

ANNEX I

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Viet Nam has an area of 331,216.6 square kilometres (sq. km) which spreads from latitude 23°23'N to 8°17'N. The territory of Viet Nam composes of the mainland lying on the eastern part of the Indochina peninsular and many archipelagos and islands in South East Asia. Viet Nam has a total inland border stretching 4,550 km which is shared by China in the North, Laos and Cambodia in the West.

2. The East, South and South West of Viet Nam are bordered with a 3,260 km coastline. The sea territories under sovereignty and jurisdiction of Viet Nam which includes the continental shelf, big and small islands and archipelagos, stretches to the East and South East of Viet Nam and have the total area of 1 million sq. km.

3. Viet Nam has a diverse topography, including hills and mountains, plains, coastlines and continental shelf, which reflects the geological development weathered by the monsoon climate with plentiful heat and high humidity. The topography of Viet Nam lowers from North-West to South-East. This can be shown by the flows of the major rivers. Mountains and hills covers three fourths of Viet Nam's territory, however they are mostly low mountains and hills ranges. The typography below 1,000m above sea level accounts for 85% of the territory. Mountains over 2,000m only account for 1%. Plains only make up of a quarter of the territory and are divided into small parts by mountains and hills. The two large alluvial plains are the Northern plain (in the Red River Delta with an area of 16,700 sq. km and the Southern plain (in the Mekong Delta with an area of 40,000 sq. km). Between those to plains are many other small plains lying along the Central coastlines, from Ma River Delta in Thanh Hoa province to Phan Thiet province with the total area of 15,000 sq. km.

4. **Climate:** Due to the diverse topography, the North of Viet Nam is influenced by continental climate, the East by the South China Sea, and therefore the characteristics of Viet Nam is the heterogeneous humid tropical monsoon climate creating fairly different pattern of weather though out Viet Nam. The weather of Viet Nam changes from seasons to seasons, from high to low lands, from north to south, from east to west. The average annual rainfall range from 1,500 to 2,000 mm. The humidity is approximately 80%. Due to the monsoon climate and the diverse topography, Viet Nam is often hit by typhoons, floods, draughts (there are about 6 up to 10 storms and tropical low pressure, floods, and draughts per year). Studies by the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Environment Program on the possible impacts of climate change have highlighted the vulnerability of Viet Nam, especially at the Red River and Mekong River Delta areas. According to World Bank 2006 Report, Viet Nam ranks among the 5 countries most impacted by climate change and sea-level rise. In 2006, the total damages caused by natural disasters amount up to \$1.2 billion. Sea-level rises could result in disappearance of major part of the Red River and Mekong River deltas and affect approximately 22 million people.

II. NATIONALITIES AND LANGUAGES

5. **Population:** With a population of 86 million peoples (2008), Viet Nam ranks 13 among the most populated countries in the world, in which 25% are living in urban areas and 75%

in rural areas. The annual population growth rate is 1.29%. Viet Nam has a young population with 55 million people in labour age. However, the number of elderly people (above 60 years old is 8.1 million or 9.45% of the population) is on the increase thanks to the better living conditions and health care. Viet Nam's life expectancy is over 72 years old in 2008.

6. Nationalities: Viet Nam composes of 54 ethnic groups living harmoniously with each other, of which the Kinh accounts for 86%; the remaining 53 groups have the relatively small number of people. Some groups have approximately one million people like the Tay, Nung, Thai, Muong, Khmer and others have about few hundreds like the O Du or Brau. The Kinh live scattered throughout the territory but mostly gathered in the plains and river deltas. The other ethnic groups live in the mountainous areas from North to South. The level of development of the ethnic minorities is uneven. Every ethnic group has its own unique culture. 24 groups have their own written language. The written languages of 8 minorities namely Thai, Hoa, Khmer, Cham, Ede, Tay Nung, Co-ho and Jrai are taught in schools. Viet Nameese is chosen as the working language throughout Viet Nam.

III. RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS

7. Viet Nam is a country that has various religions and beliefs. Viet Nameese people have carried out religious activities for a long time. Viet Nam has approximately 20 million followers, 62,500 dignitaries and monks and more than 22,000 worship places. The Viet Nameese ethnic groups all have their own beliefs which connect with their working and spirit lives. Apart from the traditional belief like worship their own ancestors, various major religions like Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islamism have spread to Viet Nam and blend in with the domestic religions or transformed to new religions like Caodaism, Hoa Hao Buddhism.

IV. HISTORY

8. In its history, Viet Nam is one of the places known as the cradle of the human being and one of the early developed agricultural countries with the rice civilisation. The socio-economic development and the need of fighting against floods and invaders, led into the creation of the first State of Viet Nam - Van Lang - in the 7th Century BC. Together with this State, is a developed economy and a civilised culture, known as the Red River Civilisation (or the Dong Son Civilisation).

9. The Viet Nameese history is also a history of fights against other invaders. Since the 3rd Century BC (the war against the Qin Dynasty) until the end of the 20th Century, Viet Nam had to carry out hundreds of wars to protect its territory and independence. Despite of ups and downs, Viet Nam remains a Nation with continuous development in all fields, thus reaffirming the existence and growth of the nation of Viet Nam.

10. After one century ruled by the colonialists, in August 1945, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and President Ho Chi Minh, the people of Viet Nam rose and gained independence of the country and established the State of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Right after that, Viet Nam had to struggle for 30 years to liberate and reunify the nation. Since then the independent Viet Nam enters into a new era - an era of peace, independence and national construction.

11. The Sixth Congress of the Viet Nameese Communist Party (1986) launched the policy of Renovation (Doi Moi) in which the economic reform is placed in the centre. This is an important landmark in the development of Viet Nam in the new era. From a food importer, Viet Nam has

become the 2nd largest rice exporter in the world, its economy sustained high growth and the people's living conditions are more and more improved.

12. Throughout the creation and development of Viet Nam, what stands out is the country's patriotic spirit, resilience and self-reliance, determination of the people and the tradition of national solidarity. The history also made Viet Nameese people the tradition of mutual affection, living in justice and kindness; help each other when there is difficulty; adaptability and integration; flexibility, the tradition of fondness for learning, big-hearted and tolerance. These are the inner and infinite potential for Viet Nam's national construction for building a strong nation, wealthy people, just, democratic and advanced society.

V. POLITICAL SYSTEM

13. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a State of law. All organisations and individuals has to obey the Constitution and Laws. The current Constitution, adopted by the 8th National Assembly in 1992 (amended in 2001 at the 10th Session of the 10th National Assembly), stated that the State power belongs to the people; the State is of the people, by the people and for the people. The Constitution ensures the equal rights of all citizens in the politic, economic, cultural and social areas without discrimination of gender, religion and race.

14. Political system includes the following political powers:

- **The Communist Party of Viet Nam** is the vanguard of the worker class, the loyal representative of the worker class, the labourer, the entire nation and the leader of the socialist system. The Party is to make sure that the political system will keep the nature of the worker class and the power belongs to the people.

- **The State of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam** is the central organisation and the pillar of the political system. It realizes the will and power of the people, takes responsibility before the people to manage the social activities and represents the people in the internal and external relations.

- **Political, social and mass organisations** represent the interests of different social communities which are part of the political system in accordance with their own purposes and principles.

15. With the role of making history, **the people** is the decisive force in the transformation of the society and building of the current political system in Viet Nam. All power belongs to the people and will be exercised through the State. The State performs its functions based on the rule-of-law principle under the leadership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam.