

# **DIPLOMATIC BLUEBOOK 2015**



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**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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# **DIPLOMATIC BLUEBOOK 2015**

**NATIONAL POLITICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE  
HA NOI - 2016**



## PUBLISHER'S NOTES

The year 2015 witnessed many important international events and was also the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Vietnamese diplomacy marked by many striking achievements. In 2015, the visits by the leaders of the Vietnamese Party and State to strategic partners, friendly and neighboring countries as well as the visits by many heads of state to Viet Nam were important events. In addition, we hosted various international conferences, actively took part in the activities of many international organizations. Cultural diplomacy also made many significant marks. This was also a successful year for economic diplomacy wherein integration was deepened and effectively implemented.

With the aim of portraying an overall picture of Vietnamese diplomatic activities in 2015, the National Political Publishing House in collaboration with the Department of Emulation, Commendation and Diplomatic Traditions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs publishes *Diplomatic Bluebook - 2015*.

The book begins with an introduction by the Politburo Member, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh, highlighting the importance of the bluebook in strengthening the information and communication within Viet Nam as well as to the world on the foreign policy of the Vietnamese Party and State.

The book's content is comprised of six chapters.

The first chapter provides an overview of the international and regional situation and the foreign policy of the Vietnamese Party and State in 2015.

The second chapter reviews developments in Viet Nam's bilateral relations, especially with neighboring countries and important partners as well as the framework for strategic and comprehensive partnerships with major powers in the region and the world.

The third chapter provides an outline of multilateral diplomacy.

The fourth chapter presents the results of economic and cultural

diplomacy and the overseas Vietnamese-related affairs and their contribution to the Fatherland's development and defense.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Party, the National Assembly and the people's external affairs.

Most notably, the sixth chapter explores the main guidelines of the foreign policy adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam.

The book aims at different audiences, from researchers, lecturers and students to the public who are interested in Viet Nam's diplomatic activities.

We wish to introduce this book to readers.

*June 2016*

NATIONAL POLITICAL  
PUBLISHING HOUSE

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PHAM BINH MINH

Member of the Politburo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs

## FOREWORDS

2015 was crucial as the final year for implementing the tasks of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress and the 2011-2015 Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan and preparing for the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. It was also the year of many important celebrations: the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Party, the 70<sup>th</sup> National Day, and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of the South Viet Nam and National Reunification. Immersed in the glorious days of the entire nation, the Vietnamese diplomacy also celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its growth and development.

Throughout the history of the nation, generation after generation, Viet Nam's diplomatic personnel have always upheld patriotism, played an active role in the struggle for national independence and reunification in the past as well as the reform, integration and national defense today. Building on that glorious tradition, over the past year, the Vietnamese diplomacy has made great efforts and recorded proud achievements. Most notably was the establishment of strategic and comprehensive partnership framework with most major countries in the region and the world.



Meanwhile, multilateral diplomacy has also been elevated to a new height.

In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the first bluebook titled *Diplomatic Bluebook - 2014*. This book had captured the attention of the public, meeting the initial objectives set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a means to introduce the foreign policy pursued by the Vietnamese Party and State, conduct researches and studies and as a useful reference for all those who are interested in Viet Nam's external affairs.

This year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to introduce the *Diplomatic Bluebook - 2015* following the success of the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Therefore, this book is not only a recounting of Viet Nam's foreign activities in 2015, but is also an opportunity for us to review the triumphant journey of the past five years. The 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress marks a significant turning point, consolidating the results of 30 years of reform, setting the directions and objectives for socio-economic development over the next five years (2016-2020) and the development strategy for the next ten years, and opening up a new period of development for the nation - an era of extensive

international integration. In order to implement the Party's guidelines in the wake of the Congress, there is a need to widely disseminate about and conduct studies on the guidelines set out at the Congress. Therefore, the book refers to the core contents of the Party and State's major foreign policy guidelines and strategic orientations on external affairs and international integration, especially Viet Nam's relations with neighboring and regional countries, strategic and comprehensive partners and traditional friends, and Viet Nam's participation in regional and international forums. "*Multilateral diplomacy - active international integration for national defense and development*" was the theme of the Vietnamese diplomacy in 2015 and consequently the highlight of this book, which will be reflected throughout its length. The book refers to all four major areas, namely political diplomacy, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, overseas Vietnamese-related affairs as well as the Party, the National Assembly, and the people's diplomacy.

It is my hope that the book meets the expectations of readers as you will have a fruitful and enjoyable time perusing it.

**PHAM BINH MINH**

**Member of the Politburo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs**

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ABAC	APEC Business Advisory Council	ASEP	Asia - Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting
ACMECS	Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy	BRICS	Group of Newly Emerging Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)
ADB	Asian Development Bank	CAD	Canadian Dollar
ADMM	ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting	CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence - Building Measures in Asia
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community	CLMV	Cooperative mechanism between the four countries Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	CLV	Cooperative mechanism between the three countries Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam
AIPA	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly	COC	Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea <sup>1</sup>
AMM	ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting	COP-21	The 21 <sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
APA	Asian Parliamentary Assembly	DOC	Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
APEC	Asia - Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum	EAS	East Asia Summit
APF	Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie	ECOSOC	The United Nations Economic and Social Council
APPF	Asia - Pacific Parliamentary Forum		
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum		
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations		
ASEM	Asia - Europe Meeting		

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1. "South China Sea" is the English term internationally used for the sea that is dominantly named as the "East Sea" in Viet Nam.

EU	European Union	PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
EVFTA	EU - Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement	RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
FEALAC	Forum for East Asia - Latin America Cooperation	TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
FTA	Free Trade Agreement	TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
FTAAP	Free Trade Area of the Asia - Pacific	UN	United Nations
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region	UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IPU	International Parliamentary Union	UPR	Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council
MDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals	USD	United States Dollar
NDB	New Development Bank	WB	World Bank
NGO	Non-governmental Organization	WEF	World Economic Forum
ODA	Official Development Assistance	East Asia WEF	World Economic Forum on East Asia
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	WTO	World Trade Organization
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Viet Nam		



## Chapter One

# THE WORLD AND REGIONAL SITUATION, THE VIETNAMESE PARTY AND STATE'S FOREIGN POLICY

In recent years, the Resolution of the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress has been implemented amidst increasingly complicated regional and international developments. The world economy experienced slower rate of recovery than forecast, prices of certain commodities, particularly oil, dropped

sharply. Global issues such as climate change, terrorism and epidemics tended to be more serious; a number of regional issues, especially islands, sea and territorial disputes became more complex. The world and regional situation in 2015 also followed the same trend.

### I. The World and Regional Situation in 2015

#### 1. Economic Situation

a. The world economy continued to recover, but at a slower, uneven and unsustainable rate. In 2015, the world economy grew at 3.1%<sup>1</sup>, lower than 3.4% of 2014. Apart from India with 7.3% growth rate, other newly emerging and developing economies continued to experience decline in economic growth for the fifth consecutive years, at only 4% against 4.6% of 2014. China suffered from economic slowdown, while Russia and

Brazil went into deep recession (-3.7% and -3.8% consecutively). Developed economies such as Japan and the EU experienced weak recovery at 1.9%. The US's economy seemed to perform slightly better at 2.4%.

b. Decline in global trade led to a sharp reduction in prices of commodities, particularly oil. World trade in 2015 grew by 2.8%<sup>2</sup>, marking the fourth consecutive year growing at less than 3%. Greenfield investment globally increased 0.9% against

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1, 2. "IMF World Economic Outlook", April 2016.

that of 2014, equivalent to 721 billion USD<sup>1</sup>. FDI flow into newly emerging and developing economies declined remarkably, while that into developed countries continued to grow.

c. 2015 witnessed the trend of increasing international economic integration and linkage around the globe, especially in the Asia - Pacific region with the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and conclusion of TPP Agreement negotiations. At the same time, many large-scale linkages were about to be concluded such as RCEP, TTIP agreement, East Asia FTA among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, etc. Most notably, by the end of 2015, as AEC came into being in line with the set roadmap, ASEAN became a promising single, competitive and dynamic market. AEC is the community of 600 million people from dynamic economies with the combined GDP of 2,600 billion USD, and the community of diverse cultures, with rich tradition and identity. This marked a historic milestone of the regional integration in Southeast Asia, reflecting the common vision and determination of ASEAN member states to further deepen intra-bloc linkages and integration.

## ***2. Political and Security Situation***

a. Given the world's slow economic recovery, countries continued to focus on economic development, maintaining domestic socio-political stability, and promoting international cooperation to resolve common threats, such as the IS terrorists (the self-proclaimed Islamic State), proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and illegal migration. Notably, multilateral diplomacy forged historic global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Climate Agreement at COP-21. Yet, the world also faced no less new complex developments.

b. Asia - Pacific continued to drive the world economic recovery and integration, and play an increasingly important role in the world economic and political order.

There were no major changes in Northeast Asia, however several hotspots such as the East China Sea disputes, the Korean peninsula continued to witness complex developments.

In Southeast Asia, regional countries strongly promoted regional integration and the establishment

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1. "UNCTAD Report", February 2016.

of an ASEAN Community. ASEAN continued to maintain solidarity, unity, and brought into full play its centrality in the regional architecture. However, this region also witnessed unpredictable developments. Regional and international public opinion continued to express serious concerns over the complex developments in the East Sea due to militarization activities without respecting international laws and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as well as unilateral acts to change the status quo and expand control area, etc. These acts escalated the tension and negatively affected regional peace and stability, while there had been no substantive progress in the formulation of a Code of Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (COC), and the increasing strategic competition among major powers.

c. The wave of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa to the EU in 2015 led to the most severe migration crisis ever since World War II, causing social and security instability. The public debt crisis in Greece was not yet fully addressed while the integrity of the Union was threatened as the UK was preparing for a referendum on Brexit.

Africa, the Middle East and Latin America also witnessed new

developments. Despite being faced with many difficulties and instability, Africa still attracted the attention from major powers.

In the Middle East, agreement reached between P5+1 with Iran on the Iranian nuclear issue after 12 years of negotiations eased the regional tension, opening up a new chapter in the relations between Iran and the US and Western countries. Yet, the situation in the Middle East remained very complicated: civil war in Syria, conflicts in Yemen, Libya and Iraq; division among Arab states, extremist Islamic groups, especially IS, continued to seek expansion of their influence, etc. All these had negative impacts on peace and stability of the entire region.

In Latin America, the trend of dialogues was on the rise. Remarkably, the US and Cuba re-established their diplomatic relations and carried out normalization activities, thus opening up enormous opportunities for cooperation in the region.

Such international and regional situation had a deep impact on peace, security and development of Viet Nam. Complications, difficulties and challenges increased, yet there were opportunities for Viet Nam to



expand its external relations, deepen its comprehensive international

integration and improve its status in the international arena.

## II. Vietnamese Party and State's Foreign Policy

### 1. Overview of the Foreign Policy of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress

*"Consistently pursue the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development, diversification and multilateralization of external relations, actively and proactively promote international integration; being a friend, reliable partner and responsible member of the international community, in the interest of the nation, for a prosperous socialist republic of Viet Nam.*

*The mandate of Viet Nam's diplomacy is to secure a peaceful environment conducive for the industrialization and modernization process, firmly safeguard national independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, enhance the country's status; actively contribute to the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress in the world."*<sup>1</sup>

Based on the above-mentioned goals, tasks, principles and motto, the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress introduced major orientations for foreign affairs, including the overall direction to

improve the effectiveness of external activities, and continue to add more substance to external relations.

### 2. Major Orientations for Diplomacy in 2015

Successfully realize the tasks set by the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, consolidate the foundation for the implementation of the tasks set by the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in the context of deepened international integration. Continue to mainstream the spirit of the Politburo's Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW dated April 10, 2013 on international integration and the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Plenum's Resolution (XI<sup>th</sup> Term) on Fatherland Defense Strategy in the new circumstances into reality, with the following focuses:

Add more substance and effectiveness to ties with other countries, promote shared interests, especially with neighboring countries, major powers, traditional partners and friends.

Actively serve socio-economic development goals, support efforts

1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam: *Documents of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2011, pp. 235-236.

to explore new opportunities, new markets, attract foreign investment to create jobs, promote sustainable growth; increase cooperation in resolving social injustice and inequalities, strongly support programs on connectivity, poverty reduction, development gap narrowing, and green economy to lay the sustainable foundation for peace, security and development. Proactively engage in the negotiations and signing of FTAs, TPP, RCEP, and negotiations within the WTO framework, and realize measures under the AEC roadmap.

Improve the effectiveness and efficacy of multilateral diplomacy, actively contribute to addressing the common concerns on peace and stability maintenance, and effective responses to global challenges, thus enhancing the nation's international status. Actively participate in and put forward initiatives at multilateral forums such as ASEAN, UN, APEC, ASEM, Mekong Subregion Cooperation, etc., successfully host the 132<sup>nd</sup> International Parliamentary Union Assembly (IPU-132), contribute to drafting and implementing the UN post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Effectively manage the land borders with neighboring countries,

effectively resolve emerging issues, firmly safeguard sovereignty, sovereign rights and legitimate interests in the East Sea, and promote the settlement of disputes through peaceful means in line with international law.

Strongly promote cultural diplomacy and raise the efficiency of external communications; improve the efficiency of citizen and legal person protection activities overseas.

Comprehensively carry out the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, multilateralization and diversification of external relations in all channels of the Party, State, and Parliament and people-to-people exchange, thus contributing to maintaining peace and stability for national development, protecting national interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity, securing socio-political stability and enhancing the country's status.

\*

\* \*

Based on the major directions for foreign affairs defined at the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, in 2015, under the Party leadership, diplomatic activities were carried out in a comprehensive and targeted manner, thus producing important



outcomes, and contributing to the overall success of the country over the past five years as assessed by the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress (see Chapter VI). To date, Viet Nam enjoys diplomatic ties with 185 countries among the 193 UN members; and is an active and

responsible member of more than 70 international organizations. Viet Nam's strategic partnership with 15 countries and comprehensive partnership with 10 nations have taken its external relations with other countries to a new height with greater substance.

2014 and 2015 were chosen as the years of Viet Nam's "*multilateral diplomacy - active and proactive international integration*." The 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress marked an important shift in the mindset on foreign affairs, setting out the "active and proactive international integration" guideline, which was further elaborated in the Politburo's Resolution No.22-NQ/TW, Resolution No.31-NQ/CP dated May 13, 2014 on issuance of the Government's Action Plan to realize Resolution No.22-NQ/TW and Directive No.15/CT-TTg on international integration. In carrying out the guideline, Viet Nam's tremendous efforts have resulted in remarkable achievements, thus taking Viet Nam's multilateral diplomacy to a higher level. Viet Nam was trusted with high votes to be a member of important UN bodies and successfully accomplished the tenures, such as the membership to the UNHRC for 2014-2016, the Board of Governors of the IAEA for 2013-2014, the World Heritage Committee for 2013-2017, and the UNESCO Executive Board for 2015-2019. Viet Nam started to participate in the UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2014. Viet Nam, as an active and responsible member, has contributed to the work of international and regional organizations, including to the establishment of the ASEAN Community. Viet Nam also proposed many initiatives to promote cooperation within APEC, EAS, ASEM, and Mekong River Commission, took part in the negotiations and contributed to the success of the COP-21 and the 2030 Agenda, and successfully hosted IPU-132. Viet Nam has been active in promoting international economic integration by negotiating and acceding to regional and inter-regional FTAs such as EVFTA, RCEP, FTAAP, TPP, among others.



