

STATEMENT
BY H.E. MR. TRUONG VINH TRONG
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
AT THE 2011 U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL MEETING
ON HIV/AIDS

New York, 08 June 2011

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Viet Nam welcomes the convening of the 2011 U.N. General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS. This Meeting is of great importance as the world marks 30 years into the AIDS epidemic and 10 years of implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

Since the landmark U.N. General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, the global response to HIV/AIDS has recorded significant outcomes: The number of newly-infected people has decreased by 19% over the past decade; access to antiretroviral therapy expanded; stigma and discrimination declined, and the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS better respected.

On behalf of the Government and people of Viet Nam, I salute these encouraging accomplishments, which would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the United Nations under the leadership of Mr. President and Mr. Secretary-General, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). They are also attributable to the active response of leaders of Member States, many international organizations and eminent persons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By 2010, Viet Nam had achieved ahead of schedule many Millennium Development Goals, including those on poverty reduction, education universalization, promotion of gender equality, and improvement of maternal and child health, which have been widely recognized by the international community. In HIV/AIDS prevention and control, with HIV-infected people currently accounting for about 0.26% of the population, Viet Nam has initially been able to contain the rise of HIV infection. In concrete terms, the prevalence rate among injecting drug users declined from 30% in 2001 and 2002 to 17% in 2010; and the number of HIV/AIDS-related deaths has gone down from more than 6,000 a year to some 2,500 a year for the last two years, to name a few.

Extensive AIDS awareness campaigns have been conducted frequently throughout Viet Nam over the last 20 years. The enactment of the Law on Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and many other related legal documents has helped encourage and facilitate greater participation of the population and social organisations. The National Strategy on HIV/AIDS

Prevention and Control has been developed and organically integrated with the country's Socio-Economic Development Strategy. The National Committee for HIV/AIDS, Drugs and Prostitution Prevention and Control founded over 10 years ago has effectively strengthened the coordination of efforts among different agencies and population of all social strata so as to ensure implementation of HIV/AIDS response measures in tandem with measures to combat drugs and prostitution. Experience of Viet Nam shows that prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, drugs and prostitution should be aligned with efforts to reduce poverty, raise social awareness and knowledge, improve healthcare and promote gender equality.

In this connection, the Government and people of Viet Nam highly value the meaningful support and effective cooperation extended by the United Nations Organisation, most directly through UNAIDS and co-sponsors such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, WB, and other international organizations, especially GFATM, PEPFAR, and many countries and international friends to Viet Nam's HIV/AIDS prevention and control efforts over the past years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the tremendous accomplishments in national development, Viet Nam remains a poor country faced with numerous difficulties. The Government is fully aware that the initial gains achieved in our national response remain fragile. Viet Nam has embarked on developing the next phase of the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, which is an essential component of our efforts to promote sustainable social and economic development for 2011-2015. As such, resources will be prioritized for the implementation of national targets on HIV/AIDS as well as international goal of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and the U.N.'s latest initiative on zero new infection, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related death. The Government and people of Viet Nam are strongly committed to these goals. We, at the same time, look forward to the continued support as well as close and effective collaboration of the U.N. system, Member States and international organisations in this endeavour.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The AIDS epidemic remains a major global challenge and a threat to the sustainable development of many nations. It can only be averted by the joint efforts and shared responsibility of each and every member of the international community. Viet Nam endorses the Report of the Secretary-

General on the Implementation of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. We support the draft Outcome Document to be adopted at this High-Level Meeting, and wish to underline the following:

Firstly, in the context of daunting challenges to global development, the international community must sustain its constant alert to the HIV/AIDS problem and secure the resources needed for national and international AIDS responses. Common as they are, HIV/AIDS represent the most formidable challenge to poor developing countries. The fight against them should therefore receive special attention and support from the international community.

Secondly, prevention is the best cure. This is particularly relevant to HIV/AIDS. Hence, it is imperative to undertake comprehensive preventive measures. These may include education, communication and awareness raising, especially among the youth. Harm reduction interventions, counseling and improvement of diagnostic capacity are also essential to efforts towards the goal of zero new infection. This requires strong involvement of the people of all walks of life and social segments as well as the leadership of governments.

Thirdly, it is necessary for people living with HIV to have better access to healthcare services, including especially ARV and Methadone. We need to facilitate the production of low-cost ARV and Methadone through technology transfer and financing for developing countries. At the same time, importance should be attached to early detection measures and continuous treatment for HIV-infected people.

I wish the Meeting great success.

May Mr. President and all of you here present enjoy abundance of health.

Thank you for your attention./.