

ADDRESS

by H.E. Madam Truong My Hoa

Vice President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

at the High-Level Plenary Meeting
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*Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Five years ago, leaders from 189 countries of the world solemnly adopted the Millennium Declaration with a yearning for humankind to live in a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reflect the interactive links between security, development and freedom of humankind.

Looking back on the last five years, we rejoice to note that the MDGs have been given enormous attention in development cooperation relations. Endeavors towards the MDGs have yielded positive outcomes in various parts of the world. For instance, since 1990, more than 200 million people in East and South Asia have escaped poverty. Nevertheless, we cannot help but be concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the MDGs in a number of countries and regions. At present, more than one billion people are still living in extreme poverty; over 115 million children of primary school age are out of school; nearly 11 million children die before they reach their fifth birthday and half a million women die at childbirth every year; the number of people living with HIV/AIDS has risen to 40 million while other dangerous infectious diseases such as SARS and avian influenza have come in strongly; the environment continues to deteriorate severely. While recognizing the shortcomings in national development policies and institutional capacity among the causes of the difficulties in the implementation of the MDGs, we all can see clearly that these difficulties also arise from the international political and economic environments that have become more complex in the recent years because of the rise of terrorism and the increasing trend to use force in international relations and resort to protectionism in trade.

Mr. President,

During these days sixty years ago when the United Nations came into being, the Vietnamese people regained independence and formed the first people's democratic State of their own. For a long time, the Vietnamese people have been well regarded by the international community for their resolve and courage in the struggle to protect the fundamental human rights to live in freedom, independence and to determine their own destiny. Nowadays, we are proud to be spoken about by international community also for the important socio-economic achievements recorded in the reform process (*Doi Moi*) and in the implementation of the MDGs.

On this occasion, I would like to bring to your kind notice the fact that, as of 2004, Viet Nam had reduced poverty rate by three fifths compared with that of 1993, thus attaining the MDG on halving poverty 10 years ahead of the schedule. Regarding the MDG on universal primary education, Viet Nam eliminated illiteracy and achieved universal primary education back in 2000 and has now the net enrolment rate of nearly 95%. At present, nearly half of provinces in Viet Nam have attained universal junior secondary education. Significant progress in promoting gender equality related to the third MDG is clearly reflected in the constant rise of Viet Nam's Gender Development Index (GDI) from 0.668 in 1998 to 0.689 in 2004. Women account for more than 27% of the deputies to the Vietnamese National Assembly, the highest ratio in the Asia-Pacific region. Women enjoy due recognition for their significant role in the family as well as in the society. As for the other MDGs, the under-five mortality rate has been halved and the maternal mortality rate reduced by one third against 1990. Initial progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS and ensuring sustainable environment. Vietnam's relations with international development partners have been expanded, creating important external resources for the development process through export, foreign direct investment and official development assistance. UN funds/programs and specialized agencies have made many efforts to help Vietnam implement the MDGs; they have also acknowledged the impressive progress that Viet Nam has made towards the full achievement of the MDGs by 2015. To contribute to the discussions during this Summit, the Vietnamese Government has submitted the national report on the implementation of the MDGs in Viet Nam

The root cause of the fore-going encouraging results in Viet Nam is the determination to promote socio-economic development evinced by the State and the people of the country since their declaration of national independence and the significant achievements made in the reform (*Doi Moi*) process during the last 20 years. The experiences that are also positive factors promoting the implementation of the MDGs in Viet Nam include perseverance in reforms, integration of the MDGs into national socio-economic development and international cooperation programmes, mobilization of domestic resources in parallel with changing the investment structure and effective use of resources, active integration into the global economy and expansion of external economic relations, combination of economic growth and the promotion of social welfare, administrative reforms and the enhancement of the capacity and wide participation of the people. On behalf of the State and people of Viet Nam, I would like to take this opportunity to express our high appreciation to UN organizations, other bilateral and multilateral donors, international non-governmental organizations and foreign individuals for the valuable assistance extended to Viet Nam in our development cause. We look forward to your continued support and assistance in the future.

Mr. President,

Although the implementation of the MDGs is the primary responsibility of each country, the assistance of the international community is essential. Regarding further assistance to developing countries' efforts to attain the MDGs by 2015, we wish to make the following recommendations:

Firstly, developed countries should seriously honor their commitments to allocate 0.7% of GNP to official development assistance, reduce and write off debt for developing countries, especially the less-developed countries, increase market access and facilitate the accession of the developing countries that apply for membership of the World Trade Organization.

Secondly, the United Nations should take effective measures to combine, especially at the national level, the implementation of the MDGs with that of other commitments reached at global conferences held in the previous decade on issues related to women, children, population and development, HIV/AIDS, housing, the environment and social development. This will help increase the sustainability of the achievements recorded.

Thirdly, the UN organizations should draw on the good experience of countries in implementing the MDGs to propose concrete activities to help developing countries map out strategies and build capacity in fulfilling the MDGs, and increase coordination of assistance provided by their development partners, including harmonization of procedures in the formulating and implementing assistance programmes.

Fourthly, within their capacity, the UN Funds/ Programmes and specialized agencies should take active steps in working with other development partners to raise support for the South-South cooperation. Viet Nam has conducted effectively the 2+1 cooperation programmes between Viet Nam and a number of African countries with the assistance of donors. Viet Nam has experience in implementing this cooperation model and we are ready to share it with other countries.

Mr. President,

We have for long agreed on the need to reform the United Nations to make this organization more efficient in fulfilling the mandates enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reflect the enormous changes in the world over the last 60 years. The fact that Member States have asked the United Nations to take the lead in implementing the MDGs demonstrates the Organization's indispensable role in addressing global issues. The reform of the United Nations is aimed to make this organization live up to the expectations of its Member States. In this regard, Viet

Nam shares the view of a large number of countries that the reform of the United Nations should be conducted in a balanced and comprehensive way on the basis of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and ensuring democracy, transparency and representativeness of this organization with a view to increasing its efficiency in the interest of all Member States, especially developing countries. For the MDGs to be fulfilled, all aspects of the capacity of the UN system at the country level need to be further strengthened

Mr. President,

Recent complex developments in the world highlight all the more the urgent task to bridge the development gap and promote equitable and sustainable development within and between countries with a view to rooting out the causes of much of the instability in the current world. The **MDGs are crucial** means to that end. For its part, Viet Nam reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the MDGs. Fulfilling and exceeding these goals will also contribute to the realization of the common goal of our people, that is to build a strong Viet Nam with "prosperous people, a just, democratic and civilized society".

Thank you for your kind attention.