## Chapter Two

# BILATERAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

A part from unceasing consolidation and enhancement of its traditional relations, especially with Laos and Cambodia, Viet Nam has further institutionalized the framework of its relations with priority and important partners as well as with other countries.

### I. Relations with Neighboring Countries

1. *Laos*: The traditional friendship, special solidarity and comprehensive cooperation between Viet Nam and Laos continued to flourish.

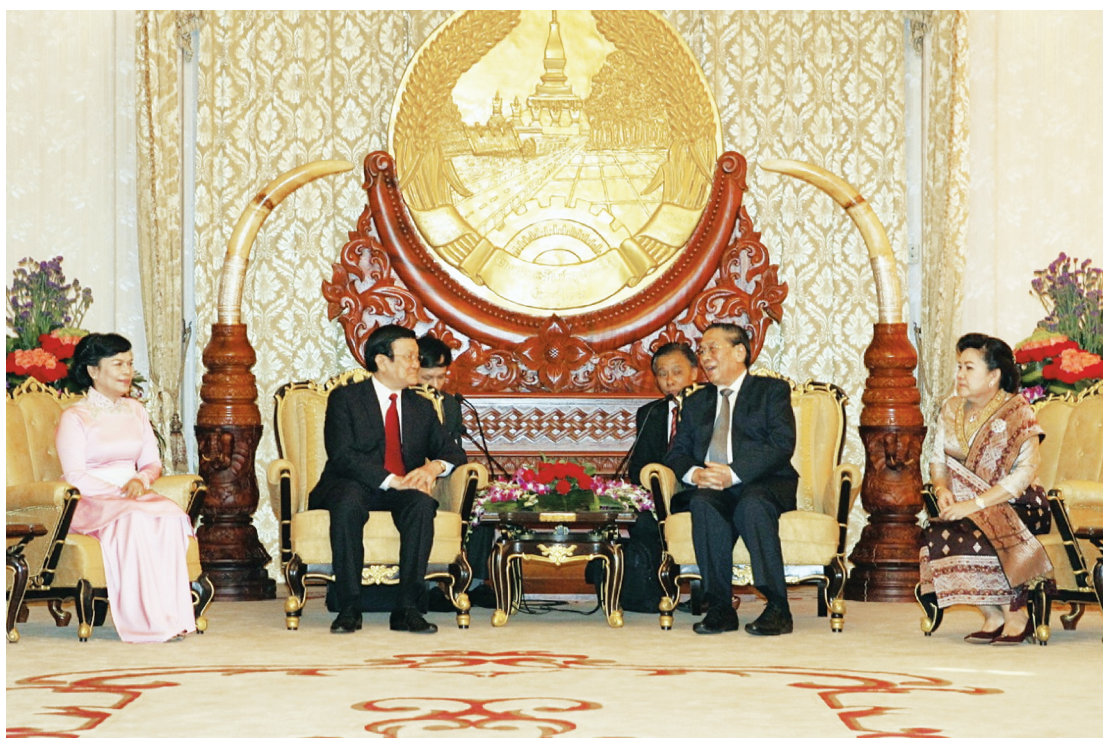
Political, defense, security ties were strongly expanded. The two sides continued to increase the exchange of high-level visits: President Truong Tan Sang visited Laos in March and May 2015; Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visited Laos in September 2015; Vice President Nguyen Thi Doan visited Laos in October 2015; Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong visited Viet Nam in July 2015; Vice President Bounnhang Vorachith visited Viet Nam in July 2015; and so on. The two countries co-organized major national celebrations such as the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Day of Viet Nam, the 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday

of President Ho Chi Minh, the 40<sup>th</sup> National Day of Laos, the 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday of President Kaysone Phomvihane, etc. The two sides actively maintained Party-to-Party contacts, successfully convening the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viet Nam - Laos Theory Conference (July 2015); regularly maintained mechanisms of bilateral cooperation, namely the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Committee on Bilateral Cooperation (the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> sessions took place in Ha Noi and Vientiane respectively in 2015), the annual meetings at the foreign ministerial and deputy foreign ministerial levels. Both sides also actively implemented the Cooperation Agreement for 2014-2020 between the two foreign ministries and continued implementing agreements in defense - security cooperation;

developed a stable Viet Nam - Laos borderline; completed the project on increasing the density and renovation of border markers, and signed the Protocol on the Borderline and Border Markers and the regulations on the border and border gate management. Laos and Viet Nam also continued to implement the Agreement between the two governments to address free migration and out-of-law marriages

in the Viet Nam - Laos border areas. Progress has been made in the search and regrouping of the remains of Vietnamese volunteer soldiers. In the dry season of 2014-2015, the remains of some 212 Vietnamese volunteer soldiers fallen in Laos were regrouped.

In the economic, trade and investment cooperation, the conclusion of the new Trade Agreement (March 2015) and the Border Trade Agreement



*President Truong Tan Sang and Spouse met Lao General Secretary and President Choummaly Sayasone and Spouse during his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (March 23-25, 2015) - VNA*

(June 2015) were the spotlights in 2015. The two sides signed the MOU on transportation cooperation strategy for 2016-2025 with a vision

until 2030 (September 2015); deployed the "one-stop-shop" model at Lao Bao - Densavan border gate (February 2015), hence increased connectivity

between the two economies. Viet Nam's investment in Laos saw promising results with the launching of the 523 million USD potassium salt project in Khammouan (September 2015) by Viet Nam Chemical Group, and the opening and hand-over of the 36 million USD project on Attapeu International Airport funded under BT form by Hoang Anh Gia Lai Group. In the fiscal year 2014-2015, Laos licensed 27 Vietnamese FDI projects with the registered capital of 41.5 USD million. Laos highly valued Viet Nam's increased investment in agriculture, cattle and fish farming, and so on.

Education - training, cultural and social cooperation continued to be expanded. Both countries increased the number of students in each other's educational institutions, and made efforts to improve the selection and training quality. Vietnamese language learning among Lao officials was sustained. Cultural exchanges between the two countries were regularly conducted.

Both sides worked closely together at regional and international forums and continued to coordinate with other ASEAN members in building the ASEAN Community.

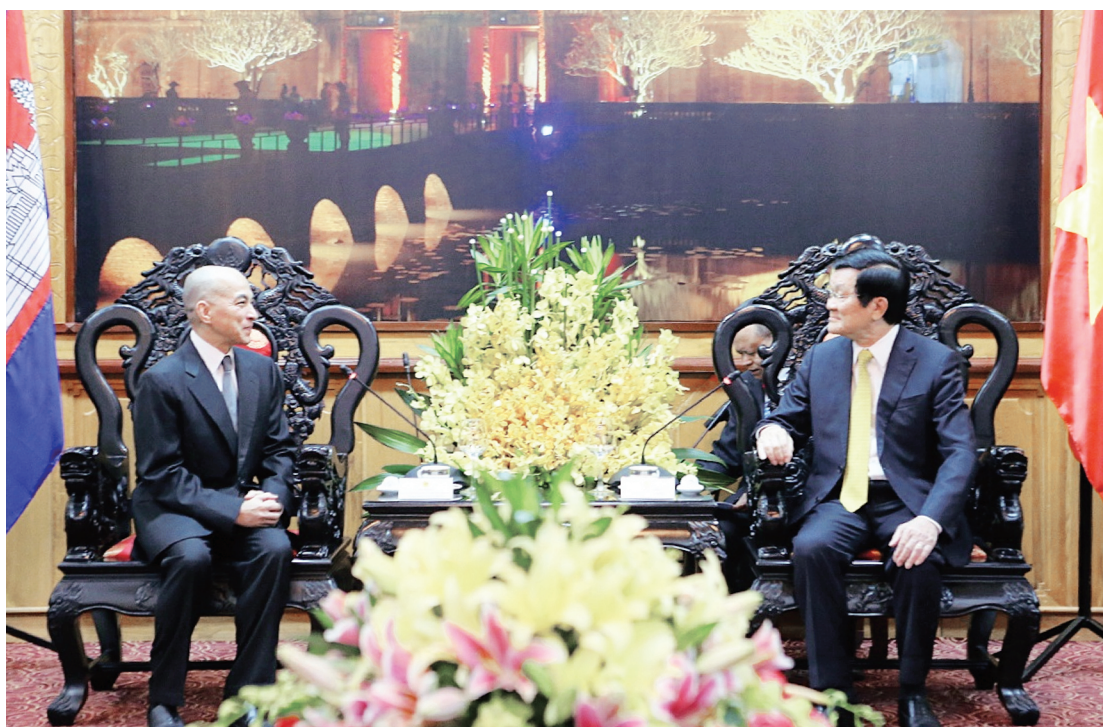
**2. Cambodia:** The political and diplomatic relations between Viet

Nam and Cambodia were further deepened. The two sides maintained regular exchange of visits at all levels. King Norodom Sihamoni visited Viet Nam in October 2015 and Senate President Say Chhum visited Viet Nam in December 2015, his first foreign trip after the election in June 2015.

Mechanisms of bilateral cooperation were maintained. Fruitful results were produced after the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Viet Nam - Cambodia Joint Commission on Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technological Cooperation and the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference on the Cooperation and Development of border provinces in Ho Chi Minh City in October 2015. Besides, cooperation between localities, especially border provinces, was effectively expanded.

The two governments attached special attention to and strictly monitored the land border demarcation and marker plantation. To date, the two sides had completed 83% of the workload. Relevant agencies and localities in border areas informed the National Border Committee of their resolve and efforts to finish their work early. On December 26, 2015, a ceremony was held to mark the inauguration of Marker 30 (Gia Lai - Rattanakiri), Marker 275 (An Giang -





*Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni visited Viet Nam (October 18-23, 2015) - VNA*

Takeo) and the road connecting Le Thanh international border gate (Gia Lai) and Oyadow (Rattanakiri). The prime ministers of Viet Nam and Cambodia witnessed the event, a demonstration of strong determination of the leaders and people of both countries in building a Viet Nam - Cambodia borderline of peace, friendship, cooperation and development.

Economic, trade and investment are among priority areas of cooperation between the two countries. The two-way trade in 2015 amounted to 3.370 billion USD, up by 2% from 2014. Viet Nam's FDI

flow into Cambodia saw positive growth. By the end of 2015, Viet Nam had invested in Cambodia 172 projects with the total capital of 3.361 billion USD, making Viet Nam the fifth largest foreign investor in Cambodia among over 50 countries and territories investing the country.

The two countries placed much importance on security and defense cooperation between their armed forces. The Ministries of Defense and Public Security/Internal Affairs of both countries conducted annual exchange of delegations at all levels and effectively implemented cooperation



*Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen unveiled the border marker 275 (An Giang - Takeo) of the Viet Nam - Cambodia borderline (December 26, 2015) - Government's Office*

plans. Notably, the two countries' soldiers and people joined efforts in searching, excavating and repatriating the remains of Vietnamese volunteer soldiers fallen in Cambodia during the wars.

Cooperation in education - training, health and culture was renewed in both substance and forms. The two governments annually provided short- and long-term scholarships for their students to pursue education in each other's educational institutions, as well as to researchers and staff of their ministries, agencies and localities. In the health domain, Viet Nam provided Cambodia with diverse forms of cooperation at different levels. In particular, many

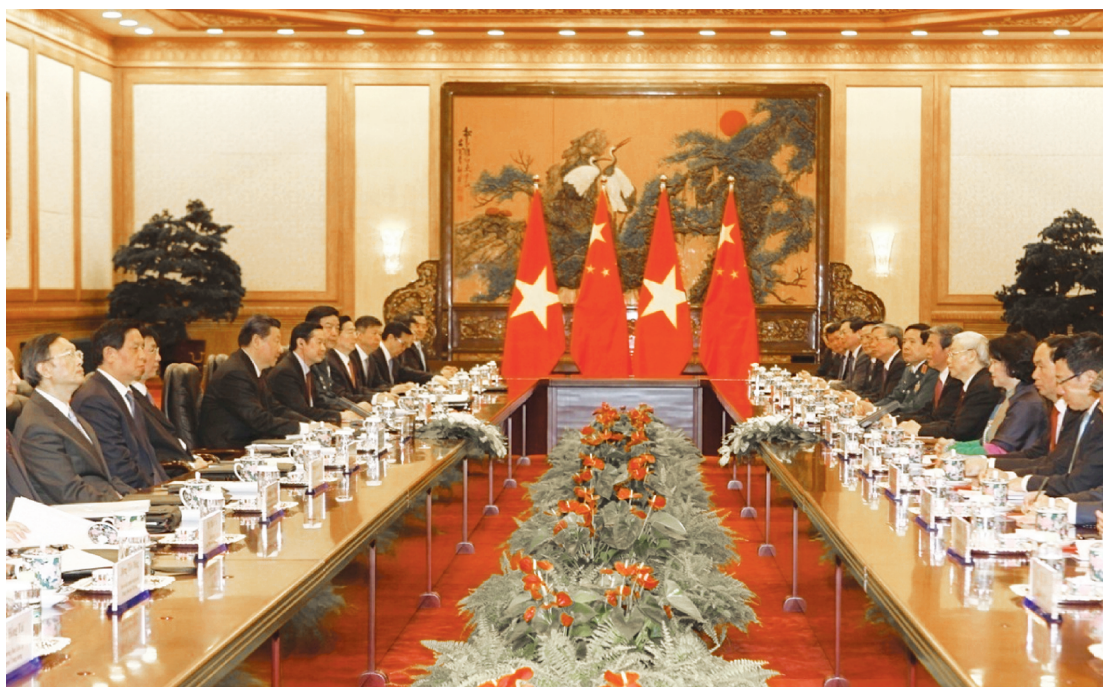
delegations of Vietnamese healthcare workers and doctors were sent to Cambodia to provide free medical services and medicine, especially for border provinces. In Viet Nam, Cambodian patients were provided with medical services at the same fees as applicable to Vietnamese patients. Cultural exchange between the two peoples and social mass organizations took various and animated forms, becoming a "spiritual bridge" of affection to increase mutual understanding between Vietnamese and Cambodian ethnicities. The two sides maintained exchange of visits between their fatherland fronts, friendship associations, women and youth unions.



