



**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**Statement by
Mr. Nguyen Tat Thanh, Deputy Permanent Representative,
Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations
at the Sixth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

New York, 18 May 2007

Agenda item 4:

Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals:

- (a) Economic and social development;
- (b) Environment;
- (c) Health;
- (d) Education;
- (e) Culture;
- (f) Human rights;

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Madam Chairperson,

My Delegation wishes to congratulate you on your re-election as Chairperson of this Forum. Our equally warm congratulations go to the other members of the Bureau.

With a view to ensuring that the current economic growth benefits all groups of the population, in formulating and implementing socio-economic development policies and programmes, the Government of Viet Nam always takes steps so that they address the particular needs of disadvantaged groups of the population, including 53 ethnic minorities who live in mountainous and remote areas and make up 12 % of the country's population.

To achieve sustainable development for mountainous environment it is necessary to ensure harmony and balance between economic growth, social justice and environmental sustainability, and to preserve the cultural identity of all ethnicities. Therefore current priority areas are as follows:

- To improve the livelihood and progressively meet material and spiritual needs of ethnic minorities, first and foremost, through poverty reduction and job generation programmes, especially for the most poverty-stricken areas. To improve access to basic services such as transportation and road system, irrigation system, electricity, water, schools and clinics with a view to ensuring the balanced and realistic development among regions and ethnicities towards harmonious development contributing to the narrowing of development gaps among regions and groups of population. Pursue economic development as the focal task and the means to enhance the quality of life for ethnic minorities while observing the principle of social harmony, sustainable exploitation of natural resources and environment protection.
- To maintain close linkage between socio-economic development and environment protection. Protect and improve the environment as an indispensable element of development and a must in all socio-economic development strategies, policies and programmes through measures of reasonable exploitation and preservation of resources such as forest, land, water, fauna, flora and genetic resources.
- To ensure that socio-economic development is not detrimental to the particular and distinguished identity of traditional culture of mountainous ethnicities, by preserving and enriching cultural life of people through, inter alia, studies and preservation of the traditional culture of villages and communes, assisting the organizing of various individual or joint cultural events, increasing the radio and television coverage in minority areas with increasing components in ethnic languages.
- To undertake measures to encourage the participation of the people in identifying their needs, developing and implementing plans and monitoring

and assessing their progress, especially the participation of women, local mass organizations and traditional communal organizations in all activities affecting the life of the people concerned.

- To improve the access to healthcare for ethnic minorities through providing free health insurance and some healthcare services, through conducting expanded vaccination programmes with a view to preventing diseases, and through minimizing the number of communes without clinics. As of present 96% of communes have their own clinics and vaccination coverage has reached over 90% and efforts are currently undertaken to ensure less accessible, remote mountainous areas also benefit from these programmes.
- To develop human resources and pay greater attention to education and training through providing incentives in the enrollment of and support for ethnic students. Currently 8 ethnic writing systems are taught in schools nationwide including HMong, Cham, Bahnar, Jrai, Khmer.
- To further implement land, housing and water policies (such as Decisions 132 and 134 of 2002 of the Prime Minister for the Central Highland ethnic population) to ensure that every family has their own land for living and farming, adequate, durable and safe housing and individual or shared water supply.

Along this line, the Programme on Socio-Economic Development of communes with special difficulties in mountainous and ethnic minority areas (Programme 135) launched in 1998 has been extended until 2010 on the basis on its success stories and lessons learned. The current phase of Programme 135 aims at considerably improving the production and income generation, infrastructure including transportation and irrigation systems, building schools and clinics at all communes, providing electricity and clean water, increasing enrollment rate at schools, providing free legal assistance and capacity building with a view to facilitating monitoring of investments and other activities by communities in their areas.

Madam Chairperson,

Before concluding, my Delegation feels compelled again to state our objection to the participation in this august body by entities, such as Khmer Kampuchea Krom Federation and the Montagnard Foundation, who have been engaging in separatist activities against the State of Viet Nam, including through, *inter alia*, spreading false information that my Delegation has always rejected. Such actions by these entities and individuals would only negate the effect of efforts by this Forum and my Government toward the betterment of all people on the ground.

Thank you for your attention.