

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT
ON VIETNAM'S COMBINED 5th AND 6th NATIONAL REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

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The Vietnamese State attaches much importance to the serious implementation of the provisions of CEDAW including the submission of the regular reports to the Committee. The combined 5th and 6th National Report has been carefully prepared by an inter-disciplinary board led by top figures of the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) and adopted by the Prime Minister before submission to the Committee. I am very much delighted to take this opportunity to inform you that from now on, under Article 102 of the Law on Signing, Joining and Implementing International Conventions, which comes into effect on January 1st 2006, all national reports on international treaties and conventions that Vietnam is a party to, including reports on CEDAW, shall be submitted to the National Assembly for adoption.

The combined 5th and 6th National Report covers Vietnam's implementation of CEDAW during 2000-2003. Due to the large time gap between the date of submission of the report and today's session, I shall try to update some new developments on the implementation of CEDAW in the recent years.

1. Backgrounds on the implementation of CEDAW in Vietnam since 2000 to date.

Vietnam continues to pursue the policy of renovation and reform as well as the Strategy for Socio-Economic Development for 2001-2010 aiming at making 'the people wealthy, the country strong, the society democratic, just and advanced' so as 'to bring Vietnam out

process. However, apart from what we have been able to do, Vietnam still faces various difficulties and challenges. The people's living standard remains lower than many other countries in the region. Many thrusting social problems are still present. The income gap between various social groups and regions caused by the impacts of the market economy is widening. All these negatively affect the implementation of CEDAW.

2. Directions and measures to fight all forms of discrimination against women and to promote the development and advancement of women.

Vietnam is for the strict elimination of all forms of discrimination between men and women in the

(Vietnam's Agenda 21) also identifies that women belong to 1 of the 7 priority social groups for sustainable development in Vietnam.

The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam is a concrete example of the institutionalisation of gender equality targets with the overall goal being 'improving the quality of women's material and mental life, creating all conditions to effectively implement the fundamental rights and bringing into full play the role of women in all political, economic, cultural and educational fields.' Apart from this overall goal, the Strategy also sets out 5 concrete objectives and 20 quantitative targets to eliminate discrimination against women, ensure women's equal rights in the fields of labour-employment, education, health care, and improve the quality and efficiency of women's participation in political, economic, cultural, social fields and leadership as well as enhance capacity of national machinery for the advancement of women. The Strategy further identifies that the integration of gender issues in planning and implementing public policies is one of the 8 key solutions.

On the basis of this Strategy, on March 18, 2002, the NCFAW adopted the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women to the year 2005, the first phase of the 10-Year Strategy. This Plan is a component that has been integrated into Vietnam's Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2001-2005. So far,

- Economic independence is a very much important condition to attain women's equality with men and has become the No. 1 target in the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam. Many measures to facilitate women in finding employment, developing their economies, increasing their income and stabilising their and their families' life have been taken from the Centre to the localities. According to statistics quoted in the Vietnam Gender Assessment Report of December 2006 by the WB, ADB, DFID and CIDA, 83% of females and 85% of males in the working age have jobs. The gender gap in terms of salary and wage has also been reduced from 78% in 1998 to 83% in the urban areas and 85% in the rural ones in the present time as compared with respective figures for men. Among the 2.9 million vocational trainees of the period of 2001-2003, over 30% were females and 46.5% of the 7.5 million labours finding employment during 2001-2005 were female. More than 40% of the annual number of labours finding new employment is females with 46.5% of whom in the public sector. At present, women occupy 19% of the leadership positions, 41.5% in highly skilled professions, 58.5% in middle range professions. The ratio of time utilis

- Vietnam is also facing a number of new challenges arising from the negative impacts of the market economy and the expansion of international interactions, especially the problem of trafficking in women for prostitution purpose, wrong-doings in the marriage service for women looking for foreign husbands are becoming thrusting social problems.

5. Directions and measures for the time to come.

In order to bring into full play the achievements made and overcome the outstanding problems, in the time to come, the NCFAW plans to propose to the Government a number of measures as follows:

- The legal, mechanism and institutional systems on gender equality need to be further reviewed and improved. The coming into effect of the Law on Gender Equality on July 1st, 2007 is an important legal step forward contributing to the promotion of equality between men and women and the advancement of women in Vietnam.

- In terms of institution, it is necessary the build the capacity and enhance the efficiency of the NCFAW, increasing the resources for activities conducted for the advancement of women while at the same time attaching importance to training of gender specialists and experts for the branches and localities so as to proactively implement gender integration activities. The Vietnamese Women's Union must also consolidate its role as the representative and protector of women's legitimate interests. At the same time, it is necessary to provide social criticism over the laws and policies relating to women.

- It is further necessary to accelerate the integration of gender perspectives into all strategies, plans and socio-economic development targets; the promotion