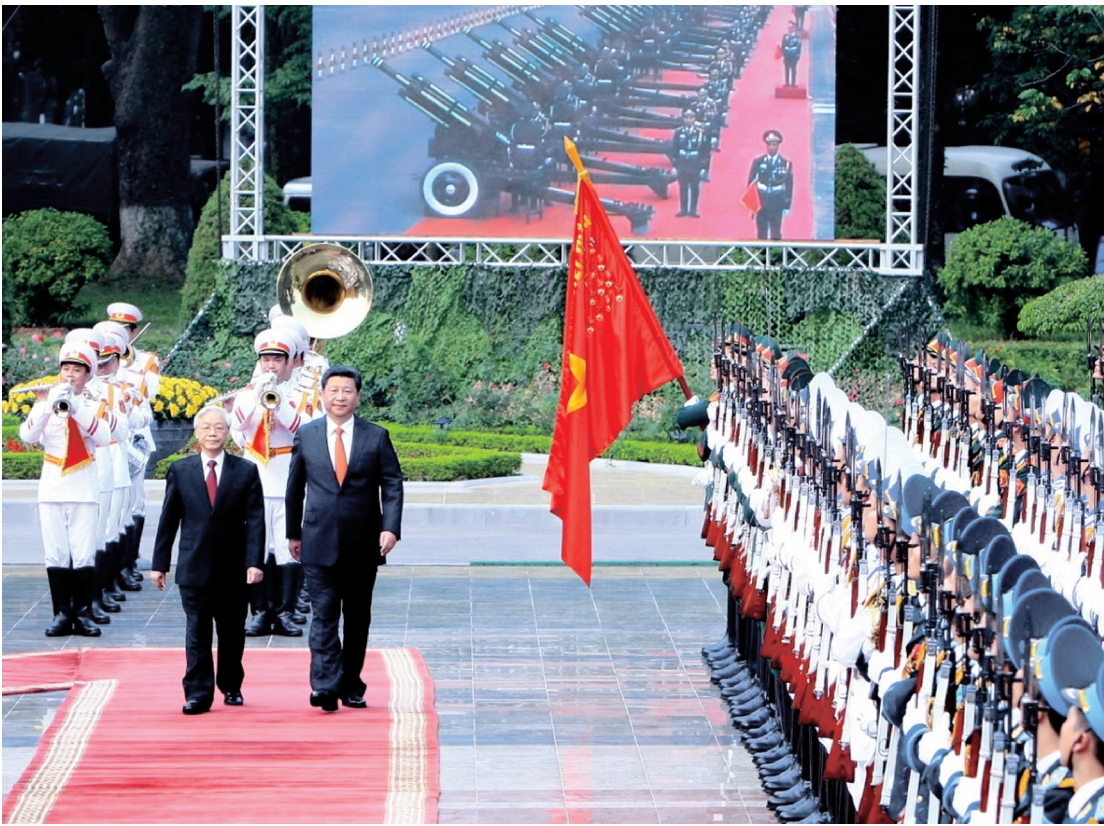
3. **China:** In 2015, Viet Nam - China relations, by and large, saw stable developments, with positive steps forward and greater substance in various cooperation areas.

Contacts between the two countries' leaders took place frequently under various forms, including official visits, special envoy's visits, telephone conversations, annual meetings, and meetings on the sidelines of multilateral forums. This enabled both sides to promptly exchange views on important issues in the relations between the two Parties and countries, thus significantly

contributing to the enhancement of the bilateral relations. Most prominently, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong made an official visit to China in April 2015. President Truong Tan Sang attended the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory against Fascism held in Beijing in September 2015. Chinese General Secretary and President Xi Jinping paid a State visit to Viet Nam in November 2015. The two countries continued a number of cooperation mechanisms, namely the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Committee on Viet Nam - China Bilateral Cooperation (June 2015), the 11<sup>th</sup> Political Theory Symposium between the two Parties



*General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and Chinese General Secretary and President Xi Jinping held talks during his official visit to China (April 7-10, 2015) - VNA*



*Chinese General Secretary, President Xi Jinping paid a State visit to Viet Nam  
(November 5-6, 2015) - VNA*

in Shanghai (June 2015). Both sides advanced exchange and cooperation between ministries, agencies, notably between the ministries of defense, public security and foreign affairs, and between border provinces.

Economic, trade, investment and tourism cooperation continued to grow. In 2015, the two-way trade reached 66.6 billion USD, up by 13.7% from 2014. Viet Nam's export was 17.1 billion USD, up by 14.8% and import was 49.5 billion USD, up by 13.3%. By the end of 2015, China had

1,284 projects in Viet Nam with the total registered capital of 9.98 billion USD, ranking 9 out of 110 countries and territories investing in Viet Nam. In 2015, there were more than 1.78 million Chinese tourists coming to Viet Nam, down by 8.5% from 2014 and China was the biggest Viet Nam's inbound tourist market.

The land border and Tonkin Gulf situation was fundamentally stable. The two countries signed the Agreement on free passage of vessels at the mouth of Bac Luan river



and the Agreement on cooperation in the development and protection of tourism resources in Ban Gioc waterfall in November 2015, and agreed to implement these agreements effectively. Viet Nam and China also had officially completed the settlement of the outstanding land border issues.

However, currently, the East Sea issue remains the biggest outstanding issue in the bilateral relations. In 2015, there were complex developments at sea due to China's illegal actions. In pursuit of the consistent policy of firmly safeguarding maritime sovereignty, Viet Nam would like to settle disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, making best use of political and diplomatic measures to address emerging issues in order to maintain a peaceful and stable environment for development without affecting the friendship and equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with China.

**4. ASEAN members:** Viet Nam worked closely with ASEAN members to enhance solidarity and cooperation, promote the ASEAN Community building and strengthen the ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture. Bilateral relations between Viet Nam

and ASEAN members continued to see positive developments. Investment from ASEAN countries in Viet Nam was sustained.

2015 marked a number of outstanding events. President Truong Tan Sang attended the Asia - Africa Summit in Indonesia in April 2015. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung attended the 7<sup>th</sup> CLMV Summit, the 6<sup>th</sup> ACMECS Summit in Myanmar in June 2015 and the Golden Jubilee of Singapore in August 2015.

Recently, Viet Nam has established strategic partnerships with *Malaysia* and the *Philippines*. Viet Nam totally had strategic partnerships with all five major founding members of ASEAN (Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines), creating firm foundation for adding more substance to these relationships. The Foreign Ministers of Viet Nam and the Philippines co-chaired the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on the Viet Nam - Philippines Bilateral Cooperation in Viet Nam in October 2015. In 2015, leaders of Viet Nam and *Thailand* agreed to further advance the Strategic Partnership. Both sides maintained the exchange of high-level visits and effectively implemented mechanisms of bilateral cooperation. Particularly,



*Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh and Filipino Foreign Minister Rosario signed cooperation agreements on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on the Viet Nam - Philippines Bilateral Cooperation (October 21, 2015) - The World and Viet Nam Report*

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung paid an official visit to Thailand and co-chaired the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Cabinet Meeting in July 2015. Labor cooperation made important progress as the two countries signed the MOU on Labor Cooperation and the Agreement on Dispatching and Receiving Labor in July 2015, providing a legal basis for addressing issues of Vietnamese workers in Thailand. *Singapore* remained one of the Viet Nam's largest trade partners (Singapore ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in

terms of investment in Viet Nam with a total capital of 34 billion USD. The two-way trade reached over 16 billion USD in 2015). Viet Nam and *Indonesia* have organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Bilateral Cooperation Committee. In 2015, Viet Nam and *Myanmar* conducted many activities to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties, such as the exchange of high-level visits, the 8<sup>th</sup> Joint Commission Meeting (May 2015) and other cultural and art events.

## II. Establishment of Strategic and Comprehensive Partnerships with Almost Major Countries in the Region and the World

The 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress emphasized one of the outstanding achievements in Viet Nam's foreign affairs over the past five years: *"External relations have been increasingly deepened and broadened... [Viet Nam] has established strategic and comprehensive partnerships with various important partners."*<sup>1</sup> To date, Viet Nam has established the strategic partnerships with 15 countries and comprehensive partnerships with 10 countries. More than 50% of the strategic partnerships, or 8 out of 15, were established within the last five years. Viet Nam has basically institutionalized the frameworks for its relations with all major countries, including the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Viet Nam's strategic and comprehensive partners range from neighboring countries, major countries to ones that play an important role in different regions.

Deepening the relations with important partners brings immense economic interest and also huge benefits in trade, investment, politics, security, defense and culture for Vietnam.

Strategically, Viet Nam has succeeded in lifting its position in equal relations with these partners. In their foreign policies, Viet Nam keeps an important position in Asia - Pacific, international and regional organizations. These new frameworks helped step up cooperation and increase political commitments at the highest level to respecting Viet Nam's political regime, recognizing the leading role of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, and reduce differences. Mutual trust and confidence between the countries have increased to promote high-level contacts as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

In the economic domain, the strategic and comprehensive partnerships allowed Viet Nam to enhance cooperation and attract huge external resources for national development. The economy was given the opportunity to connect itself to a larger market of over 3.5 billion people and a combined

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1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam: *Documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2016, p. 151.

GDP of 35 trillion USD. Many of Viet Nam's strategic and comprehensive partners are also members of important regional economic linkages to which Viet Nam is also a party, including the TPP and RCEP. The majority of the ten largest trade partners and foreign investors of Viet Nam are also its either strategic or comprehensive partners, including China, the US, Japan, Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

Such remarkable achievements resulted from the good performance of the diplomacy in strategic research and forecasts, from understanding the needs and interests of the partners amid a context where countries were redefining strategies to give more weight to Asia - Pacific, Southeast Asia, including Viet Nam.

### III. Relations with Other Partners

#### 1. Asia

- *India*: The strategic partnership continued to be expanded. In 2015, both sides invested efforts to implement cooperation agreements in the priority areas, and promote economic, trade, investment, ODA, tourism and labor cooperation. During the visit to India by the Vietnamese Defense Minister (May 2015), both sides signed the Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations for 2015-2020 and a MOU between Vietnamese Coastal Police and Indian Coast Guard, and agreed to soon establish a dialogue at defense ministerial level.

In 2015, bilateral trade amounted to 5.1 billion USD. Both sides also worked closely to disburse the 300-million-USD concessional credit granted by India to Viet Nam to

import raw materials for the textile industry and for the Long Phu II Thermal Power Plant project in Soc Trang (valued at 1.8 billion USD). In 2015, India's greenfield investment in Viet Nam increased dramatically with 18 new projects valued at 222 million USD, increasing the total investment of India in Viet Nam to 529 million USD with 111 projects, making India rank the 27<sup>th</sup> among the foreign investors in country.

- *Japan*: The bilateral relations continued to experience robust and substantive progress in 2015. High-level contacts were maintained on a frequent basis under various forms, including General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's official visit to Japan (September 2015), Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit



to Japan to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Japan - Mekong Summit (July 2015), President Truong Tan Sang's meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the Asia - Africa Conference and the commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bandung Conference (April 2015), Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and the related meetings in Malaysia (November 2015). Defense and security cooperation was also further enhanced.

Viet Nam - Japan economic cooperation witnessed breakthroughs as both sides agreed to focus on strengthening cooperation, connecting their economic development and production capacity strategies. In 2015, bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to 28.526 billion USD, up by 3.3% against 2014. In the 2015 fiscal year, Japan continued to be the largest ODA provider to Viet Nam with the total of 310.08 billion Yen (equivalent to 2.5 billion USD). By the end of 2015, there were 2,883 effective Japanese FDI projects in



*General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong paid an official visit to Japan at the invitation of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (September 15-18, 2015) - VNA*

Viet Nam with the accumulated capital of 38.41 billion USD, making it the second largest foreign investor in the country. Cooperation in agriculture, culture, education and training, science and technology was also fostered. Exchanges between two countries' local authorities and people were also enhanced.

## 2. Europe

- *Russian Federation:* The comprehensive strategic partnership was further deepened and broadened. The exchange of visits took place

regularly, especially at high level: Prime Minister Medvedev's visit to Viet Nam (April 2015); President Truong Tan Sang's visit to Russia to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War (May 2015). Both sides effectively implemented the 2015 List of Priority Tasks.

On economic cooperation, in 2015, due to difficulties experienced by Russia, bilateral trade only stood at 2.2 billion USD, declining by 13% compared to that of 2014. Russia had 113 effective investment projects in Viet Nam with the total registered

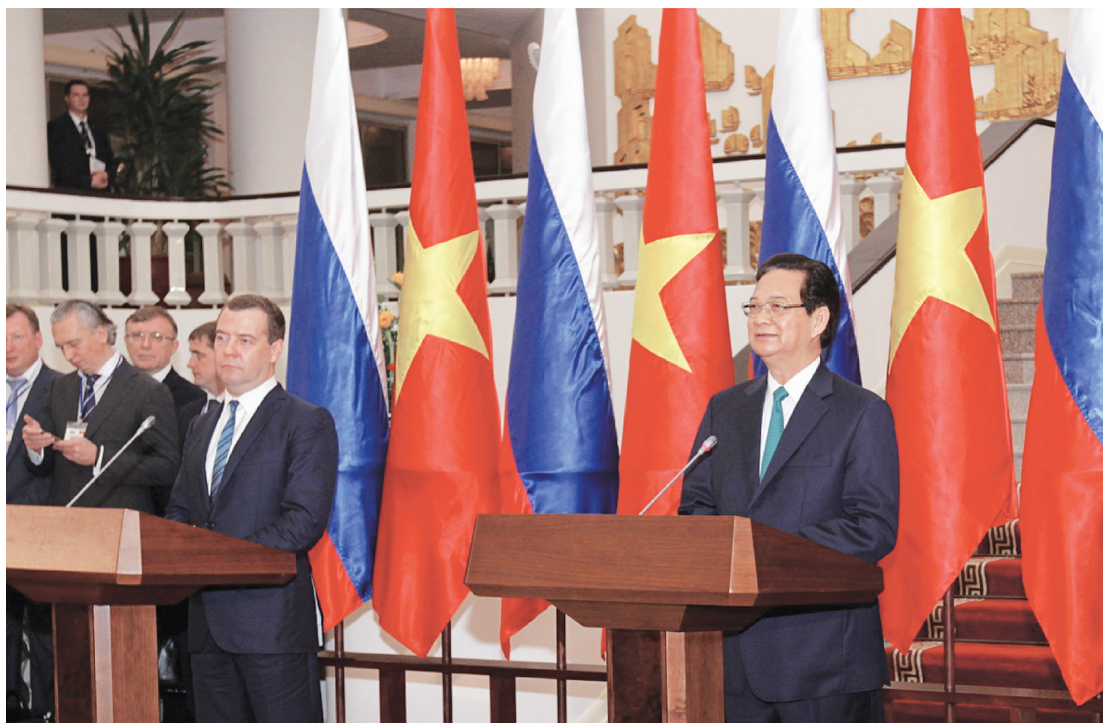


*President Truong Tan Sang and Spouse met with Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Russia to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War (May 8-10, 2015) - VNA*



capital of 1.94 billion USD. Viet Nam also had 20 investment projects in Russia with the total registered capital of 2.5 billion USD. Viet Nam and the

Eurasian Economic Union (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan) signed a Free Trade Agreement in May 2015.



*Russian Prime Minister Medvedev and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung at a press briefing after the talks during the Russian Prime Minister's visit to Viet Nam (April 4-7, 2015) - VNA*

Cooperation in strategic areas such as nuclear power, oil and gas witnessed encouraging results. The two sides worked closely to implement the Ninh Thuan I Nuclear Power Plant project and cooperated in nuclear safety. Oil and gas cooperation was fostered, joint ventures between the two countries such as Vietsovpetro, Rusvietpetro, Vietgazprom, Gazpromviet operated effectively in each country. Both

sides also explored the possibilities to expand cooperation to other areas such as hydropower, thermal power, mining, metallurgy, automobile assembly, agriculture, etc.

Defense cooperation was also strengthened on the basis of existing agreements.

- *European Union (EU)*: EU and Viet Nam became comprehensive partners. Both sides have actively implemented

the new cooperation framework after signing the PCA (June 2012).

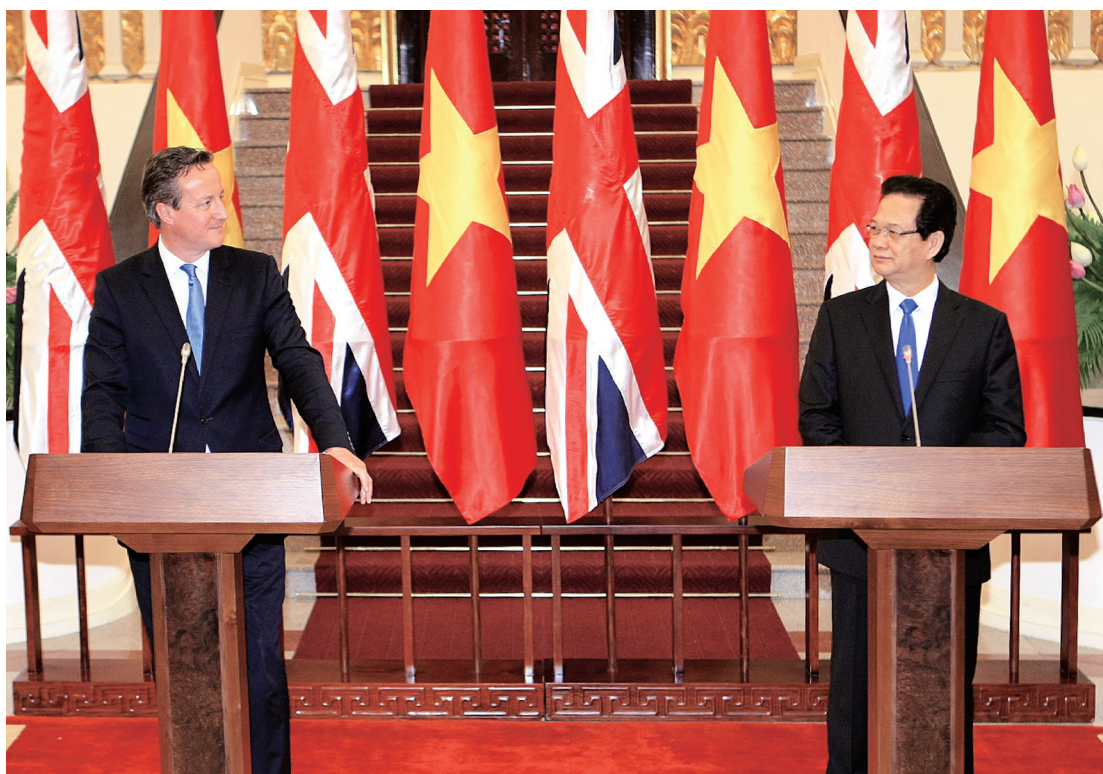
The Viet Nam - EU relations were strengthened in 2015 with a joint press statement on December 2, 2015 on concluding EVFTA negotiations during Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's EU visit. Both sides were actively preparing for the official signing of this Agreement in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2016. Strategic partnerships between Viet Nam and Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Spain, and sectoral strategic partnerships with the Netherlands and Denmark continued to be promoted in the political, economic, trade, development assistance, institutional reform, legal and climate change areas. EU continued to be the second largest export market, second largest trade partner and largest ODA provider of Viet Nam. Trade turnover between the two sides reached 41.8 billion USD in 2015, a 12% increase compared with that of the previous year. Viet Nam exported 30.8 billion USD to the EU and imported 11 billion USD. By the end of December 2015, 23 out of 28 EU member states had invested in Viet Nam with 1,700 projects worth 23.3 billion USD. Both sides worked closely to disburse the EU's development assistance package of 400 million Euros to Viet Nam for the period of 2014-2020.

- *Germany*: Bilateral relations progressed in all areas, highlighted the first State visit of President Truong Tan

Sang to Germany (November 2015) with the signing of many important cooperation agreements that enabled expansion of cooperation in the economic, education and training, science and technology, and labor fields. Both sides celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations with many commemorative activities, implemented the Viet Nam - Germany Strategic Action Plan, launched the German House project in Ho Chi Minh City (October 2015). Germany remained the largest trade partner of Viet Nam in the EU. Two-way trade turnover in 2015 was 8.9 billion USD, up by 14.2% against 2014. Germany committed to providing Viet Nam with ODA worth 220 million Euros for the 2015-2017 period.

- *The UK*: Bilateral relations were marked with an important milestone as British Prime Minister paid an official visit to Viet Nam for the first time since the two countries established diplomatic relations. During this visit, both sides agreed on major directions for their political, economic, security, defense, education, scientific and technological cooperation, and signed many important economic contracts. Two-way trade turnover reached 5.38 billion USD in 2015, up by 25% from 2014. The UK became the second largest EU investor in Viet Nam with 239 effective projects worth 4.68 billion USD of total registered capital.





*British Prime Minister David Cameron and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung at a press briefing during his official visit to Viet Nam (July 27-31, 2015) - VNA*

- *France*: Both sides maintained the exchange of visits and contacts at different levels, particularly Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's meeting with French leaders during COP21. France became the fifth largest trade partner of Viet Nam in the EU (with 3.5 billion USD in total trade value in 2014), the third largest EU investor in Viet Nam with total capital exceeding 3.38 billion USD and also Viet Nam's largest ODA provider in the EU.

- *Italy*: Bilateral relations made new progress with the Italian President's first visit to Viet Nam

since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973. Two-way trade turnover was 2.89 billion USD in 2015, up by 6% from 2014. Italy committed to providing Vietnamese small and medium-sized enterprises with a financial aid package, transfer of technological know-how to Viet Nam in new cooperation areas such as renewable energy, infrastructure and sustainable development.

- *The Netherlands*: The Viet Nam - Netherlands relations were a typical example of a "dynamic and effective relationship" between Viet Nam and

an EU member. The two countries' Prime Ministers met, discussed and co-chaired the high-level dialogue on Climate Change in Mekong Delta on the sidelines of COP-21 (Paris, November 2015). Politically, both sides agreed to maintain the exchange of delegations at all levels, actively cooperate at international forums to maintain the excellent political relationship as a foundation to promote cooperation in other areas. On trade, the Netherlands rose to be the third largest trade partner of Viet Nam in the EU with bilateral trade value of 4.32 billion USD. The Netherlands remained the largest EU investor in Viet Nam with 239 projects worth 6.65 billion USD in registered capital, accounting for 34.6% of EU's FDI in Viet Nam, focusing on the areas of production, electricity - gas distribution and processing. At the same time, both sides also created favorable conditions for businesses to promote cooperation and investment in the priority areas such as climate change, water management, agriculture, energy, ship building and seaport logistics.

- *Central and East European and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries*: These countries all expressed their support to traditional relationship and multifaceted cooperation with Viet Nam. Both

sides maintained the exchange of delegations at all levels, especially between leaders: President Truong Tan Sang visited the Czech Republic and Azerbaijan (May 2015); Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visited Kazakhstan (May 2015) and Bulgaria (June 2015). Bilateral cooperation in various areas registered new progress.

Trade turnover with the Central and East European region in 2015 amounted to 2.3 billion USD, a 5% increase from 2014. On development cooperation, Hungary committed to providing 60 million Euros in concessional credit for Can Tho Oncology Hospital project, and 300 million USD for the Red River Surface-water Plant. Poland committed to providing 250 million Euros of concessional credit for some projects, including a project on six newly built search and rescue vessels. Viet Nam signed a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which involved some CIS members in May 2015.

### 3. *Americas*

- *The United States (US)*: Bilateral relations with the US in 2015 witnessed momentous progress. Mechanisms for dialogues, contacts between leaders, government and parliament agencies were enhanced. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong

paid a historic visit to the US in July 2015. On this occasion, both sides issued the Viet Nam - US Joint Vision Statement to deepen the partnership, step up cooperation on regional and global issues, and set the orientations for the comprehensive partnership for 2016-2020.

Cooperation in economics, trade, investment, science - technology, education - training and war legacy was taken to a higher level with good progress. The US was one of the top development partners of Viet Nam, and also the latter's second largest export market where the surplus had always

been on the side of Viet Nam. After the signing of TPP, it was expected that Vietnamese export to the US would increase dramatically. Two-way trade turnover amounted to 45 billion USD in 2015, up by 24% from 2014.

On defense cooperation, both sides signed the Joint Vision Statement on Viet Nam - US Defense Relations (June 2015).

Visits to Viet Nam by US Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of the US Navy and other exchange activities between naval forces of both countries during the visit to Da Nang seaport



*General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and US President Barack Obama had talks at the White House during his official visit to the US (July 6-10, 2015) - VNA*



of two US Naval vessels (April 2015) helped tighten their friendship. On security cooperation, the visit of Vietnamese Minister of Public Security to the US in March 2015 contributed to the promotion of bilateral cooperation in security and crime prevention.

Regarding differences on democracy and human right issues, Viet Nam made efforts to promote candid and constructive dialogues with the US to keep the latter update of Viet Nam's policies, position and progress in this area.



*US Secretary of State J. Kerry visited Viet Nam and held talks with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh (August 7, 2015) - Government's Office*

- *Canada*: President Truong Tan Sang and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh met with the new Canadian Prime Minister J. Trudeau and Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Dion. Minister of International Development and La Francophonie M.C. Bibeau visited Viet Nam. During APEC-23, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a financial aid worth 12.9 million CAD (2015-2020) for Viet

Nam's cooperatives development project with an aim to assist Viet Nam in poverty reduction, inclusive and sustainable development, raising competitiveness and productivity of agricultural cooperatives.

Over 88 million CAD were disbursed for Canada's ODA projects in Viet Nam in 2015. Until 2018, Canada would continue to implement 13 projects worth 130.9 million CAD

in the areas of banking supervision assistance, improving of SMEs' competitiveness, and agricultural development, etc. Canada planned six new projects for the period between 2016-2022 valued at 82.1 million CAD.

- *Latin American countries*: Bilateral relations with Latin American countries grew smoothly with the exchange of visits and contacts between the two sides' leaders, notably President Truong Tan Sang's visit to Cuba, Vice President Nguyen Thi Doan's visit to Brazil and Bolivia; Venezuelan President N. Maduro,

Venezuelan Deputy Prime Minister E. Jauna, Brazilian Foreign Minister M. L.Vieira, Politburo Member - Vice Chairman of Cuban State Council S. V. Mesa's visits to Viet Nam. The visit of President Truong Tan Sang to Cuba (September 28 - October 1, 2015) and other important agreements signed during this visit helped deepen the traditional friendship between the two countries. Trade relations were further enhanced. Two-way trade turnover between Viet Nam and Latin American countries reached 11 billion USD in 2015, up by 10% from 2014.



*Cuban President Raul Castro presented President Truong Tan Sang with an Order of Friendship during his official visit to Cuba (September 28 - October 1, 2015) - VNA*

#### 4. South Asian, West Asian and African Countries

Regarding South Asian countries, the visit to Viet Nam by the *Bangladeshi* President (August 2015) enhanced mutual trust and understanding and created new momentum to further promote bilateral relations. Viet Nam and *Pakistan* conducted a Political Consultation at Deputy Foreign Minister level for the first time in August 2015. Both sides agreed on measures to strengthen the friendship and cooperation in economic, trade, security, education and training areas. Visits and bilateral meetings actively contributed to improving Viet Nam's access to the South Asian market, a very potential market for export and investment in the future.

With West Asian and African countries, exchange of delegations took place regularly with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to *Algeria* from May 31 - June 2, Deputy Prime Minister Hoang Trung Hai's visit to *South Africa, Mozambique, Angola* (August 2015) and *Israel* (December 2015), Minister of Transport Dinh La Thang's visit to *Turkey* (April 2015), Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat's visit to *Egypt* (April 2015), Minister of Health Nguyen Thi Kim Tien's visit to *Turkey* (May 2015); and the visits to Viet Nam by *Turkish* Foreign Minister (March 2015), *Moroccan* Minister of Industry, Trade and Digital Economy (March 2015), *Israeli* Deputy Minister of

Defense (April 2015), *Israeli* Deputy Foreign Minister (August 2015), and *Iranian* Deputy Foreign Minister (March 2015).

In terms of bilateral trade, growth in some markets exceeded that of 2014, for example, *Israel* (with 1.8 billion USD in trade value for 2015, up by 64% from 2014); *South Africa* (1.2 billion USD, up by 24%); *UAE* (5.7 billion USD, up by 12%); and *Turkey* (2.2 billion USD).

#### 5. Oceania

The highlights were the visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to *Australia* and *New Zealand* in March 2015 and visit to Viet Nam of Prime Minister J. Key of *New Zealand* in November 2015. Viet Nam and *Australia* signed the Declaration on Enhancing *Australia - Viet Nam* Comprehensive Partnership in March 2015. *Australia* responded positively to Viet Nam's request for market access for *Vietnamese* agricultural products. *Australia* has licensed the import of *Vietnamese* fresh lychee in 2015, and was finalizing necessary procedures for future import of *Vietnamese* mango and dragon fruit. Viet Nam and *New Zealand* agreed to deepen the comprehensive partnership towards strategic partnership in the future. Viet Nam also provided timely and tangible assistance (50,000 USD) to *Micronesia* to assist those affected by the devastating natural disaster.





## Chapter Three

# MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

Multilateral diplomacy at international organizations and regional mechanisms has played an increasingly important role as an effective tool in the foreign affairs playbook of states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the following reasons: (a) globalization and the science and technology revolution have greatly increased the interdependence between and among nations and regions; (b) together with the significant progress in democratization in international relations, smaller countries have earned growing roles; (c) there emerged complex and urgent global issues that cannot be addressed by any single country, and require cooperation among countries and regions. At multilateral institutions, small and medium states with shared interests, including protection of identities, sovereignty, interests... are better equipped to protect themselves and contribute to building a more democratic and fair world economic and political order. The proposition

of ideas, initiatives is the mainstay of multilateral diplomacy, where small and medium countries, despite their limited resources, can still make pivotal contributions, thus adding weight to their voices.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress marked a critical change in the foreign policy mindset. The 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress adopted the guideline “*proactive, active international integration*” in order to engage deeper with the common efforts of the regional and international community. The line was further elaborated by Resolution No.22-NQ/TW of the Politburo, which highlighted the need to “*proactively, actively participate in developing and optimizing international rules and norms, and participate in the affairs of the regional and international communities; put forward cooperation initiatives and mechanisms under the mutual-benefit principle; consolidate and raise the country’s status in the regional and international communities.*”

In recent years, ministries, agencies and localities continued to disseminate and accelerate the implementation of the Resolution of the Politburo, the Government's Action Plan and Directive No.15/CT-TTg of the Prime Minister on international integration. The National Steering Committee on international integration headed by the Prime Minister has been established, comprising various steering committees operating under its aegis, including the Inter-agency Steering Committee on international integration in politics, security, national defense; Inter-agency Steering Committee on international integration in cultural and social, science and technology, and education

and training fields. Presented with the new demands of international integration, the Government organized a national video conference to introduce the Prime Minister's Directive No.15 to the ministries, agencies and authorities of 63 cities and provinces, and the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) on August 27, 2015. The video conference was also held to enhance the coordination between the central government, local authorities and the businesses, and strengthen domestic preparations for future steps upon the completion of negotiations, signing, ratification, implementation of a host of new-generation FTAs for deeper international integration.

### I. At the United Nations

*Accomplish key tasks as a member of important forums*

Viet Nam continued to accomplish its role as a member of the IAEA Board of Governors for the 2013-2015 term, and the UN Human Rights Council for the 2014-2016 term, thereby helping improve the country's status in the international arena, and showcase Viet Nam's consistent policies on the issues relating to

international peace and security, disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy; as well as human rights protection and promotion. In 2015, Viet Nam also was elected with high vote to several important UN agencies, including the ECOSOC for 2016-2018 and UNESCO Executive Board for 2015-2019. This is proof of the international friends' high confidence in Viet Nam. These



*Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung addressed the COP-21 in Paris, France  
(November 28 - December 3, 2015) - VNA*

important positions offer Viet Nam opportunities to play greater role in the work of the UN - the largest global body - through which Viet Nam can directly take part in shaping international rules and norms. Viet Nam is currently running for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for the 2020-2021 term.

*Proactively participate in formulating international rules and norms and addressing the common concerns of the international community*

At the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-21) in November - December 2015, Viet Nam engaged actively in the negotiations for the Paris Climate Change Agreement, thus playing a role in the protection and promotion of the interests of developing countries,

including itself. Viet Nam has also deposited its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), which detailed its plans for reduction in greenhouse gases emission, whereby it pledged to reduce 8% of its GHG by 2030 compared to the Business-as-Usual scenario (BAU) with domestic resources, and up to 25% with international support. In addition, Viet Nam would also pursue climate change adaptation components. That was a major undertaking, showing that Viet Nam had delivered its commitments by joining also allowing room for its implementation and socio-economic development.

At the UN Summit in September 2015, countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Viet Nam actively took part in the negotiations of this Agenda and pushed for issues highly relevant to developing nations. At the Summit, Viet Nam shared with other participating states its success stories in socio-economic development as well as the MDGs implementation.

As an active member, Viet Nam also provided substantive inputs to various UN conferences on oceans and law of the sea issues (the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States', Parties to the UNCLOS; the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea; negotiations of the 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea; the GA Ad hoc Working Group on the conservation of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the International Seabed Authority in Jamaica; the 25<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Managing Potential Conflict in the South China Sea in Indonesia).

Viet Nam also engaged in in-depth discussions on legal matters at the 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in October 2015 as well as other international conferences, including the 13<sup>th</sup> UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2015 in Qatar,

the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria.

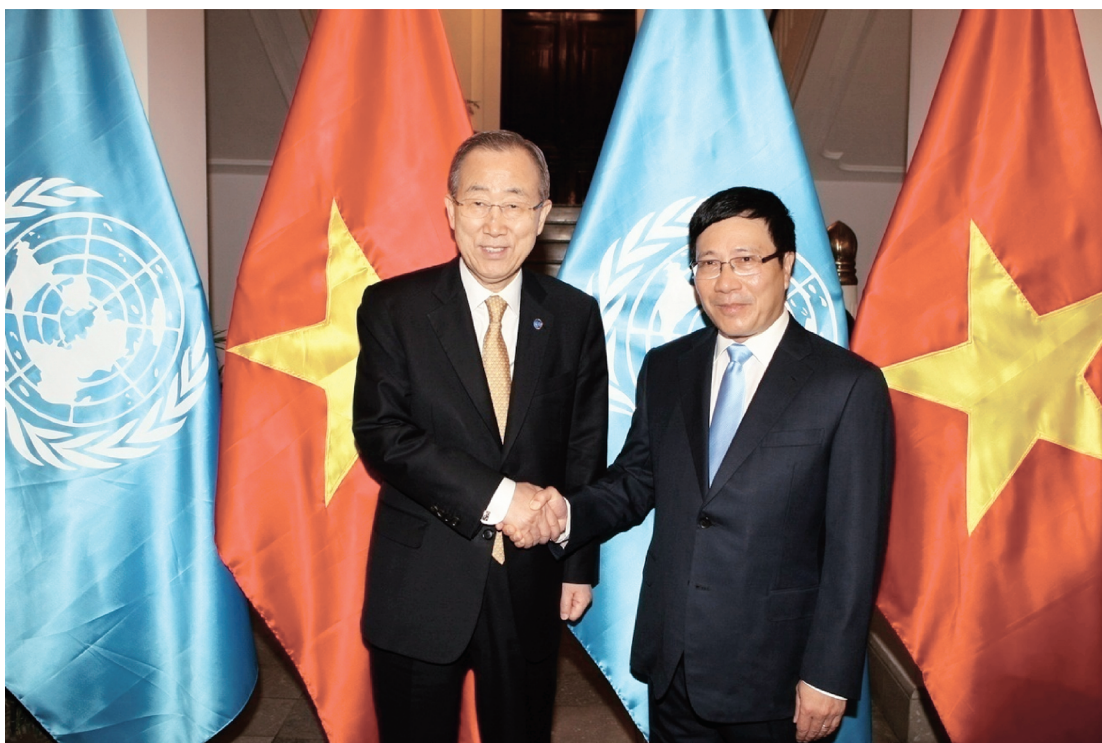
#### *Deepening Viet Nam - UN ties*

In May 2015, Viet Nam welcomed UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on his official visit to the country. This was the second time the Secretary General visited Viet Nam in the last five years, and was proof of the UN's keen interest in Viet Nam's development and appreciation of Viet Nam's multilateral diplomacy contributions in recent years. Viet Nam took the initiative in working with UN development organs in the country to roll out the "One UN" initiative that coordinates and harmonizes the development programs of the organizations in Viet Nam. This was again proof of Viet Nam's determination to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation, and also a Viet Nam's tangible contribution to the reforms of the UN development system.

Viet Nam also fulfilled its national reporting duties on implementing the UN Security Council sanction resolutions.

At the same time, Viet Nam became more involved in the UN Peacekeeping Operations by sending five officers to partake in missions in South Africa and South Sudan





*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh held talks with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (May 22-24, 2015) - VNA*

(Viet Nam sent two officers in 2014). Viet Nam's participation in the UN Peacekeeping Operations has been highly appreciated by countries. The UN has proposed that Viet Nam

should send additional personnel to UN Peacekeeping Operations, and consider upgrading from contributing at the individual level to the contingent level.

## II. Multilateral Diplomacy at ASEAN

During 2015, under the motto “proactive, active and responsible (member)”, Viet Nam was able to underline its privilege and role in ASEAN by engaging extensively with others to substantially promote the common work of the Association, including the implementation of

the ASEAN Community-building roadmap (ASEAN Economic Community by the end of 2015), drafting of strategic documents that will shape ASEAN cooperation priorities for the near future such as the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN

Community, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging ahead together; ASEAN 2025 Vision and Blueprints on the three pillars of the Community, and many other important documents on the cooperation with partners.

*In political and security cooperation,* Viet Nam continued to promote the development and optimization of regional security tools and mechanisms, as well as enhancement of ASEAN's solidarity, unity and centrality in addressing regional issues, including the East Sea. Viet Nam also exerted efforts to promote confidence building measures and codes of conducts, promptly respond

to traditional and non-traditional security challenges and issues that emerged in the relations with ASEAN's partners. The country also played an active role in promoting ASEAN cooperation within the ASEAN-led mechanisms and forums, including the EAS, ARF, ADMM, ADMM+, and so on.

*On economic cooperation,* Viet Nam was second in ASEAN in terms of realizing the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint action lines (95.5%, only behind Singapore). Viet Nam expanded away from traditional areas to the new ones, including intellectual property protection, competition policies, and consumer protection. As the coordinator of the



*Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Community at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit (November 22, 2015) - VNA*



ASEAN - EU relations for the 2012-2015 period, Viet Nam invested significant efforts to promote the two-way economic and trade interactions. Viet Nam also chaired the negotiations of the trade in services agreement within the framework of the ASEAN - Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP), represented ASEAN in chairing the investment group in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.

*On social and cultural cooperation,* Viet Nam was active in proposing initiatives, promoting ASEAN cooperation in the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant labor, disadvantaged groups, gender equality, climate change and environmental protection.

*In foreign policy,* Viet Nam fulfilled its role as the coordinator of ASEAN - EU dialogue partnership (2012-2015).

During this period, an agreement was reached on a roadmap towards the ASEAN - EU strategic partnership. Viet Nam was also a coordinator of the ASEAN - India relations, actively promoting the upgrading of the ASEAN - US and ASEAN - New Zealand relations to strategic partnerships, took part in ASEAN - US, ASEAN - Russia and ASEAN - China high-level meetings, improved the operation effectiveness of the EAS, developed Action Plans for the relations with the six key dialogue partners including the US, China, South Korea, India, Canada and New Zealand for the 2016-2020 period.

### III. Other Regional Mechanisms

Viet Nam, as an proactive, active and responsible member, has contributed to the work of regional and sub-regional forums such as APEC, ASEM, Forum of East Asia - Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), Mekong sub-region cooperation mechanisms as well as mechanisms between the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and other partners. Viet Nam also put forth initiatives to promote regional integration and

sustainable development, including the annual conference on water resources management, project on a biodiversity conservation zone for sustainable development, eco-tourism in the Mekong - Danube cooperation framework as part of ASEM cooperation, multi-modal transportation initiative for better connectivity between the Mekong sub-region with other regions. These initiatives were strongly supported by

others. The Viet Nam National Mekong River Commission also completed the assessment on the impacts of Mekong mainstream hydropower structures on the Mekong Delta. The research was an important scientific, objective basis to find comprehensive, lasting solutions that satisfy the legitimate interests of the parties concerned, in line with the 1995 Mekong Agreement. The Vietnamese CEO of the MRC Secretariat was elected by other MRC members.

As part of Viet Nam's foreign policy until 2020, hosting of APEC 2017 was high in the agenda. Together with the accomplishment and assumption of important roles within ASEAN, the UN and WTO, APEC 2017 would be a vivid proof of Viet Nam's efforts to take its multilateral diplomacy and international integration to new heights. Extensive preparations are being made for APEC 2017 to ensure its success in all domains.

#### **IV. International Cooperation and the Struggle in Democracy and Human Rights**

As a proactive, active and responsible member of the Human Rights Council (HRC), Viet Nam provided substantive inputs to the HRC discussions, resolutions and other important documents that helped better protect and promote human rights across the world. In the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, Viet Nam worked closely with other states and international organizations to promote priorities for protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, socio-economic and cultural rights, impacts of climate change... Viet Nam also presented its national human rights reports and successfully engaged in interactive dialogues about its domestic human rights advances

as part of the HRC Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Viet Nam has been actively implementing the 182 recommendations it accepted at the UPR session. Viet Nam's candid and substantive dialogues on human rights with the US (May 2015), Australia (July 2015), Switzerland and Norway (November 2015), the EU (December 2015) were highly appreciated by these partners. To varying degrees, the partners all recognized that Viet Nam had made "real advances" in human rights. At the same time, diplomatic activities were executed in tandem with those of security and national defense to prevent ill-intent forces from using democracy and human rights as a pretext to interfere and intervene in its internal affairs.



## Chapter Four

# DIPLOMACY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEFENSE

### I. Economic Diplomacy

1. The foreign affairs activities have substantially contributed to realizing the socio-economic development goals. To date, Viet Nam has attracted 260 billion USD for 18,000 FDI projects from 103 countries and territories. In addition, 50 countries and international organizations made commitments to provide 80 billion USD of ODA capital to Viet Nam. Viet Nam has established economic, trade and investment relations with 224 markets in all continents and participated in 500 bilateral and multilateral agreements.

In recent years, Viet Nam has promoted political and diplomatic activities at all levels, especially at the high level, in tandem with FTA negotiations and technical exchanges with other countries to request their recognition of Viet Nam's Market Economy Status. Until now, 62 countries have recognized Viet Nam's Market Economy Status.

2. 2015 was a turning point in Viet Nam's FTA negotiation effort, with such milestones as the conclusion of the TPP and Viet Nam - EU FTA negotiations. With the participation in the TPP, EVFTA and other FTAs either through ASEAN or bilaterally with other partners such as the Eurasian Economic Union (signed in May 2015) and with the Republic of Korea (coming into effect since December 2015), Viet Nam has thus become an important part of a vast 58-member FTAs network, including all the five UN Security Council permanent members and 15 G-20 countries. The conclusion and signing of new-generation, high-standard and extensive FTAs are a meaningful step in the implementation of the policy of diversification and multilateralization of external relations and comprehensive international integration. It helped create intertwined interests and deepen the relations between Viet Nam

and top partners in the region and the world, especially the US, the EU, Russia and Japan, thus raising the country's international status.

Viet Nam's participation in the TPP, RCEP, AIIB, etc. as founding members enabled the country to play a role in shaping the rules of these institutions, thus best protecting its national interests.

3. Promotion activities for trade, investment, labor and tourism in key markets such as Japan, the UK, the US, Russia were increased in order to attract investment and ODA, establish new export markets, resolve difficulties and settle disputes in trade, and protect the interests of Vietnamese enterprises overseas. Many substantive promotional activities were organized successfully, including the Viet Nam Day in Kinagawa Prefecture, Japan during the visit by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong to Japan in September 2015, the Viet Nam - US Business Dialogue hosted during President Truong Tan Sang's visit to New York to attend the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the Viet Nam - Germany Business Forum during President Truong Tan Sang's visit to Germany in November 2015, Viet Nam Discovery in the UK and the Economic Cooperation Forums in Israel and Slovakia, among many others.

Vietnamese representative missions abroad undertook active steps in encouraging foreign businesses and investors from various countries such as the US, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, India, Spain, the Czech Republic, and Poland to explore business and investment opportunities in the Vietnamese markets, especially in the areas of high demand such as industry, agriculture, energy, and advanced technologies. At the same time, Vietnamese diplomatic missions overseas also helped Vietnamese firms expand their export markets (for aqua-products, agriculture produces and fruits), explore investment opportunities in potential markets in Africa and Latin America, penetrate into new labor markets (such as Japan), strengthen their foothold in traditional labor markets (such as the Korea and Chinese Taipei), and promote tourism in key markets (China, Europe). During high-level visits and other foreign affairs activities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been active in promoting negotiations and conclusion of labor agreements, with focus on key markets such as Malaysia and Thailand to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Vietnamese workers overseas, thus creating opportunities for tens of



thousands of Vietnamese migrants to acquire legal working status from the local authorities. The *Online Economic Diplomacy* website continued to be an effective channel in strengthening collaboration between the Vietnamese diplomatic missions overseas and ministries, agencies, local authorities and businesses who wish to find and contact partners.

The “Meeting between the Provincial Administration and the Diplomatic Corps” in Vinh city

of Nghe An province in May 2015 was attended by more than 50 foreign ambassadors, diplomats and representatives from 33 countries and international organizations in Vietnam. It was a concrete step in strengthening the ties between the Diplomatic Corps and provinces and cities, thus giving the latter an opportunity to showcase their potentials, advantages and opportunities for cooperation with other countries and international organizations.



*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh at the WEF in Davos (January 22-23, 2015) - Hai Minh (Government's Office)*

4. Leveraging on its network of overseas missions and its relations with international research institutes, Viet Nam's diplomacy was

able to step up its research on the world economy in order to provide timely updates and advices to the Government and other ministries

and agencies regarding social and economic policies. Many economic reports contained concrete details on the world economy, prevalent

economic issues, and trends of the global economy and international economic relations until 2030, and so on.

