Aide-memoire
on Viet Nam’s candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2023-2025

The Government of Viet Nam presents its candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the term 2023-2025, aspiring to make active, responsible and effective contributions to global efforts to promote and protect human rights. Viet Nam is proud to have been endorsed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the Association’s candidate for this position.

Viet Nam’s Appreciation of Human Rights Values

1. Viet Nam believes in the universality of human rights as the common aspiration and shared value of humankind, essentially enshrined in United Nations (UN) declarations and international treaties in this area.

Viet Nam encourages dialogue and cooperation among countries and all relevant stakeholders, particularly at the UN human rights mechanisms, to improve the quality of life for each and everyone around the world.

Viet Nam also holds that the promotion and protection of human rights must be undertaken in a comprehensive and holistic manner, in all civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and developmental aspects, and in accordance with both commonly recognized international standards and relevant legal frameworks of each nation.
Highlights of Human Rights Accomplishments in Viet Nam

2. Throughout their millennia-long history of nation building and defense, the Vietnamese people had fought hard and made untold sacrifices to defend their own inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms. Viet Nam’s development particularly since Doi Moi reforms, has always been people-oriented and people-driven. Our people-centric vision, policies and actions all aim at the goal of “prosperous people, strong nation, and equal, democratic and civilized society” where the legitimate needs of the people would be better met.

The 2013 Constitution of Viet Nam dedicates an entire Chapter with 36 Articles to expressly stipulating human rights, and citizens’ fundamental rights and obligations. Since then, Viet Nam has promulgated, amended, and supplemented more than 100 laws and ordinances relating to human rights and citizens’ rights, notably the 2015 Criminal Code, the 2015 Civil Code, the 2015 Referendum Law, the 2016 Children Law, the 2017 Legal Aid Law, the 2018 Cybersecurity Law, the 2019 Labour Code.

3. Viet Nam has implemented concerted measures, prioritizing resources for socio-economic development, and raising living standards for the people. Achievements in this area and the country’s strengthened international integration have created favourable conditions and sufficient resources to better ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Vietnamese people are effectively enjoying rights and freedoms better than ever before.

4. Viet Nam achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is actively implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From 2010 to 2020, Viet Nam recorded an average annual GDP growth rate of 6%. In the same period, per capita income was doubled¹, the rate of poor households decreased from 14.2% to 3.0% and health insurance coverage increased from 60.9% to 90.7%.

Preventive healthcare, from the national to local levels, continue to be strengthened, and proven effective in ensuring the people’s right to health, particularly in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government continues to allocate 20% of the overall state budget to education, enabling the nationwide universalization of kindergarten and elementary levels.

¹ From 1331 USD per year in 2010 to 2750 USD per year in 2020
5. All civil and political rights are better ensured. More than 900 registered press agencies are active in Viet Nam. Over 70% of the population have access to the Internet on a daily basis and among them, 95% use social media, for educational and business purposes. The people participate in, and provide their inputs to the drafting of legal documents or policies, including by using online tools.

70,000 active associations in Viet Nam represent the youth, women, workers, farmers, the elderly, people with disabilities or being scientific, professional, business organisations, charities, and other non-governmental organisations. Operating in a conducive environment, these associations are making significant contributions in all aspects of the social life in Viet Nam, and constructively engaging in the making of laws and policies.

In Viet Nam, multiple religions and beliefs coexist in harmony, and together making significant contributions to the country’s development. Over 95% of Viet Nam’s population profess a particular belief or religion, and over 26 million people are religious devotees (almost 27% of the population).

6. Promptly responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, Viet Nam has adopted an whole-of-government approach and coordinated, effective measures to promote and protect human rights, leaving no one behind. Among them, the highest priority is given to ensuring people’s right to health and their ultimate right to life.

At the same time, Viet Nam has been taking actions to minimize the adverse economic and social impacts of the pandemic, to maintain and recover production and business activities, and to ensure employment, social security, and living conditions of the people, especially vulnerable groups. Social security packages worth approximately 2.2 billion USD have been issued to support more than 20 million people to sustain their livelihoods. Beneficiaries of these packages include poor people, people with disabilities, the elderly, the unemployed and under-employed and people with nil or reduced income, due to the impact of the pandemic.

In 2020, Viet Nam conducted more than 350 international flights to bring home Vietnamese expats in need of repatriation for protection against the pandemic, especially vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, and women.

Thanks to these measures, Viet Nam has so far managed to control the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, entering a “new normal” status while promptly recovering the economy. Among a few economies enjoying highest
growth rate in the world in 2020, Viet Nam yielded the growth rate of 2.91%.

The National Assembly of Viet Nam also adopted the target economic growth rate at 6% for 2021.

7. Viet Nam attaches great importance to the adherence to, and implementation of international treaties in protecting and promoting human rights in the country.

