



**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
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ADDRESS

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY NGUYEN TAN DUNG
PRIME MINISTER OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
OF VIET NAM**

**At the General Debate of the 68th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly**

"Humanity yearns for a world free from war and hunger"

New York, 27 September 2013

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Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

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"Humanity yearns for a world free from war and hunger"

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a distinct honor for me to address this august forum. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Dr. John Ashe, on your assumption of the Presidency of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly. I am certain that under your leadership, this Session will successfully define the post-2015 development agenda. I would also like to express my deepest respect to the Secretary General for his significant contributions to the continuing work of the UN.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking back at the last 100 years, the miraculous advances of science and technology have changed our world profoundly, making it a flat and smaller place. People's lives have improved. Yet along with these accomplishments come latent dangers. The common dream of people across the world continues to be a safe, peaceful, prosperous and happy life free from hunger. It is still far away.

Mankind yearns for peace, so why is it that many regions are still constantly threatened by disputes, conflicts and wars? The global economy is growing, so how is it that billions of people still live in abject poverty? Science and technology have brought about outstanding advancement, so why are natural disasters, epidemics and pollution increasingly severe and unpredictable?

These questions place upon all of us an enormous responsibility as a community of nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Throughout history, wars have destroyed many civilizations. Just in the past 100 years, two World Wars and many others, including the one in Viet Nam, have taken millions of lives and produced devastating consequences over generations.

Whilst peace, cooperation and development are the dominant trend, the threat of war is ever present. Violence in the Middle East and North Africa is a grave concern; the latest instance in Syria where the use of chemical weapons needs to be strongly condemned. We need to give peace every possible chance and to find solutions to eliminate chemical weapons in accordance with international law and UN Resolutions. Unpredictable developments in the Korean Peninsula persist. The East China Sea and the East Sea of Viet Nam (South China Sea) still rage with territorial disputes. Just one single incident or ill-conceived act could trigger conflict, even war.

In the East Sea where over half of the world's shipping passes through, maintaining maritime security and freedom of navigation is critical not only to the region but also to the world. Viet Nam consistently pursues a policy of peaceful resolution of disputes to defend its legitimate interests and fully respect those of the global community, in accordance with international law, the 1982 UNCLOS, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and effort towards a Code of Conduct (COC).

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Ho Chi Minh quoted Thomas Jefferson in Viet Nam's Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal; they are all endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". All human life is precious, irrespective of race, religion or gender. Taking away a single life causes heart-breaking pain to a family whether right here in Manhattan or far away in a remote corner of the earth.

Therefore, any effort to prevent conflict must be valued and supported. Any effort to preserve peace must be fully exhausted. Any act to provoke war must be condemned and stopped. A physician must do whatever he can to cure a patient if there is but a glimpse of life left. And we must devote all of our efforts to preserve peace if there is but a feeble signal that war can be averted, for war will take away the life of not only one but many people including many women and children.

Peace can only be built and preserved when all countries respect the independence, sovereignty and cultural traditions of each other without imposing one's morality on the other. Conflict and war can only be averted if we eliminate actions that run

counter to the UN Charter and international law, imposition and power politics. Strategic trust among nations must be constantly fostered with honesty, sincerity and concrete actions, for example, in the lifting of embargo against Cuba or the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

The role of the UN and its Security Council needs to be promoted. The international community is expecting the major powers to set an example for others in peace building. Let the UN Security Council be the fulcrum in building consensus for driving all nations to join hands together in preserving peace. The deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence is lying in wait to take away the lives of hundreds, thousands, even millions of innocents. Please don't give it a hand. Please don't look away. Please stop it.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I share the Secretary-General's view that the Millennium Development Goals are currently our most successful endeavor against hunger and poverty. But let us not forget that close to 40% of global wealth is in the hands of not more than 1% of its population. The rich-poor gap continues to widen. Over 1 billion people are still living in extreme poverty. Hundreds of millions, especially children are still hungry and lack food; are ill and lack basic medicine; and face a grim future due to a lack of education.

At the same time, deforestation, exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, pollution, etc have led to global warming, rising sea level, unpredictable weather, natural disasters and new epidemics. These grave dangers are driving poorer nations further into destitution.

We must rally together to escape poverty, fight disease, protect the environment, respond to natural disasters and build a greener and more just world. Poorer countries and peoples need to lift themselves out of poverty with the help of richer people and more developed countries. This help must not only come from a sense of philanthropy, as we say in Viet Nam "whole leaves wrap torn ones", but firstly from a sense of responsibility and understanding of our joint destiny. Poorer people and nations have contributed to the wealth of richer nations and people and they deserve a more prosperous future.

I urge the global community, with a sense of responsibility and humanity, to craft an ambitious post-2015 development agenda and re-double our efforts to promote peace, end hunger, poverty and protect our planet. Let us develop a roadmap of actions for poorer nations to effectively participate in international agreements, institutions and face and overcome global challenges and dangers in the spirit of Alexander Dumas' Musketeers "One for All and All for One".

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a Vietnamese, what I have just shared with you comes from experiences soaked in sweat and blood. Just a few decades ago, the word Viet Nam was synonymous with war, division, blood and tears. A remote country called Viet Nam suffered 15 million tons of bombs, four times the amount used in World War II. Each Vietnamese bore nearly 10 times his or her weight worth of bombs, not to mention our suffering from over 70 million liters of the silent but deadly Agent Orange/Dioxin.

In the Vietnamese tradition of "Benevolence triumphs over Brutality, Virtue drives out Tyranny"; with courageous sacrifice and creativity, with the support of peace-loving people, nations and international organizations; Viet Nam has defended its independence, united and rebuilt from the ashes of war, and left behind the past to become an active and responsible member of the international community.

Viet Nam has integrated the Millennium Development Goals into the formulation and implementation of our development strategy and balanced economic development and social security. We have received the FAO award for our outstanding achievements in poverty reduction. As we consider people the goal and the center of development, Viet Nam pays special attention to providing healthcare, education, and means of communication even for people in remote, under-developed areas and amongst our ethnic minorities.

Viet Nam is working actively with other members to build the ASEAN Community - a common house for all South East Asian nations that used to be deeply divided by war. This vividly manifests the aspiration for a bright future of peace, cooperation and prosperity, for unity in diversity, and for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Having gone through devastating wars of aggression and extreme poverty, our aspirations for peace and prosperity burn ever more brightly. We commit to do more. To participate in every peace-building, poverty reduction, environmental protection and other efforts. We stand ready to join the UN's peace keeping operations. We are willing to share our resources and experience as a tribute to the international friends who have supported us in our struggle for independence, unification, and poverty reduction. Viet Nam is and will always be a reliable partner and responsible member of the international community.

Take food for example. From a country constantly suffering from hunger, Viet Nam has become a leading rice exporter. We have achieved national food security but consider it our responsibility to help maintain global food security. Not only exporting, we also assist countries to become self-reliant in food production, as we

have done in Cuba, Mozambique, Angola, Mali, Madagascar, Myanmar and others. We hope developed countries and international organizations will participate in supporting similar programs as a meaningful and substantive multi-partite model of cooperation.

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude with the strong conviction that the "Post-2015 Development Agenda" will be developed and finalized for a world free from war and hunger. All for peace and cooperation. For sustainable development and prosperity for humanity. For our ever green planet. Viet Nam commits itself to that purpose.

Thank you very much./.