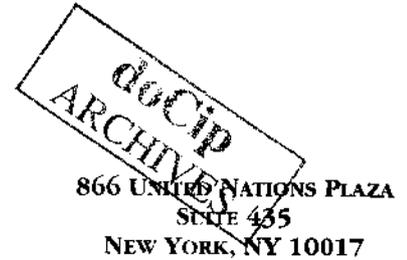




**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



INTERVENTION

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**Representative of the Permanent Mission of Vietnam to the UN at the
Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous**

Issues

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Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my great honor to speak before the Forum today. I would like to take this opportunity to express our confidence that under the able guidance from you and other members of the Forum, our Session will result in great success.

Mr. Chairman,

Vietnam is the homeland of 54 nationalities that have been living together from time immemorial. These 54 Vietnamese nationalities have developed a tradition of patriotism, unite and assist mutually in the conquest of nature and in social struggle, throughout the historic processes of national defense, construction and development.

Although they speak different languages, the ethnic groups live close to one another and can know the language of others through everyday relations. Although they are evolved in cultural exchanges, they keep retaining the identity of their own culture. The diversity of the cultures of ethnic groups does not take them off the track of the common development of the nation, just as the peculiarity is in tune with the generality in the dual category of philosophy.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Vietnam since its foundation in 1945 has pursued a consistent policy to strengthen the great national unity and has paid special attention to improving the life, both physically and spiritually, for the peoples from all social strata regardless of race, sex, cultures or religions.

The Government of Vietnam gives special attention to preserving and improving cultural and spiritual life for ethnic minorities. So far, there have been 40,000 radio programs broadcasted in ethnic minorities languages, and 6,000 ethnic music programs. The project on "Collection, translation, publishing and Preservation of Central Highlands Epics" has been implemented during which 456 works and 208 artisans have been found.

The Government has also adopted and instructed the realization of the Socio-economic Development Programme for extreme difficult communes, ethnic minorities in mountainous, border and remote areas with a view to improve the living standard of ethnic minority peoples, helping these areas escape poverty, backwardness and integrate into the common cause of national development. The Programme has recorded fruitful outcomes over the past years. Basic infrastructure in mountainous area has been built and improved significantly, which help to promote further the development of a multi-sector economy.

There has been good progress in improving equality among ethnicities. Poverty rates in remote areas have been remarkably reduced. The percentage of ethnic minority pupils at primary level has increased from 16.7% in 1998-1999 school year to 17.5% in the 2001-2002 school year, from 8.9% to 12% at the lower secondary level. There are 344 ethnic minority-boarding secondary schools with 59,160 pupils in the country.

In recent years, the Central Highlands has become one of the fastest growing regions of the country with an average growth rate of 9/9% (higher than the national average rate). The infrastructure in the central highland provinces has been improved a lot. Each province has thousands of kilometers of asphalted road and a low voltage electricity grid. Now, 99% of the communes in the region have roads to the centers (while the figure for the whole country is 97.4%). From 89% to 97.4% of communes are connected to national electricity grid (while it is only 89% nationwide). In the near future, tens of bridges will be built in the central highlands while a project aimed to install a pipeline to bring oil is underway. Poverty reduction programs in the Central Highlands have been actively implemented, cutting the poverty rate from 24.9% in 2001 down to 17.4% in 2003. The State has made big investments in irrigation works, helping maintaining production during the dry season. Poor households are provided with loans to buy houses or installation at low interest rates. There have been also policies to address ethnic minorities's needs for housing and farming land. They are encourages, through subsidy to reclaim land for cultivations and husbandry.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Delegates,

By providing the information as such, we would like to seek the opportunity to make the record straight of what is really happening in Viet Nam today.

I thank you for your attention.