerning the disabled persons should be given more attention.

9. The process of making endeavours to build and ensure the right to be masters and enjoy equality is not dissociated from the equality and freedom of the whole nation. Only when the country gains full independence, in which there exist no injustice, no exploitation of man by man, then the disabled persons may enjoy equality. Therefore the struggle for the disabled persons' right must link together

with the struggle for national liberation, the struggle for establishing a new régime, a new order, without exploitation of man by man and building up socialism. However, those achievements constitute just an initial step to build the political equality of the disabled persons; in order really to bring about a happy and plentiful life to the disabled, to give them "stability in material life and happiness in moral life", to have a healthy and pleasant life, the country should have peace and succeed in building a prosperous economy. That is why, in the recent past, Viet Nam has persevered in fighting against all bellicose acts, and all expansionists' manoeuvres designed to disturb the Vietnamese people's life of peace, friendship and co-operation.

10. Since the liberation of the south, Viet Nam has received assistance given by various organizations and Governments to the disabled persons in Viet Nam. However, taking into account on the requirements needed for helping the disabled rehabilitate in their labouring life, in daily activities in society and for preventing from disability, the Government of Viet Nam believes that it is in need of more assistance.

11. The situation of the disabled persons in Viet Nam has been presented in Mr. Milos Bjelic's report to the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs after his return from a visit to Viet Nam. The figures given in the report only reflected the situation of the disabled victims of war or disabled from birth defects, data on the disabled who lost their labour capacity because of occupational diseases were not included, etc. To help Viet Nam possess more conditions to bring about equality to the disabled persons, the Government of Viet Nam proposes that assistance be further given in health services, labour protection, materials to make prostheses, transportation means, vocational training and materials to help the disabled earn their living after vocational courses, training of specialists in rehabilitation, dissemination of experiences and materials concerning rehabilitation of the disabled, prevention of labour accident, occupational diseases, and building installations for research in labour protection.