



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

Check against delivery, pls!

**Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Bui The Giang
Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam
at the 47th Session of the Commission for Social Development**

**Priority Theme: Social Integration
(5 February 2009)**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretariat and Special Rapporteurs for the tabled reports. My Delegation associates itself with the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Bearing in mind the concept of “a society for all” as defined in the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development, my Delegation welcomes the discussion of this important theme “Social Integration”, for we are strongly convinced that social integration helps ensure full enjoyment of universal human rights among all social groups while serving each and every country’s economic growth and sustainable development. We therefore wish to place on record our high recognition of all efforts that the United Nations and the international community have made since the Copenhagen Summit, particularly the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, etc. These instruments have proved to be pivotal in building important foundations, particularly when they become localized, for the minimization of exclusion, and guarantee of equal access to opportunities for all social groups. We also wish to commend all the major steps taken by the Special Rapporteur on Disability during 2003-2008 in implementation of these documents.

Mr. Chairman,

Among vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities deserve special attention due to their high level of vulnerability and frequent risk of marginalization. In this connection, I share the Special Rapporteur’s concern that the overall achievement the international community has made remains below its commitments as stated 15 years ago in the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons

with Disabilities. To eliminate this gap, let me humbly suggest four concrete points. *First*, it is essential to improve national legislations on persons with disabilities and incorporate issues related to them into socio-economic policies, plans and programs. *Second*, provision of care to persons with disabilities is good but not sufficient. Their independence needs to be supported through facilitating their own socio-economic activities. Loans, funds and technical assistance from whatever available sources as well as Government's preferential schemes targeting them, therefore, should be promoted. *Third*, the public awareness regarding them must be changed and improved, perceiving them just as persons *with disabilities* but not as *unable* persons. And this requires efforts by the whole community, the education system public media in the first place. *Forth*, international cooperation and assistance in helping persons with disabilities should be broadened to cover not only the provision of crutches, wheelchairs or funds, but also the exchange of experiences in promoting a legal framework and building infrastructures friendlier to persons with disabilities, and effectively supporting their associations, for example.

Mr. Chairman,

With 6.63% of the population affected with disabilities as result of many decades of wars, including large numbers of those severely wounded by wars, victimized by the Agent Orange toxic chemical and dismembered by explosive remnants of war (ERWs), Viet Nam has done its utmost to relieve their difficulties, improve their access to the economic life and enhance their social integration. We are proud of being among the first countries in Asia-Pacific to support UNESCAP's initiative to develop and implement a long-term plan for persons with disabilities, and at the moment making intensive preparations for the ratification in a near future of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In legal terms, the rights of persons with disabilities are guaranteed by the National Constitution and other important laws, most notably the Labour Code, the Education Law, the Vocational Training Law, the Information and Technology Law, and the Ordinance on Persons with Disabilities, to name a few.

As a result, encouraging progress has been recorded in all fields of life. A healthcare and rehabilitation network for persons with disabilities has been set up at all levels. More than 300,000 people, including tens of thousands of children, have for the last 10 years benefited from corrective rehabilitation and received corrective equipment free of charge. Access to education has also been improved, particularly thanks to the development of a system of curriculum and text books in Braille for the visually impaired and sign languages for the audibly impaired. The number of children with disabilities enrolled in secondary and tertiary education keeps increasing while about 10,000 adults with disabilities attend vocational training courses every year.

On the part of the Government, policies regarding persons with disabilities have been mainstreamed into national poverty reduction policies and plans. A number of funds and credit programs have been put in place to help persons with disabilities start up or scale up their businesses. The Employment Fund for Persons with Disabilities was established. And it has become a practise for the National Employment Fund to allocate a marked share from its annual budget to different associations of persons with disabilities, such as the Association of the Blind, the Association for the Protection of the Disabled and Orphans, the Association for Victims of Agent Orange, the Business Association for Persons with Disabilities, and the Association for the Relief of Children with Disabilities, etc.

Mr. Chairman,

In order for each Member State as well as the entire United Nations system to stay on track to meet our Copenhagen commitments, much remains to be done. For its part, Viet Nam will continue to make all-out efforts to realize the social integration vision. As ever, we are prepared to work closely with other regional and international partners in this endeavour.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

