



# VIET NAM'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





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## FOREWORD

As a responsible member country of the United Nations, Viet Nam has been actively participating in the implementation of the global sustainable development agendas. In the context of Viet Nam, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were nationalized in the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for SDGs (SDG NAP) in May 2017. As part of this process, the country has prepared a Voluntary National Review (VNR) for presentation at the United Nations High-level Political Forum 2018 on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2018).

This VNR aims to evaluate the achievements of the 2030 Agenda and 17 SDGs, analyze policy gaps and potential challenges arising during achievement of the SDGs in Viet Nam and presents recommendations to accelerate future achievement of the SDGs.

This review was prepared on the basis of intensive and extensive consultations as well as constructive participation from numerous stakeholders, including the National Assembly, ministries and related agencies, socio-political organizations such as the Women's Union and Youth Union, socio-professional organizations, UN agencies in Viet Nam, development partners, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of the business community, research institutes and scientists.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEMA	Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs
CP	Cleaner Production
DOIT	Department of Industry and Trade
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FII	Foreign Indirect Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GINI coefficient	Unequal income distribution coefficient
GOVN	Government of Viet Nam
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOC	Ministry of Construction
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOIT	Ministry of Information and Technology
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTP	National Target Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OOF	Other Official Finance
PAPI	Public Administration Performance Index
PAR INDEX	Public Administration reform Index
PCI	Provincial Competitiveness Index
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDG NAP	National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for SDGs
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
TVET	Training and Vocational Education Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VBCSD	Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development
VCCI	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VHLSS	Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey
VND	Viet Nam Dong
VNGO	Viet Nam Non-Governmental Organizations
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VUSTA	Viet Nam Union of Science and Technology Associations
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization



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## KEY MESSAGES OF THE VNR

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in line with the long-term development strategy of Viet Nam. In our endeavour to achieve this agenda, the Government of Viet Nam is committed to mobilizing all resources and the participation of government ministries and agencies at all levels, organizations, communities and the people.

Seventeen global SDGs have been nationalized into 115 Viet Nam SDG (VSDG) targets in our “National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, based on Viet Nam’s development context and priorities, and building on the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The National Action Plan emphasizes the importance of partnerships and clearly assigns tasks and responsibilities to respective stakeholders at both central and local levels in SDG implementation. In addition, Viet Nam has paid particular attention to vulnerable groups such as the poor, people with disabilities, women, children and ethnic minorities through a number of policies aimed at promoting social equality to ensure that no one is left behind. Accordingly, the National Council for Sustainable Development and Competitiveness Improvement, established in 2005, plays an advisory and consultative role to the Prime Minister in the implementation of sustainable development initiatives.

To date, Viet Nam is proud to have achieved a number of SDG-related results, including: (1) A substantial reduction in the national multi-dimensional poverty rate from 9.9 per-cent in 2015 to less than 7 per-cent in 2017; (2) A decrease in the under-5 mortality rate from 22.1 in 2015 to 21.6 in 2017 per 1000 live births; Health insurance coverage reaching 86.4 per-cent in 2017; (3) A primary net enrolment rate of 99.0 per-cent and a primary completion rate of 99.7 per-cent for the school year 2016-2017; (4) Gradually making gender equality a cross-cutting issue in all political, economic, cultural, and social spheres with remarkable results such as: women’s representation in the National Assembly in the 2016-2021 term reaching 26.7 per-cent; and, the year 2017 recorded 12 out of 30 government ministries and agencies with female leaders holding minister and deputy-minister positions; (5) The proportion of households having access to safe water reaching 93.4 per-cent in 2016; (6) Access to electricity by more than 99 per-cent of Vietnamese households in 2016; (7) Internet use reaching 54.2 per-cent or 50 million people in 2016; (8) Annual GDP growth rates at 6.7, 6.2, and 6.8 per-cent for 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively; (9) Improvements in the protection and management of the environment and natural resources and an increase in forest cover to 41.5 per-cent in 2017; (10) A reduction in inequality and an improvement in the promotion of access to justice and information; (11) Viet Nam’s deeper and more comprehensive international integration and enhanced international position; and (12) Important steps taken to support the youth in realizing their full potential as key partners in achieving the SDGs.

