

**PERMANENT MISSION**  
of the  
**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM**  
to the United Nations Office  
and other International Organizations at Geneva



**MISSION PERMANENTE**  
de la  
**REPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE DU VIET NAM**  
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies  
et des autres Organisations Internationales à Genève.

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**STATEMENT**  
**BY H.E. MR. PHAM BINH MINH**  
**FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN**  
**AFFAIRS OF VIETNAM**

**AT**

**THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT**  
**OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE HUMAN**  
**RIGHTS COUNCIL**

*Check against delivery*

**Geneva, March 4, 2008**

Mr. President,  
Madame- High Commissioner,  
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to express my appreciation to the contributions by the President of the Council, Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania and other members of the Bureau over the last challenging months. It is our confidence that with your able leadership, this Session will be navigated to a fruitful one. May I assure you of our full cooperation for your work.

Mr. President,

I am honored to address at the High Level Segment. It is here in Geneva 60 years ago, the historic document that we call the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and ever since it stands as a source of inspiration, a calling for us to ceaselessly strive for the common goal of promoting and protecting human rights for all over the world. During those 60 years, we have witnessed vital achievements in the field of human rights, e.g. the elimination of apartheid, the codification of international human rights instruments, addressing critical human rights issues, including economic, social, cultural rights and right to development... However, our mission is far from completed when violence, armed conflicts, natural calamity and epidemics continue to deprive people of their rights to life, over 1 billion people are living in extreme poverty without the most basic needs being met, women still fall victims to discrimination, children cannot go to school in some part of the world... This prompts us to realize that we still have a long way to go and the international community should redouble its effort in attaining the noble cause of the Human Rights Declaration.

Mr. President,

The establishment of the Council on Human Rights has given us a unique opportunity: an opportunity to learn from the achievements as well as the mistakes of the defunct Commission of Human Rights. Viet Nam has more than once expressed its hope for this Council to make a fresh start by introducing a new culture of cooperation and mutual understanding in the field of human rights promotion and protection, and that the old-time practices of selectivity, double standards and excessive politicization will not be repeated. In so doing, we believe, the Council will take credit for being a universal platform for effective cooperation of that nature, full

respect for all tradition, culture and independence of all countries. It is unfortunate however that the past seems to die hard, and the spirit of cooperation and dialogue, therefore, has not been fully translated into the work of the Council. The Universal Periodic Review mechanism is an innovation of the Council. The Review has been designed to provide a tool for international cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights, not a source of tensions between members. We look forward to this test as a successful functioning of the Council. We are serious to work for our evaluation in 2009 under the Universal Periodic Review.

The past 2 year is a very short time but extremely significant for the Human Rights Council. We noted with satisfaction that the Council adopted the institutional-building text within the given timeframe. Though the text is not perfect and there is room for further improvement, we believe it is a fair and balanced package. My gratitude goes to all the parties involved for exercising maximum flexibility with goodwill during the hard process of negotiation. Its adoption is a solid testimony to the commitment of all parties to work together in good faith so as to ensure the future success of the Human Rights Council.

Our Human Rights Council is like a young tree. For this young tree to grow into a strong one that can stand the test of time, it is our job to cultivate the land for it to take root, not to poison it. In a world of increasing diversity, differences are to be anticipated. To overcome these, a touch of tolerance and mutual understanding is needed. A new mindset and a new way of working together should be adopted. As man is not perfect, countries are likewise in term of human rights. If we work together in a constructive manner, we can advance the cause of human rights worldwide.

Mr. President,

Ensuring and upholding human rights is the goal as well as the impetus in the process of national construction and development in Viet Nam. Viet Nam always does its utmost to facilitate the full realization of human rights. It is also the foundation for all the policies and activities of the State. After more than 20 years of implementing the reform policy, Viet Nam has recorded great achievements in economic development, improvement of people's rights and living standard, building a State underpinned by rule of law and justice with a view to become a country of "prosperous people, strong nation, equitable, democratic and advanced society". Vietnam has been recognized by the UN as one of first countries achieved the poverty reduction goal of MDGs 10 years ahead of schedule,

and the pioneer in the ratification of international human rights conventions.

In 2007, Vietnam has made further progress in promoting and protecting human rights. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the following: Vietnam's position in the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) improved by 4 ranks compared to 2006. The National Assembly, as the most representative body, has played an ever-increasing role in all the fields of society, including socio-economic and political ones. Notably, the high percentage of 97% of the total 56 million voters taking part in the National Assembly election in May 2007 demonstrated the active participation of Vietnamese people for the nation's political activities. The National Assembly has adopted 7 laws in 2007 to better ensure both human rights and rule of law, including pardon and amnesty law and law on prevention and protection against domestic violence. Grass-root democracy has been carried out nationwide to enable everyone to express their views and opinions on all matters concerned. The right to religious belief and freedom is fully respected. In May this year, Vietnam will hold the UN Day of Buddhist Vesak in Hanoi, with participation of over 5000 Buddhist delegates over the world.

The human being is the center of all socio-economic policies. The promotion and protection of human rights serves as a crucial factor for sustainable development. International cooperation and dialogues are among the priorities in our foreign policies. We are therefore always open and willing to engage deeper in international dialogues and cooperation on human rights on an equal and constructive footing for mutual benefits. Bearing that in mind, Vietnam has conducted dialogues on human rights with several countries on a regular basis and actively participated in international cooperation on human rights within the framework of the UN and other relevant multilateral forums.

Mr. President,

In the year commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Vietnam renews its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, to strengthen further the effectiveness of the Human Rights Council, to build the latter into a successful and constructive mechanism that lives up to the entrustment of the General Assembly and the expectation of all the UN members.

I thank you for your attention./.