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CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM  
TẠI LIÊN HỢP QUỐC

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PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by Mr. PHAM HAI ANH,**

**Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam  
to the United Nations**

at the Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on  
Indigenous Issues

*New York, 15-26 May 2006*

**Item 3      Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous  
peoples: redefining the Goals**

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Madam Chairperson,

My Delegation welcomes the special theme entitled "Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals" as our country attaches great importance to the realization of MDGs for all of our people.

Madam Chairperson,

As term "indigenous peoples" is not to be defined and is up to the people concerned to identify themselves, therefore at national level we have consistently used terms, such as ethnic groups, ethnic minorities, etc. which are among those of preference in many other countries as is noted in one of the factsheets of the Forum.

At present, Viet Nam has 53 ethnic minorities making up 13.8% of the total population, or 10 out of 82 million people, who live in a harmonious family with strong traditions of solidarity and mutual assistance, while each ethnicity has its own cultural identity, thus bringing about the diversity and richness of Vietnamese culture that we all cherish.

The Vietnamese people are firmly committed to achieve the goal of "prosperous people and a just, democratic and civilized society" for all of our people. In our national efforts towards achieving the MDGs, alongside the national Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy, which is Viet Nam's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) published in 2001, in 2002 we also prepared a separate MDGs strategy for ethnic minorities entitled "Localizing MDGs for Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam: Promoting Ethnic Minority Development". This was mentioned as the only document of its kind in the Secretary-General's report on the Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/60/333) to the current Session of the General Assembly.

This strategy sets a number of minority-specific targets in five major fields: poverty reduction and employment; settlement and land use rights; education; health; and governance. For instance, the strategy aims to eradicate hunger by 2010, to bring the poverty reduction and employment rate for all minorities close to that of national average; to have sufficient essential infrastructure in all 2300 communes in special difficult circumstances by 2010; to universalize primary education by 2010 for all ethnic boys and girls through providing more multilingual education, minority language textbooks, training ethnic minority teachers and encouraging teachers to learn minority languages; to eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015; to reduce under-five and maternal mortality rate by much more than the average national reduction; to increase quantitatively and qualitatively the participation of people from ethnic minorities in Government bodies at national and local level in order to closely reflect the ethnic composition of the population, etc. For these main targets the strategy has also adopted a series of intermediary targets and activities and relevant indicators to assess the progress in their implementation.

Having highlighted the above and to avoid wasting the precious time of the Permanent Forum, I will not name every single goal, indicator, measure or fact which can be easily found in the above mentioned strategy, our PRSP, Viet Nam's reports on the implementation of MDGs, etc., or if one prefers other sources, although we do not necessarily agree with everything contained therein, one may look up relevant information on UNDP or the World Bank websites.

Madam Chairperson,

### **Participation**

The Viet Nam's Government attaches special importance to the policy of ensuring equal rights and development of all ethnic groups and considers it as a decisive factor for the country's sustainable development.

To produce real impact on ethnic minorities, members of ethnic groups are encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes at all levels. At present, there are 86 ethnic minority members of the National Assembly, representing 17.27% of the total membership, which is higher than the ratio of 13.8% of ethnic minorities in the total population. The proportion of ethnic deputies to People's Councils at all levels is also relatively high: 14% at provincial level, 17% at district level, and 19% at commune level.

Ethnic minorities also actively participate in designing and implementing various socio-economic development strategies, programmes and plans specially designed for them such as those on the socio-economic development in specially difficult communes of ethnic minority, mountainous and remote areas; on priorities for infrastructure development and the allocation of cultivation and residential land; on housing and other necessities for poor ethnic minorities; on poverty reduction and job creation, on tax incentives for agricultural products, financial assistance for enterprises, price subsidies to essential commodities such as iodized salt, medicines, fertilizers, writing paper, etc. for ethnic minorities; on forest development and habitat protection in mountainous areas; on the priorities of training and employment of ethnic minority staff; on the universalization of education, development of boarding schools, admission of ethnic minority students into universities and vocational training schools, etc.

### **Education and presevation of ethnic identity**

The preservation and development of ethnic minority's culture in Viet Nam has received increasing attention through such activities as building or repairing communal cultural houses, broadcasting radio and television in ethnic languages, e.g. since 1997, Radio "Voice of Viet Nam" has produced over 4000 specific programmes in 5 ethnic languages – Mong, Kh'mer, Ede, G'rai and Bana, and since 2000 programmes in Thai and K'ho have been added.

The issue of languages plays crucial role in both the preservation of the identity of ethnic people and their development. Currently, there are 30 ethnic groups in Viet Nam who have written scripts, both ancient and Latin-based. The Ministry of Training and Education has developed and maintained sets of textbooks in 8 ethnic languages. At the local level, twenty five provinces organize training in ethnic languages on regular basis.

Madam Chairperson,

Much still remains to be desired, gaps to be filled and divides to be bridged, even in those areas that we are proud of having achieved considerable progress like MDG 1 and 2. Yet our commitment remains strong and is consistently translated into deeds aiming at a better, shared and sustainable future for all of our people, in particular people belonging to ethnic minorities.

Before concluding, Madam Chairperson, I would like to state that Viet Nam resolutely rejects all groundless information of certain circles who blatantly claim themselves as representing some indigenous peoples in Viet Nam. In fact they cannot be entitled to represent any ethnic minorities of Viet Nam in this Forum. Their true goal is nothing more than to pursue separatism, through causing mistrust among various ethnic groups, undermining the national unity and national efforts towards a better tomorrow for all Vietnamese people. Their actions are of firvolous and vexatious nature and in no way contribute the benefits of indigenous peoples.

Thank you for your attention.

