



ADDRESS BY
H.E. MR. PHAM BINH MINH,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 72ND SESSION OF
THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, September 22nd, 2017)

Mr. President,

I extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Miroslav Lajcak on his election as President of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

My special thanks shall also go to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. Only in ten months, Mr. Guterres has already left his mark in the Organization's work for peace, development and human rights.

Mr. President,

On 20 September 1977, exactly forty years ago, Viet Nam was admitted to the United Nations as its 149th member. One day later, then Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Viet Nam stood right here at this podium, addressing this Assembly.

Representing a nation devastated by decades of war, he affirmed the unified Viet Nam's pledge to closely cooperate with other Members in striving tirelessly to turn the lofty goals of the United Nations into reality – those are the goals of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

These forty years have been an era of transformations for my country.

Viet Nam today is a dynamic economy on the path of reforms and sustainable development. The country has transformed itself from an aid-dependent to a lower middle-income country. Our MDG implementation efforts have helped bring tens of millions of Vietnamese out of poverty.

But one thing has not changed.

Viet Nam today is as a committed member of the United Nations as ever before. We are a staunch supporter and proponent of multilateralism with the United Nations at

its heart.

We believe in the fundamental role of international law and the UN Charter, the principles of respect for sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, non-interference, non-threat or use of force, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. President,

We gather here as the world undergoes profound and fast transformations. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, in particular the advancement of digital technology, is bringing about unprecedented opportunities for development for all. Enormous efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are underway.

Yet, our world is still fraught with turmoil, uncertainties and fragility. While peace and cooperation prevails, people around the world are facing unprecedented challenges to their security and development. Security instability, the risks of conflicts, disasters and climate change threaten the sustainable development of all nations.

Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction have gone global and been threats to all. Efforts for disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation have not progressed as expected. The worst migration and humanitarian crisis since World War II continues to unfold.

For many past decades, the aspiration to live in peace remains a distant dream for millions of people.

Together with the slow and unsustainable growth of global economy, globalization and economic integration are now facing a less certain future. Inequality within and between countries remains one of the biggest challenges of our time. The impacts of climate change is evermore real, and far beyond forecast.

This year, we have witnessed multiple natural disasters, inflicting heavy losses in human life and property in Cuba, Mexico, the United States and other Caribbean countries.

Given these daunting challenges, the theme chosen for this Session – *“Focusing on the People: Striving for Peace and Decent Life for All on a Sustainable Planet”* – could not have been more timely.

Mr. President,

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the world community has in the clearest of ways chosen sustainable development as the path towards a better destiny for this and future generations.

It is now incumbent upon us to bring this ambitious plan into reality. Developing countries should be given more favorable conditions and resources to realize the SDGs. We call on developed nations to fulfill their commitments on providing financial assistance and technology transfer for developing countries.

On this path towards sustainable development, we must place the interests of the people at the center of all our policies and actions. Failing to do so, we will not be able to ensure a decent life for all.

I believe life cannot be decent when poverty, unemployment and epidemics remain unaddressed effectively. It cannot be decent if it continues to be threatened by climate change and disasters.

And above all, we will not succeed in our quest for sustainable development and decent life for all unless we can secure sustainable peace.

Mr. President,

Having enjoyed only the last four decades of peace and independence, we know what peace can bring about. Sustaining peace must always be on the top of our agenda.

This major undertaking will take strong commitment and cooperation. And I believe we will need to come together to strengthen multilateralism to achieve these goals.

For today's global challenges, multilateralism have indeed proven to provide the most effective solutions. Multilateral institutions are venues for countries to align their own interests, manage disputes and differences, and promote cooperation. But the trust on multilateralism will falter if these institutions fail to prove their effectiveness, or lack consensus on common goals and principles. Therefore, global and regional multilateral mechanisms should function in a transparent, effective and responsive manner.

The United Nations must be the center of coordination and linking joint efforts to address global challenges, building an ever more comprehensive system of rules and norms with a mechanism for ensuring objectiveness, fairness and equality. For it to do so, the United Nations need to undertake a comprehensive reform, from organizational structure and working methodology to the way the development resources are mobilized and allocated.

Viet Nam supports efforts to reform the United Nations in this direction and will participate responsibly in the reform process.

Mr. President,

International law is essential foundation for the order and stability in international relations. Wars, conflicts and tension today are occurring mainly because international law has not been fully respected and observed in good faith. We believe that upholding international law, peace will be secured. We need to take concrete actions, in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, to prevent conflicts, build confidence and peacefully settle conflicts and disputes, including those in the Middle East, Africa and call for denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In the same vein, we find that the unilateral embargo against Cuba is inappropriate and and we call for its immediate removal.

We welcome the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a historic milestone towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Today, I sign this Treaty and call upon others to sign and ratify the Treaty to enable its early entry into force. Let us all be clear. The danger of nuclear weapons still looms over mankind as long as they exist.

Mr. President,

The year 2017 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to which Viet Nam is proud to be member. ASEAN is striving to a rules-based and people-oriented Community, to strengthen its centrality in the evolving regional architecture and actively contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific.

Viet Nam is working closely with other ASEAN members to address common challenges. With regard to the South China Sea dispute, Viet Nam and ASEAN call upon all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and settle disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, fully respect diplomatic and legal processes, implement the Declaration on the Conduct of parties on the South China Sea (DOC) and expedite the completion of an effective and legally binding Code of Conduct (COC).

Viet Nam also takes pride in hosting the Asia – Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) this year, as we seek to build an Asia-Pacific partnership for sustainable and inclusive development in the 21st century.

Mr. President,

At the global level, Viet Nam has actively engaged in the work of the United Nations, having served on the Human Rights Council between 2014-2016 and currently is a member of ECOSOC for the term 2016-2018. We have started to implement the National Plan of Action for implementing the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. And we will present the Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2018. Viet Nam hosted last March the High-level UN Conference on transit trade facilitation for landlocked countries.

Since 2014, Viet Nam has sent its officers to work in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and is preparing for the deployment of level-two field hospitals. Before that, since 2009, Viet Nam has presented its candidature for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term 2020-2021. We believe that these are the most practical ways to contribute to sustainable peace and security.

It is my confidence that through our concerted effort and the strength of multilateralism, we will fulfill our mission to maintain peace and security, ensure a decent life and a sustainable future for all.

Thank you very much./.