## II. Cultural Diplomacy and External Communication

### 1. *Cultural Diplomacy*

The three programs, namely “President Ho Chi Minh, Hero of National Liberation and Great Man of Culture”, “Cultural Diplomacy Strategy until 2020” and “Enhancing Viet Nam’s Participation in UNESCO for the 2013-2018 period” were given priority in Viet Nam’s cultural diplomacy. Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Steering Committee for Cultural Diplomacy was established and has operated very effectively.

a. Overseas, through various commemorative activities hosted to honor the dual titles (“National Liberation Hero” and “Great Man of Culture”) conferred upon President Ho Chi Minh by the UNESCO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was able to: (i) find, collect and conserve overseas artifacts, records of Uncle Ho; (ii) promote the image, culture, history, tradition and people of Viet Nam to the world through the image of President Ho Chi Minh; (iii) help strengthen and deepen the ties between Viet Nam

and other countries; (iv) uphold and promote the values of Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, ethics and dignity; and (v) raise national pride to help solidify the bonds between Vietnamese overseas communities with their homeland. The outstanding events hosted abroad by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with other ministries, agencies and local governments such as “Vietnam Days in Japan”, “Vietnam Week in Italy” (2013), “Vietnam Day in the Netherlands”, “Vietnam Days in Qatar and UAE” (2014) and most notably “Vietnam Days in the US” (2015) have made the Viet Nam Day/Week a highly welcomed brand for local people.

Vietnam, as an active member, made significant contribution to the work of various multilateral forums, including the establishment of the “ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community”, and its initiative to form the “FEALAC Network of Cultural Cities.” In the UNESCO framework, Viet Nam has played an important role as a



World Heritage Committee member for 2013-2017 and was elected to the UNESCO Executive Board for 2015-2019. In 2015, Viet Nam successfully won UNESCO's recognitions for its tug-of-war (keo co) game and ritual as intangible cultural heritage of humanity (in the multinational dossier together with the Republic of Korea, Cambodia and the Philippines), as well as for Lang Biang as the 9<sup>th</sup> biosphere reserve in Viet Nam. Viet Nam's Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park was also recognized by UNESCO for the second time as World Natural Heritage. Viet Nam successfully had

two UNESCO Category II Institutes on Math and Physics established in the country and settled sensitive political and maritime issues within the UNESCO framework. From 2011 to 2015, cultural diplomacy's efforts earned eleven new recognitions for Viet Nam, including three world cultural and natural heritages, five intangible cultural heritages, two documentary heritages and one world biosphere reserve. The above titles are a testament to Viet Nam's diverse and time-honored cultural tradition, thus strengthening the country's standing in the international arena.



*Ceremony to recognize Vi-Giam folk singing in Nghe Tinh as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity in Vinh city, Nghe An province (January 31, 2015) - VNA*

b. Domestically, Viet Nam successfully hosted a range of major cultural events and festivals such as the Thai Nguyen International Tea Festival, the Death Anniversary of the Hung Kings, Hue Festival, Da Lat Flower Festival, Ben Tre Coconut Festival, Ha Giang Buckwheat Flower Festival, etc. A novelty of those events was the increased participation of the businesses, which reflects the strengthening bond between economic and cultural diplomacies. For instance, the Diplomatic Corps' trip to see the UNESCO-recognized wood blocks in the Vinh Nghiem Pagoda was combined with an event to promote Luc Ngan lychees to Australia, Japan, US markets.

Viet Nam also worked with other countries to organize a number of foreign cultural festivals in Viet Nam, namely the Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival, the Japanese Festival in Hoi An, the annual Japanese Festival in Ho Chi Minh City, the European Days in Viet Nam (2011), the European Music Festival in Viet Nam (2012), the Russian Cultural Days (2013), the Indian International Yoga Day (2015), the Art Show by Yunnan artists from China in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City (2015).

## **2. External Communication**

In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked very closely with

other Ministries, agencies and local authorities and Vietnamese representative missions abroad to successfully implement external communications activities, tying it with internal communications in order to bring information from Viet Nam to the world and vice versa in an accurate and timely manner, meeting the needs of various stakeholders.

- Information on diplomatic activities by leaders of the Party and State as well as major political events and festivals was effectively provided. Through various means of communication that put an emphasis on each activity and its messages, the external communications helped create profound impression on Viet Nam's image and status, thus expanding foreign relations, promoting economic - trade relations and foreign investments, and encouraging a closer bond between the Vietnamese overseas communities and their homeland while mobilizing international support for the Party and State's policies.

- Information on the active international integration policy stated in Resolution 22 of the Politburo was widely introduced along with stronger promotion of Viet Nam's active and effective contribution to ASEAN Community Building, as well as to the work of the UN and other regional and

international organizations as well as its economic integration process.

- Press and media activities were strongly promoted. Through its spokesperson, Viet Nam was able to promptly express its positions on various regional and international issues of interest to the public, both domestically and worldwide such as maritime territory and sovereignty and overseas citizen protection, thus generating an overall positive view from the public about Viet Nam.

- Effort was invested to step up cooperation with international press agencies for objective coverage of news in Viet Nam, especially of major events in the country. In 2015, 324 press teams, including 1,348 reporters and correspondents, came to cover news and create features about Viet Nam.

- The “Plan for Enhancing External Communication Capacity of Vietnamese Diplomatic Missions Overseas until 2020” was actively implemented along with the signing of Agreements on Coordination

Guidelines with other ministries and agencies regarding external communication activities of Vietnamese diplomatic missions overseas.

- Priorities were given to reforming and improving the quality of external communication materials, notably with the drafting of diverse publications on Viet Nam such as the *Welcome to Viet Nam* video clip, which was made in ten languages, the *Charming Viet Nam* booklet in Vietnamese, English, French and Arabic, and the *Charming Viet Nam* DVD, which was also translated into nine languages (DVD version of the *Charming Viet Nam* booklet).

As part of its external communication, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been promoting research and use of information technology along with modern digital media. The Ministry’s website was being upgraded into an online, multimedia portal that is integrated with the online pages of all Vietnamese diplomatic overseas missions.

### III. Overseas Vietnamese-related Activities and Citizens and Legal Persons Protection

1. Based on the 10-year review of the implementation of the Politburo’s Resolution No.36-NQ/TW

dated March 26, 2004 on overseas Vietnamese-related activities, the Politburo’s Directive No.45-CT/TW

was issued on May 19, 2015 to further promote the implementation of Resolution 36. The Directive was added with new items and recommendations to further encourage overseas Vietnamese to turn toward and contribute to the development of their homeland.

Thanks to the success of the reform and open-door policy, each year half a million of overseas Vietnamese return to visit the homeland. Remittance continued to rise and played a role in ensuring Viet Nam's macroeconomic balance and social security.

2. The State Commission on Overseas Vietnamese took the initiative to plan and organize a number of events for overseas Vietnamese so that they can participate in major celebrations, such as the Spring in the Homeland Program hosted under the theme of "Glorious Nation" in Ho Chi Minh City, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of the South and National Reunification in Ho Chi Minh City, the Parade in Ba Dinh Square on the 70<sup>th</sup> National Day, the visit to Spratly Archipelago, and the delegation of 15 Vietnamese representing 15 countries and territories to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> National Patriotic Emulation Congress.

The conservation and promotion of cultural heritages and the Vietnamese language continued to be

realized with concrete activities, which brought about such tangible results as providing Vietnamese textbooks for Vietnamese children abroad, building floating houses in Tonlé Sap Lake for classrooms and multi-purpose uses, supporting stipend for teachers in Cambodia, Vietnamese language pedagogic training for 30 overseas Vietnamese teachers from nearly 20 countries, organizing three art performance groups to Cambodia during Lunar New Year (for the first time in Siem Reap, with a special show in Tonlé Sap Lake's floating house), in seven provinces in Northeast and East Thailand, Osaka, Kansai (Japan), and Hong Kong, Macau (China).

In terms of attracting Vietnamese intellectuals and entrepreneurs living abroad, the Commission has organized special events for targeted groups in order to effectively attract and mobilize their brain and economic resources as well as their influence in the community while opening up more opportunities for them to make concrete contributions. Such events included the Roundtable on "Overseas Vietnamese's Participation in the Country's International Integration and Development" in Ho Chi Minh City (February 2015), the Overseas and Domestic Vietnamese and Business Forum chaired by the

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (February 2015), the “Overseas Vietnamese experts for Viet Nam’s economic development and integration from 2016 to 2020” hosted in collaboration with the Party Central Economic Commission and Viet Nam Initiative (this event was named among 10 outstanding economic policy events of 2015), the Vietnamese business forum in Europe (Bulgaria, August 2015), the Roundtable Talk in Thailand between Vietnamese and Thai entrepreneurs on the “Vietnamese people use Vietnamese goods” campaign (October 2015), the global congress of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in Russia (November 2015) and the Roundtable “Overseas Vietnamese entrepreneurs and businesses for national development” in Hanoi (December 2015).

In addition, to involve overseas Vietnamese in national development policy formulation, the Commission also received their inputs for the draft documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress. These included suggestions on how to restructure the economy and determine the appropriate path for Viet Nam’s development in the 2016-2020 period. Many overseas Vietnamese intellectuals also proposed that Viet Nam should pay more attention to specific issues,

such as encouraging Vietnamese lecturers from major universities and educational institutions abroad to teach in Vietnam.

3. Currently, there are about 500,000 Vietnamese workers, 230,000 Vietnamese brides and 100,000 Vietnamese students living and working overseas. Each year, millions of people travel abroad for business, tourism and investment purposes. Approximately 130,000 fishing vessels and 2.5 million fishermen earned their livelihood in the East Sea and other waters. Meanwhile, instabilities and violence still existed in many places around the world. Accidents and natural disasters happened frequently. Countries around the world were tightening their immigration and labor import policies. In particular, countries in the region were taking tougher measures against foreign fishing boats and fishermen violating their waters.

Against this backdrop, citizen protection in an “active, timely, responsive and effective” manner was considered one of the top priorities for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the beginning of 2015, the Ministry opened a 24/7 Call Service for the Protection of Vietnamese citizens and legal persons overseas. After 10 months of operation, the Call Service





*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh attended the Opening Ceremony of the Citizen Protection Call Center set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Viettel (February 2, 2015) - MOFA*

received 6,700 calls from in and outside the country and was able to provide direct assistance to citizens in distress.

Citizen protection efforts have safeguarded the legitimate rights and interests of Vietnamese citizens and legal persons abroad, including measures to struggle with China to protect Viet Nam's traditional fishing ground in the Paracel and Spratly Archipelagoes; providing legal and transportation assistance to arrested fishermen in other countries for repatriation; requesting other

countries in the region to provide humane treatment to our citizens and reconsider tough measures against Vietnamese fishing boats and fishermen (in 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took actions and settled 129 incidents, provided assistance to 200 fishing boats and 1,471 Vietnamese fishermen at various seas).

Citizen protection was promptly rendered during times of crisis, including the Ukraine armed conflict, the earthquake in Nepal or in the aftermath of terrorist bombings in Bangkok (Thailand), Paris (France)

and Jakarta (Indonesia). In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs successfully rendered protection to 2,655 Vietnamese workers in Malaysia, Thailand, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

As some Vietnamese citizens were denied entry into Malaysia and Singapore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively conducted dialogues at various levels with the authorities of these two countries in order to ensure the right of entry for Vietnamese citizens.

4. Regarding Vietnamese provinces, the Ministry stepped up collaboration and information sharing to promptly deal with incidents and educate Vietnamese citizens and fishermen to ensure their respect for local laws when they are abroad.

The Ministry continued improving the mechanism for citizen protection, especially during times of crisis in order to ensure the effectiveness of these activities in the coming period.

#### **IV. Diplomacy for Safeguarding National Sovereignty, Maritime Territories and Islands, and Fatherland's Security**

1. Diplomacy played a critical role in safeguarding land maritime territorial sovereignty as well as national security. In the last five years, progress was made in the border affairs with China, Laos, and Cambodia. Regarding China, the two sides had by and large settled the two remaining issues on land, including the mouth of Bac Luan river (with the signing of the Agreement on free passage of vessels at the mouth of Bac Luan river) and the Ban Gioc waterfall (with the signing of the Agreement on cooperation in the development and protection of tourism resources of Ban Gioc waterfall). At sea, Viet Nam maintained active negotiations on cooperation in less sensitive areas and joint development in the waters

off the Gulf of Tonkin. The two sides also reached the "Agreement on Basic Principles Guiding the Settlement of Sea-related Issues." On December 19, 2015, the two sides began joint survey of the agreed areas off the Gulf of Tonkin in preparation for a number of less sensitive projects with a view to accomplishing the goal of delimitation and joint development in this area. Regarding Laos, the two sides completed the project to increase and strengthen the border marker system along with a number of agreements on building a peaceful and friendly borderline. With Cambodia, the two sides cooperated closely to maintain security and order as well as resolve issues arising in the border areas.

Demarcation on land continued to make progress with more than 80% completed as of now. In addition, Viet Nam also conducted negotiations with Indonesia on the exclusive

economic zone (EEZ) delimitation, and prepared for negotiations with Cambodia, Malaysia, and Brunei on the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the overlapping waters.



*Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc commissioned the Coastguard Vessel 8005 during the Ceremony hosted by the Coastguard Command (November 30, 2015) - VNA*

2. In 2015, the East Sea experienced more complex developments due to China's increased large-scale land reclamation and deployment of equipment on Spratly and Paracel's features. Against this backdrop, Viet Nam continued to maintain dialogues on maritime issues with China while firmly safeguarding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity in the East Sea.

During high-level visits and meetings, the two sides had open and frank exchanges on maritime issues with a strong emphasis on the full implementation of important understandings reached between leaders of the two Parties and States; serious observance of the "Agreement on Basic

Principles Guiding the Settlement of Sea-related Issues between Viet Nam and China”; effective use of the intergovernmental negotiation mechanism on border issues; friendly consultation and negotiation with a view to finding a fundamental and long-term solution that is acceptable to both sides while maintaining discussions on provisional measures that are not prejudice to the position of each party, including joint development.


The two sides agreed to work closely to manage differences at sea, fully and effectively implement the DOC, accelerate negotiations to reach the COC on the basis of consultation, refrain from actions that may further complicate or expand the disputes, and promptly address emerging issues in the interest of peace and stability in the East Sea as well as that of the Viet Nam - China relationship.

In addition to the bilateral channel, Viet Nam also took the advantage of international and regional forums to rally other countries’ support for its legitimate position and goodwill in the East Sea. At these forums, especially ASEAN, Viet Nam made active contributions to maintaining peace, stability, maritime and aviation security and safety in the East Sea, upholding the fundamental principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS as well as resolving disputes through peaceful means, refraining from the threat or use of force, and fully and effectively implementing the DOC along with early conclusion of the COC. Against the complex developments in the East Sea, ASEAN and its partners stepped up discussions on the East Sea issue with important documents such as the Chair Statements of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, the Joint Communiqué of the 48<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (AMM-48), Chair Statements of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF-22) and the 10<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS-10) emphasizing important points mentioned above.

3. Security and defense diplomacy was also strongly promoted. This helped strengthen political trust and increase intertwined interests among countries, thus preventing the risk of

conflict outbreak. This also spelled out Viet Nam’s consistent position to peacefully settle disputes in order to safeguard national independence, sovereignty and interests.





## Chapter Five

# THE PARTY, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND PEOPLE'S DIPLOMACY

### I. The Party's External Affairs

The Communist Party of Viet Nam has established relations with 228 political parties in 112 countries in all continents, including 98 communist and workers' parties, 59 ruling parties, 38 coalition parties; 17 cooperation agreements have been signed with ruling parties and coalition parties, contributing to the consolidation of the political foundation to promote cooperation between Viet Nam and other countries in the world.

In 2015, the Party's external activities were deployed in a proactive, various, multi-layered manner from the central to local levels, through both multilateral and bilateral channels. Important achievements were recorded.