Viet Nam is currently State Party to 07/09 key international human rights treaties\(^3\) and 25 conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO)\(^4\). A roadmap has been set for future ratification of ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise.

Viet Nam abides by its obligations under international human rights treaties to which it is a Party, including that of reporting on their implementation in the country.

*Viet Nam’s Engagement in International Endeavours for Human Rights*

8. Appreciating universal human rights values, Viet Nam has been actively participating in bilateral, regional, and global cooperation in this area, in line with Viet Nam’s independent, self-reliant foreign policy for peace, cooperation, and development, and our engagement in multilateralization and diversification of external relations, and proactive and robust international integration.

Within bilateral frameworks, Viet Nam pursues cooperation and dialogue to better mutual understanding, aiming at addressing matters of mutual interests and fostering implementation capabilities in the field of human rights.

In the Southeast Asian region, Viet Nam has practically contributed to ASEAN enhanced solidarity and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights. Its role has been particularly visible in the building of the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Community and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and the establishment and functioning of ASEAN’s human rights-related mechanisms\(^5\). With Viet Nam joining hands, ASEAN is firmly

\(^2\) According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

\(^3\) Namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention against Torture (CAT). Viet Nam is the first Asian country to ratify CRC.

\(^4\) Including 7 among 8 fundamental ILO conventions.

\(^5\) Including the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN
committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in the region in conformity with the commonly recognized international standards, creating frameworks for enhancing cooperation among ASEAN Members States in this field.

9. Viet Nam has consistently been supportive of, and dutifully participating in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Viet Nam firmly upholds the value of the UPR as an effective UN human rights mechanism for exchange of information and experience, deepening mutual understanding and cooperation on the basis of equality and transparency. In the 3rd UPR Cycle (2019), Viet Nam accepted 241/291 recommendations (83%) and is actively implementing them through a National Master Plan. Viet Nam’s initiative to develop such a National Master Plan has proven exemplarily effective since the 2nd UPR Cycle.

Viet Nam also actively cooperates with other UN human rights mechanisms. Since 2010, the country has received 07 UNHRC Special Procedures and is preparing to receive the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development once circumstances allow.

Viet Nam: a Responsible Partner at the UNHRC

10. Viet Nam highly appreciates the role and contributions of the UNHRC in protecting and promoting human rights around the world.

Viet Nam has always been actively and responsibly participating in the work of the Council, particularly as its member for the term 2014-2016. Viet Nam always heightens and encourages the spirit of cooperation and dialogue. Viet Nam acts wholeheartedly to advance mutual understanding, bridging differences and seeking effective and sustainable solutions for human rights challenges, on the basis of respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, and mutual interests.

Given its experience, commitment and strong determination, Viet Nam is confident in its ability to partake the UNHRC membership. Viet Nam will spare no effort to work with other countries in enhancing the Council’s efficiency, transparency, objectiveness and balance based on the spirit of dialogue, cooperation, equality, and mutual respect.

Viet Nam looks forward to receiving UN Member States’ valuable support for its candidature to the UNHRC for the term 2023-2025.
Viet Nam’s Voluntary Pledges
as a Member of the Human Rights Council

Viet Nam pledges to continue the efforts devoted to better enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country, leaving no one behind. Viet Nam would equally contribute to global endeavours towards the same goal. In this process, Viet Nam’s priorities are:

1. Strengthening the rule-of-law State, conducting legal reforms to enhance the institutional, judicial and policy foundation related to human rights, and further incorporating provisions of international human rights treaties into national laws.

2. Fostering effective measures and allocating sufficient resources to better ensure all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, in line with commonly recognized international standards.

3. Accelerating the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, with priority given to reducing multidimensional poverty, minimizing inequality, eliminating any racial discrimination, safeguarding the sustainable livelihood for the people, improving the living conditions and access to public services, and enhancing social security and social resilience in response to natural disasters and diseases, especially for vulnerable groups.

4. Strengthening education on human rights to raise public awareness and the capability of law enforcement agencies, including through full implementation of the National Programme to incorporate human rights in the national education system.

5. Implementing fully and dutifully the accepted recommendations in the 3rd Cycle of UPR and upholding commitments and obligations under international human rights treaties to which Viet Nam is a Party, particularly via the effective implementation of relevant Nation Action Plans.

6. Enhancing substantive dialogue and cooperation with all countries and UN mechanisms on human rights.

7. Further contributing to the promotion of dialogue, cooperation, tolerance, and mutual understanding among countries and stakeholders based on respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, and mutual benefits.

8. Engaging responsibly in the work of UNHRC and promoting the role and the efficiency of the Council, with particular attention to the rights of
vulnerable groups and the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights.

9. Participating constructively in the UNHRC’s review process, with focus on reforming and improving the efficiency in addressing human rights challenges of the Council’s subsidiary bodies, including the UPR.

10. Making further substantive contributions to ASEAN human rights cooperation, particularly in the work of AICHR and the implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration.