



EMRIP Vietnam 191

STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF VIET NAM
at the 6th session of the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous People
item 6, 10/07/2013

Mr. President,

As my delegation takes the floor for the first time, let me start by congratulating you for being elected as Chairperson of this 6th Session of the EMRIP and wishing fine success for this session under your wise guidance.

Mr. President,

Although there is no indigenous people, Viet Nam is among countries who voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples because the spirit of this Declaration is consistent with Viet Nam's policy on protection and promotion of all human rights for ethnic minorities and with the international human rights treaties to that Viet Nam is a state party. We would like to stress once again our support to the United Nations mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council and the EMRIP.

Mr. President,

Viet Nam is a united nation composed of 54 ethnic groups of which 53 are ethnic minorities growing side-by-side along with the historical course of thousands of years of national building and defense. Ethnic minorities co-exist in three quarters of the country, contributing to the ~~the~~ harmony of the Vietnamese national community and enriching the cultural mosaic of the nation. Time-tested and historically proven, maintaining the national unity and harmony has become a natural law of national survival and growth.

The State of Viet Nam attaches special importance to the policy of ensuring equality and mutual assistance between and among ethnic groups in order to equally protect and promote rights of all ethnic groups in all civil, cultural, economic, political and social areas. That is clearly stipulated in the Constitution and the laws. In practice, a great score of priorities has been put in place to effectively implement this policy.

The Constitution of Viet Nam states that all Vietnamese citizens have the right to participate in the management of the state and society and to stand for elections to the National Assembly and People's Council at all levels. Let us note that the current 12th National Assembly has 87 deputies from ethnic minorities, accounting for about 18

percent, which is higher than the ratio of 13 percent of ethnic minorities in the whole population. More and more ethnic minority people are taking over important position in the state authorities at central, provincial and commune levels.

More still, curricula for 8 ethnic minority languages, including Khmer have been officially introduced in ethnic minority primary and secondary schools in 25 provinces; the Vietnam Television and Radio Voice of Viet Nam broadcast programmes in 13 different ethnic minority languages with more than 4000 special programmes. With regards to public health 93,5% of the communes in the living areas of ethnic minorities have health care center and 95% of ethnic minority children have been vaccinated through national extended vaccination programmes.

Regarding the right to access to justice and equal treatment before the court, the Vietnamese laws guarantee every citizen's equality before the law without any distinction as to sex, ethnic origin, religion, social status. When participating in the proceedings, procurators, defendants, lawyers and parties concerned have equal rights regardless of their ethnic origin to provide evidences, materials, objects, make requests and engage in lawful hearing before the Court. While the national language is Vietnamese, the Court guarantees that persons participating in the proceedings have the right to use their own mother tongue, both in written and in verbal form, before the Court. In criminal cases, defendants have the right to request the interpreting service free of charge.

Mr. President,

Despite the important achievements as mentioned in parts above, difficulties and challenges remain in implementing policies and measures for the full enjoyment of ethnic minorities, especially for those living in the mountainous regions, highlands or remote and isolated areas. Much has been done and more need to be done. In the spirit of dialogue and constructiveness, we are committed to working with the international community towards better promotion and protection of human rights as a common value of humankind, through successful implementation of our declarations and conventions in these fields.

I thank you, Mr. President.