1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam attached importance to consolidating and strengthening relations with Communist Parties, ruling parties in socialist and

neighboring countries. This relationship was given high priority by the Party since this plays a central role in the overall relationship between Viet Nam and other countries. High-level contacts and exchanges between leaders and all levels of the Communist Party of Viet Nam with the leadership of the *Lao People's Revolutionary Party* and the *Cambodian People's Party* significantly contributed to addressing practical issues, strengthening the friendship and cooperation between Viet Nam and the two special partners of Laos and Cambodia. The maintenance of research courses and exchanges among high-level officials, theoretical seminars continued to be a positive and effective measure to consolidate the special partnership between the Communist Party of Viet Nam and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. The exchange of delegations at all levels



*Mr. Hoang Binh Quan, member of the Party Central Committee, Chairman of the Central Commission for External Relations paid a courtesy call to General Secretary and State President Choummaly Sayasone of Lao PDR during the friendship exchange with the Central Commission for External Relations of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (July 2015) - Central Commission for External Relations*

helped find timely measures to deal with complex arising issues, especially the maintenance of regular exchange with the Cambodian People's Party to address border and territorial-related issues.

Relations between the Communist Party of Viet Nam and the *Communist Party of China* were smoothly maintained through multiple forms such as telephone conversations between the two General Secretaries, exchange of high-level visits, workshops and exchanges on theoretical researches and studies.

The traditional relations between the Communist Party of Viet Nam and the *Communist Party of Cuba* continued to blossom, the two sides maintained the high-level visits to exchange practical and substantive issues.

The Communist Party of Viet Nam continued to maintain relations with the *Workers' Party of Korea* through a number of activities, including the exchange of delegations. The Party's consistent policy was to actively expand and strengthen relations with the ruling and coalition parties whose role was important in the formation and implementation of

policies towards Viet Nam. This was a breakthrough orientation to expand and strengthen the Party's external relations in the coming period. In 2015, the Communist Party of Viet Nam signed an Agreed Minutes to strengthen comprehensive relations with the *United Russia Party* for 2015-2017 during the official visit to Viet Nam by Party President Medvedev. The Party relations with the United States continued to be promoted with many positive outcomes. During the first visit to Viet Nam, leaders of the *Institutional Revolutionary Party* (PRI), the ruling party of Mexico, and Communist Party of Viet Nam were committed to mapping out major orientations to develop relations between the two Parties, actively implement comprehensive cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the Communist Party of Viet Nam also sent delegation headed by Politburo member, Secretary of Ha Noi Party Committee to visit France; Chairman of the Central Commission for External Relations to visit Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic. The Deputy Chairman of the Central Commission for External Relations led a delegation to pay a working visit to the Republic of Korea at the invitation of the *New World Party* (Seanuri).

The Communist Party of Viet Nam would like to promote substantive

relations with communist and workers' parties who enjoy traditional relations and play the leading role in the political arena of various countries. In 2015, the Communist Party of Viet Nam continued to attach importance to consolidating and strengthening the traditional friendship and cooperation with Latin American left-wing parties, strengthening relations with African regional parties, further promoting experience exchange with other regional parties (received the delegation of the *Communist Party of Bohemia - Moravia*; the delegation headed by the General Secretary of the *National Liberation Front of El Salvador*; the delegation headed by Politburo member, Vice-President of the *Socialist Party of Venezuela*, the delegation of the *Bangladesh Workers Party*, the delegation of the *Communist Party of Portugal*).

The Communist Party of Viet Nam also actively participated in and made effective contributions to multilateral political forums to promote exchanges, strengthen relations with communist, workers and left-wing parties in the world. Multilateral forums included the meeting of international communist and workers' parties initiated by the Greek Communist Party, International Symposium of Communist Parties

hosted by the Labor Party of Belgium, Sao Paulo Forum of Latin American left-wing parties, International Seminar “Political Parties and a New Society” hosted by the Mexican Labor Party, International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP).

These multilateral forums provided opportunities for the Communist Party of Viet Nam to promote exchange of information, experiences on Viet Nam’s socio-economic development as well as the Party’s foreign policy; provided timely information and rallied support of international friends for issues of strategic significance for Viet Nam. The Party contributed constructively, responsibly and effectively to the overall success of the forums for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress, equal and sustainable development.

2. The Party’s external relations were effectively promoted, contributing to the settlement of issues relating to national security and development between Viet Nam and neighboring socialist countries. Over the years, the Party’s external relations have played an important role in settling arising issues between Viet Nam and other countries, especially neighboring countries. In

difficult periods, exchanges between the Communist Party of Viet Nam and other parties have helped remove obstacles, deadlock, maintain the momentum for the overall relations between States to develop in a sustainable, positive and right direction.

3. The Party’s high-level diplomatic activities made active contribution to the strengthening of Viet Nam’s relations with important partners. 2015 was the year when the Party’s external relations recorded multiple successes through a variety of activities by the Party leadership. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong made important visits to China (April), the US (July), and Japan (September) - the three world leading powers. The visits were of great success, contributing actively to realizing the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, diversification, multilateralization and adding more depth and substances to the Party and State’s external relations.

By and large, the Party’s external relations in 2015 made a significant contribution to the overall achievement of the country’s foreign affairs. The Party’s external relations helped other countries better understand and recognize the position and leadership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam in the political system and in



the country. The Party's diplomacy also contributed to consolidating the political foundation for cooperation between Viet Nam and other countries.

This also helped promote strongly and comprehensively the relations between Viet Nam and other countries in the new phase of development.

## II. The National Assembly's External Affairs

The National Assembly's external affairs have become an integral part of Viet Nam's diplomacy, along with other channels of the Party, the State and the people's diplomacy, contributing significantly to the effective implementation of Viet Nam's foreign policy. The National Assembly actively participated in regional and international inter-parliamentary organizations, inter-parliamentary forums and parliamentarian friendship organizations, implemented agreements and conducted exchange of delegations with other countries.

1. Bilateral cooperation between the National Assembly of Viet Nam with other parliaments saw a strong development at all levels. To date, the National Assembly of Viet Nam has established relations with almost all parliaments which Viet Nam has diplomatic relations, especially with parliaments of neighboring countries, ASEAN countries and strategic and comprehensive partners. The expansion of relations and cooperation

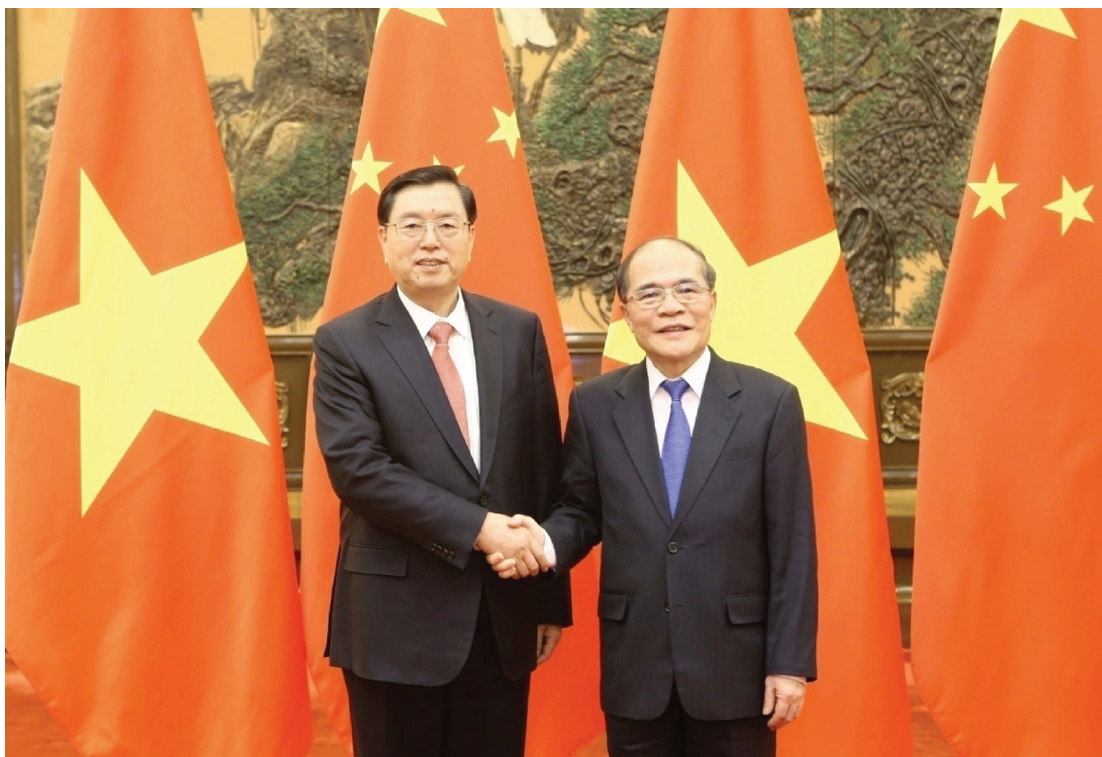
provided opportunities for Viet Nam to exchange experience on legislative building, appraisal and oversight functions. The exchange of delegations saw a vibrant development, evidenced by the first official visit by Chairman of the National Assembly to the US, marking a milestone in the relations between the two legislative bodies and peoples. In addition, delegations headed by the Members of Standing Committee of the National Assembly also visited the US, the Republic of Korea, France, Belgium, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Greece, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Laos, Thailand, Australia, Japan, Germany to exchange experiences and promote cooperation between the National Assembly of Viet Nam and parliaments of respective countries. In recent years, a large number of parliamentary delegations have made official visits to Viet Nam such as Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Speaker of the House of Representatives of East Uruguay,

Speaker of the National Assembly of South Korea, Chairman of the Lower House of Kazakhstan, President of the National Assembly of Laos, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Speaker of the Singaporean Parliament, President of the Belgium Senate, Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, and President of the Czech Senate.

2. Viet Nam became member of many regional and international parliamentary organizations and forums such as the IPU, AIPA, APPF, ASEP, APF, APA and other thematic forums or regional mechanisms

such as the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the National Assembly of three countries Cambodia - Laos - Viet Nam.

In particular, the Vietnamese National Assembly successfully hosted the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU General Assembly in Ha Noi in March 2015 with the participation of nearly 2,000 delegates, including more than 100 speakers and deputy speakers of member parliaments. This was a major diplomatic and political event of historic significance, manifesting the National Assembly of Viet Nam's active integration to build the image of



*President of the National Assembly Nguyen Sinh Hung and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Zhang Dejiang at the welcome ceremony and talks during his official visit to China (December 23-27, 2015) - VNA*



*President of the National Assembly Nguyen Sinh Hung, Vice Presidents Tong Thi Phong and Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan took photos with delegates attending the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU General Assembly hosted in Ha Noi (April 2015) - NA*

an innovative, peace-loving, hospitable Viet Nam to international friends. The National Assembly of Viet Nam introduced the Ha Noi Declaration "Sustainable Development Goals - Turning Words into Action" adopted at the Conference, in which Member Parliaments reaffirmed their commitments to support Governments to properly implement the above goals in order to meet the people's expectations on a world of peace, stability and prosperity. The 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU General Assembly helped raise the voice of member parliaments in safeguarding peace, strengthening friendship and cooperation among

nations and parliaments, and promoting the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the international community. This also reflected the National Assembly of Viet Nam's active and substantive engagement in international integration, not only for national interest, but also for peace, cooperation and development of the international community and humanity. The successful organization of the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU General Assembly helped further enhance the role and position of Viet Nam and the National Assembly of Viet Nam in the world, marking an important milestone



in the country's foreign affairs in general and the National Assembly's external relations in particular as well as a new development of Viet Nam's parliamentary diplomacy in inter-parliamentary mechanism.

Following the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU General Assembly, President of the National Assembly Nguyen Sinh Hung attended the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in New York in September 2015 and co-chaired session on *"Turning the Sustainable Development Goals into Action"* to promote the spirit of the Ha Noi Declaration and express Viet Nam's commitment to contribute to

the building of legal framework of cooperation to find solutions to the global pressing issues. In October 2015, member parliaments elected Viet Nam, one of the two countries in Asia - Pacific, as member of the IPU Executive Committee for 2015-2019. This once again reaffirmed the warm sentiments and trust of member parliaments to the National Assembly of Viet Nam.

As a member of AIPA, the National Assembly of Viet Nam has contributed actively in the management and operation of association, enhancing its role and strengthening the coordination between AIPA and



*President of the National Assembly Nguyen Sinh Hung  
attended the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (September 2015) - NA*



ASEAN, especially in promoting the the ASEAN Community building and the role of ASEAN in the evolving regional architecture.

3. In performing its legislative and supervising functions, the National Assembly has presided over and engaged in the building and amendment of many legislations related to Viet Nam's integration and foreign relations such as the amended Law on Signing, Joining and Implementing International Treaties, the Law on Belief and Religion, the Law

on Information Security; appraised and ratified a number of international treaties, provided comments on cooperation agreements. Regarding monitoring activities, the National Assembly held a hearing session on ASEAN Community and Viet Nam's participation in the community, oversaw its implementation of international commitments, reviewed the Law on Representative Missions of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Abroad; approved the appointment of Vietnamese ambassadors.

### III. The People's External Affairs

The Fatherland Front and mass organizations have actively carried out external activities, making practical contribution to the achievements of the country's overall foreign relations. The number of entities engaging external relations has increased, including associations and mass organizations from central to local levels as well as individuals. The scope of operation, content and nature of the people's diplomacy have become more diverse, relations with partners were rapidly expanded.

1. *Through the channel of the people's diplomacy, solidarity, friendship and cooperation with peoples from other countries continued to expand.*

Associations and mass organizations have carried out friendly exchanges and cooperation with Laos and Cambodia (the Viet Nam - Laos Friendship Association sent delegations to Laos, the Veteran Association sent delegations to attend the Congress of the Veteran Association in Cambodia and Laos, the Women's Union received the delegation headed by the Laotian Women's Union President, the Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) worked in collaboration with the Laos - Viet Nam Friendship Association to carry out activities under the theme "Following the Footprints of President Ho Chi Minh", and "Following the Footprints

of President Kayson Phomvihane”. A tripartite mechanism was effectively maintained such as the Regional Youth Forum on Triangle Development of Viet Nam - Laos - Cambodia, High-level Meeting of the Three Fine Arts Associations of Viet Nam - Laos - Cambodia, High-level Meeting of the Red Cross of the three countries. A series of activities were held to commemorate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Viet Nam and China (Viet Nam - China Youth Friendship Meeting during the visits by the Party General Secretaries of the two countries in April and November), Tourism Festivals “Following the Footprints of Uncle Ho”, Viet Nam - China People’s Forum, Viet Nam - China People’s Border Festival.

Many mass organizations have carried out bilateral and multilateral activities to express the wish and responsibility of the Vietnamese people to contribute to the building of a people-centered ASEAN Community. Activities to promote peace, friendship and cooperation were further implemented with other partners (the US, Japan, India, Korea, the EU, Chile, Argentina, etc.). Friendship and Peace Associations held numerous activities to celebrate and express gratitude to foreign friends on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of the South Viet Nam and National Reunification, the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Day; anniversaries of diplomatic ties between Viet Nam and other countries.



*The 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations  
(November 17, 2015) - VUFO*

*2. Mass organizations continued to participate responsibly in multilateral mechanisms, and regional and international forums.*

Mass organizations have actively participated in and contributed to many regional and international forums (including the ASEAN People's Forum, the Asia - Europe People's Forum (AEPF) under the ASEM framework, the World Social Forum, the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bandung Conference, the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Federation of Trade Unions, the General Assembly and Governing Council Meeting of the ASEAN Lawyers Association, the 38<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO, the Asian Business Summit, the ASEAN - China Expo). Viet Nam was also the host of many multilateral activities (the Viet Nam Bar Federation held meeting with the Asia - Pacific Lawyers Association, the Writers Association hosted the international conference to promote Vietnamese literature and the Festival on Asia - Pacific Poetry, the Women's Union hosted the Women's Forum for Peace and Development, the Journalists Association held a ceremony to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN Confederation of Journalists). Many organizations became members of multilateral mechanisms (the Viet Nam Farmer's Union joined the Asian Farmers' Union for Sustainable

Development, the Center for Women and Development participated in the formulation of NGO Consultative Status under ECOSOC, the Viet Nam Bar Federation officially joined the International Bar Association). These activities have helped enhance the role and position of mass organizations in multilateral mechanisms as well as the profile of Viet Nam to friends and partners across the globe.

*3. Mass organizations and administration at all levels continued to work with foreign non-governmental organizations to mobilize resources for social-economic development, participate in promoting the solidarity with the overseas Vietnamese community, and strengthen the work on external information and communication.*

In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the lead agency to exercise state management of this field, granted and amended more than 200 licenses for foreign non-governmental organizations to operate in Viet Nam. Coordination was strengthened among agencies under the Committee on Foreign Non-governmental Organizations to facilitate their operation. This has helped Viet Nam to mobilize more resources for development and convey information about Viet Nam to the international community.

In 2015, 300 million USD was mobilized through this channel. Mass

organizations played an active role in the mobilization of financial resources and other support from foreign non-governmental organizations and international partners, making great contribution to the social-economic development, the remedy of war legacy, and response to climate change.

The Viet Nam Fatherland Front and mass organizations carried out practical activities to gather support from and strengthen the solidarity with the Vietnamese community abroad. External information was strengthened to promote Viet Nam as well as its domestic and foreign policy to international friends.

*4. Provincial external activities were strengthened.*

In 2015, many provinces stepped up and deepened relations with foreign partners following the foreign policy of diversification and multilateralization. As a result, 114 agreements were concluded, of which 41 were formed between Vietnamese and foreign provinces (many pairs of partnership were formed, Asia: 27, Europe: 11, the Americas: 3), 73 were formed with foreign enterprises. This helped strengthen friendship and cooperation, promote Viet Nam and Vietnamese provinces to foreign countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs always paid attention to promoting external activities for provinces. Many activities were carried out to support

local social-economic development, international integration such as the National Online Conference to map out orientations for external activities at local level for 2015 (January 2015), the National Online Conference to introduce Directive No.15/CT-TTg of the Prime Minister on the implementation of Resolution No.22-NQ/TW of the Political Bureau on international integration (August 2015), four sessions "Meet Ambassador" of Italy, Spain, Israel, and Japan; many Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed with the European Business Association (Eurocham), Germany (GBA), France (CCIFV), Italy (Icham), and Europe - Viet Nam Business Network (EVBN). Meetings were organized for foreign business associations and local leaders to strengthen understanding and seek opportunities to attract investment at local level as well as to promote local business abroad and strengthen capacity for foreign affairs officers at local level. 2015 was the final year of the Project (2011-2015) on the training of external affairs, foreign languages and interpretation for local officers. During the last five years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided training for more than 1,500 in the total of 6,670 staff working at local foreign affairs departments.





## **I. Evaluation of the Implementation of the Foreign Policy Guidelines of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress**

- Achievements: *“Peaceful environment conducive to development, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity continues to be firmly maintained. Foreign relations have been increasingly deepened and broadened. Relations with neighboring countries and ASEAN member nations have been consolidated. Strategic partnerships and comprehensive partnerships have been established with other important partners. International integration has been stepped up, contributing significantly to pooling resources for national development, industrialization and modernization. Viet Nam has proactively and actively participated in the joint efforts of the international community, forums, regional and international organizations, enhancing the country’s status. The Party, State and people’s diplomatic activities have been conducted in a comprehensive, effective manner with new progresses made.”*

- Reason for success: *“Having been fully aware of the current trends of the time and conjuncture of the world and the region, the Party and State have issued guiding instructions in a timely and appropriate manner in line with the national interests. Many policies and solutions to address the complicated issues, including the East Sea, have garnered high consensus in the entire Party and people and support from the international community.”*

- Outstanding issues: *“Some aspects of foreign relations and international integration were to some extent not considered as proactive and efficient as expected. There has yet to be a comprehensive, effective solution to minimize the adverse impacts of international integration. Awareness and practical instructions at some points failed to catch up with the rapid and complex developments in the region and the world.*

*Close collaboration among the ministries, sectors and localities was still lacking.*

*Strategic studies and forecast remained limited.”<sup>1</sup>*

## II. The World Situation Forecast in the Coming Years

*“In the coming years, the world will continue to see many complicated developments, yet peace, national independence, democracy, cooperation and development remain a major trend. Globalization and international integration continue to be stepped up. Cooperation, competition and interdependence among countries, particularly among the major powers, are on the rise. Scientific - technological revolution, particularly information technology, continues to mushroom, promoting breakthrough leap-frog developments in many areas, creating both opportunities and challenges for all countries.*

*The world political and security landscape is changing rapidly in a very complicated and unpredictable manner; impeachment upon national sovereignty, territorial and resources disputes, racial and religious conflicts, intervention and overthrown attempts, terrorism, local wars, cyber wars, among others, continue to fire up in many regions.*

*The multi-polar and multi-centric conjuncture is evolving more rapidly across the globe. All major powers undertake strategic adjustments, which*

*incorporate all aspects of cooperation, compromise, competition, and mutual containment, strongly affecting the regional and world conjuncture. The manifestations of extremist nationalism, power politics and pragmatism are on the rise in international relations. Multilateral institutions are facing grave challenges. Developing countries, particularly medium and small nations, are facing opportunities and challenges on their development paths. Against that backdrop, moves of force rally, cooperation and competition among countries in the world and the region in their respective national interests continue to evolve with complexities.*

*Global issues such as financial, energy, water, and food security, climate change, natural disasters and epidemics are emerging. The international community has to focus more on traditional and non-traditional security challenges, particularly cyber security and the new forms of war.*

*The world economy is on a slow recovery path and still facing many difficulties and challenges as well as unpredictable fluctuations. Countries are*

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1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam: *Documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress*, Ibid, pp. 151-152.

participating more deeply in the global production network and value chain. Global price fluctuation, financial and monetary instability, and public debt continue to result in adverse effects in the world economy. Economic power weight among countries and regions is changing rapidly. Most countries are undertaking strategic adjustments, economic restructuring, economic institutional reform, and application of science - technology advances for development. Economic - trade competition as well as disputes over natural resources, markets, technologies, high-quality workforce are increasingly fierce. There emerge new forms of economic linkages, international and regional financial institutions,

bilateral and multilateral new-generation economic agreements.

Asia - Pacific, including Southeast Asia, continues to be a dynamic center with increasingly important strategic geo-economic position in the world. At the same time, this is the region of strategic competition among some major powers with destabilizing factors. Territorial, maritime and island disputes in the region and the East Sea continue to see complicated and tense developments. The ASEAN Community has come into being and continues to play an important role in maintaining peace, stability, promoting cooperation and economic linkages in the region, yet it is also facing many internal and external challenges.”<sup>1</sup>

### III. Goals, Tasks, Policies, Principles and Major Guidelines

- Goal: “Ensuring ultimate national interests.”

- Tasks: “On the basis of both cooperation and competition, the external activities aim to firmly maintain the environment of peace and stability, make the best of external resources to develop the country, improve people’s living standards, resolutely and perseveringly defend the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Fatherland, safeguard the Party, State and people, and the socialist regime, enhance

the status, prestige of the country and contribute to the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress in the world.”

- Policies: “Independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development; diversification, multilateralization of foreign relations; proactive and active in international integration; be a friend, reliable partner and responsible member of the international community.”

- Principles: “Ensure the ultimate national interests on the basis of the

1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam: Documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, Ibid, pp. 70-73.

*fundamental principles of international law, equality and mutual benefits."*

- Major guidelines: *"Improve the effectiveness of the foreign affairs activities, continue to deepen cooperative relations, enhance the quality and effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy, proactively and actively contribute to developing and shaping the multilateral institutions. Firmly fight and defeat any attempts of intervention into the internal affairs, violation of the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, national security and political stability of the country. Undertake greater efforts to complete land border demarcation, promote settlement of issues at sea on the basis of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS and the region's codes of conduct. Focus on strengthening traditional friendship and cooperation with neighboring countries, promote relations with the major and important partners. Proactively and responsibly work with ASEAN countries to build a strong ASEAN Community. Expand, deepen and improve the effectiveness of the Party, the State and the people's diplomacy.*

*Fully implement the strategic guidelines of proactive and active international integration. Ensure that international integration is the cause of the entire people and political system, step up integration on the basis of optimizing internal resources, strengthening cohesiveness and increasing the country's*

*synergy and competitiveness; economic integration is the focus, integration in other areas shall facilitate economic integration; integration is a process of both cooperation and competition, being proactive in forecasting and flexible in handling all kinds of situation without being fallen into the passive, confrontational or disadvantageous position.*

*Enhance the efficiency of international economic integration, implement fully the international commitments, develop and implement strategies to participate in free trade areas with important economic-trade partners, sign and implement effectively the new-generation free trade agreements with a master plan and suitable roadmap that is compatible with the national interests. Intensify and deepen relations with partners, particularly the strategic partners and the major powers that have an important role to play in the development and security of the country, adding substance to the established framework. Proactively engage in and enhance role at multilateral mechanisms, particularly ASEAN and the United Nations. Proactively and actively engage in multilateral defense, security mechanisms including participation in higher level of cooperation activities such as the UN Peacekeeping, non-traditional security drill and other activities. Step up international integration in the cultural, social, science - technology and other fields.*



*Step up the strategic research, forecast and recommendations on foreign affairs; renew the contents and methods, and improve the effectiveness of external information and communications; focus on the training of foreign service staff, enhance knowledge about foreign affairs for key staff at all levels. Ensure the unified leadership*

*of the Party and centralized management of the State over foreign affairs activities. Closely collaborate activities of the Party's Diplomacy, the State's Diplomacy, and People's Diplomacy, between political diplomacy and economic and cultural diplomacy, between diplomatic with defense and security areas."*<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. New Features in the Foreign Policy Guidelines of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress

The foreign policy guidelines of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress inherited and developed on the basis of the policies set forth by the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress with the supplements and new elements compatible with the new context of increasingly extensive integration.

*First, for the first time, the foreign affairs tasks were mentioned as part of the Congress's theme. The theme of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, also title of the Political Report, was: "Continue enhancing leadership and combat capability of the Party, optimize the entire nation's synergy, step up the comprehensive reform process, laying the foundation for Viet Nam to basically become a modern and industrial nation by 2020."* The theme of the Congress and title of the Political Report of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress was *"Step up*

*efforts to build a strong and clean Party; optimize the entire nation's synergy and socialist democracy; accelerate the comprehensive reform process; defend firmly the Fatherland, safeguard peace and stability; laying the foundation for Viet Nam to basically become a modern and industrial nation."*

With that, in addition to the four elements of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, namely the Party's leadership; the nation and democracy; reform; national building goals, the fifth element was introduced: *"defend firmly the Fatherland, safeguard peace and stability"*. These are the two most important tasks of the foreign affairs.

The Congress' theme covered the key tasks during the upcoming tenure. Adding the foreign policy tasks to the theme of the Congress reaffirmed the significant role of the

1. The Communist Party of Viet Nam: *Documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress*, Ibid, pp. 153-156.

foreign policy in the Party's overall goals for development and national defense during the next five years and the subsequent years.

*Second*, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress emphasized first the goal of *"securing the ultimate national interests"* and considered it the overarching goal that the entire political system must strive to achieve. At the same time, to ensure effective foreign affairs activities in the new period of more extensive international integration, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress pointed out that those activities must be on *"the basis of the fundamental principles of international law, equality and mutual benefit"*, those are two intertwined and reciprocal elements. In the current age, to achieve national interests, it is impossible to run counter to the advanced and humane values of mankind. Rather, it is necessary to abide by universally recognized international standards, norms and institutions, and to respect the legitimate interests of other nations - states and the shared interests of the international community.

*Third*, in line with the major guideline of deepening and adding effectiveness to relations with countries, the documents of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress clearly stated: *"Further intensify and deepen relations with partners, particularly the strategic partners and the major powers that have*

*an important role in the development and security of the country; adding more substance to the established framework."*

The 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress has pointed out the importance of relations with the major partners and powers and identified potentials to further strengthen these relations and ties to serve the genuine interests of the nation. During the past years, the establishment of the relations framework with important partners represents one of the remarkable achievements of Viet Nam's diplomacy. Nevertheless, that is just the beginning. Constantly building on such important progresses and striving to deepen such long-term relationships are greatly meaningful to the success of Viet Nam's diplomacy, forging the country's firm stance so that it could respond with flexibility to the rapid and unpredictable changes in the international political arena.

*Fourth*, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress clearly outlined the major directions and guidelines for the international integration process, underscoring the role of multilateral diplomacy. The 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress considered international integration a *"strategic guideline,"* with higher focus and a more detailed approach compared to the previous congresses, demonstrating the commitment of the entire Party and people to integration policies. In

the past years, Viet Nam started to channel more efforts into negotiating and signing a number of international agreements. In the upcoming years, Viet Nam will enter a more difficult phase when it delivers on its commitments including the obligations within the ASEAN Community, the WTO, and particularly the commitments under new-generation FTAs which are much more demanding than the previous FTAs that we signed. The new-generation FTAs have larger scope of regulation including not only trade and investment but also many other issues such as labor - union, environment, State-owned enterprises, intellectual property rights, etc. The future tasks and undertakings necessitate adoption of an approach to change our mindset more strongly from “active participation” to “active contribution to shaping the common rules of the game”, complete the legal system compatible with the international commitments and enhance the competitiveness of the economy with a view to securing the national interests in the process of international integration.

*Fifth*, the guiding principle for implementing the task of safeguarding the Fatherland was clarified: “*resolutely and perseveringly struggle to defend firmly the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country, defending the Party, State and people, and socialist regime.*” The core element

of this guiding principle lies in the goal of *defend firmly the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country, defending the Party, State and people, and socialist regime* while persevering in seeking peaceful measures in line with international law.

*Sixth*, people’s diplomacy has been approached from a new perspective, from *people’s diplomacy* to *people’s external relations* is an extension of the scope to include also the activities of mass organizations, political-social organizations with an emphasis on the role of people’s external relations in the overall picture of the country’s foreign relations.

*Seventh*, with regard to foreign relations in defense and security, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress underscored the guiding principle of “*Proactively and actively engage in multilateral defense, security mechanisms including participation in higher level of cooperation activities such as the UN peacekeeping, non-traditional security drill and other activities.*” This used to be considered a “sensitive” realm, nevertheless, since 2014, Viet Nam started to participate in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. This marked a strong shift of mindset, reaffirming that Viet Nam is an active and responsible member of the international community and that Viet Nam stands ready to join the UN in its noble cause of maintaining world peace and security.

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