Moreover, sustainable development principles have been thoroughly mainstreamed into the 2011-2020 Social and Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) and the 2016-2020 Social and Economic Development Plan (SEDP). In the coming years, the SDGs will be fully and further integrated into Viet Nam’s 2021-2030 SEDS and 2021-2025 SEDP.

The Government of Viet Nam has created an enabling legal environment and encouraged foreign and domestic private sectors to invest and do business in line with sustainable development principles. Accordingly, the Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development is an initiative aimed at enhancing connections within the business community to enable them to share and spread good practices, as well as to play an important role in realizing the SDGs.

Viet Nam is now a lower middle-income country (LMIC) and is also one of the most affected countries by climate change. Increasingly integrated into the world economy, Viet Nam is therefore more vulnerable to its fluctuations. The country is also facing many social, environmental as well as other interconnected and emerging challenges. As such, to successfully achieve all 17 SDGs, Viet Nam requires technical and human resources, financial support, as well as strengthened cooperation and exchange of knowledge with the international community. At the same time, Viet Nam is eager to share its own experiences and innovative approaches with other countries.

Going forward, Viet Nam will therefore need to: improve society's awareness of and mobilize all stakeholders' participation in sustainable development efforts; enhance institutional set-up and policy frameworks for sustainable development; foster cooperation between the Government and the business sector, domestic organizations, and the international community in SDG implementation; issue national SDG indicators and strengthen national statistical capacity; mainstream SDGs into development policies and strategies; and strengthen the mobilization of resources, particularly from the private sector for SDG implementation.

The Voluntary National Review (VNR) report of Viet Nam aims to share with the global community the country's initial results in the implementation of Agenda 2030. The preparation of the VNR thus provides an opportunity to raise SDG awareness and mobilize the participation of different stakeholders including the National Assembly, the Government, the UN system in Viet Nam, Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs), international and local NGOs, the business community, and other development partners.

With a high level of political commitment and determination, Viet Nam is confident that it will succeed in implementing the 2030 Agenda for a safer and better life for current and future generations of Viet Nam and for humankind. In our enduring commitment as a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam will continue to contribute positively to global efforts aimed at leaving no one and no country behind. This is our global endeavour for sustainable development.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

As a responsible member country of the United Nations (UN), Viet Nam has been actively participating in the implementation of the national and global sustainable development agendas. In the context of Viet Nam, the SDGs were nationalized in the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for SDGs (SDG NAP) in May 2017. This VNR of Viet Nam aims to share the initial achievements of the 2030 Agenda as well as Viet Nam's experience in SDG implementation with the international community.

### Methodology and process of VNR formulation

The methods to formulate this VNR included: (i) review domestic and international reports, (ii) collect statistics on SDGs, (iii) conduct extensive consultations, mobilize participation and input information from stakeholders' reports and (iv) refer to evaluation and analysis methodologies and tools proposed by the UN during the VNR development process.

The VNR development process was driven by the intensive and extensive involvement of the National Assembly, ministries and related agencies, socio-political organizations such as the Women's Union and Youth Union, socio-professional organizations, UN system in Viet Nam, development partners, local and international NGOs, representatives from the business community, research institutes and scientists. The process also received comments from vulnerable groups (women, ethnic minority people, people with disabilities) on matters related to sustainable development following the principle that no one is left behind.

This process included a number of key steps: i) organizing a kick-off workshop on VNR development, ii) establishing an inter-sectoral working group on SDGs in Viet Nam, iii) receiving reports from ministries and related agencies on specific targets, iv) cooperating with development partners, local and international NGOs to mobilize resources and input information for the VNR, v) drafting the VNR, vi) conducting consultations and finalizing the VNR and vii) preparing the VNR's presentation.

### Awareness of the 2030 Agenda

During the sustainable development process, Viet Nam actively conducted communication activities to raise awareness of stakeholders (ministries, sectors, agencies, local/international/social organizations and the business community) to enhance the sustainable development implementation capacity of stakeholders (especially ministries, agencies and provinces). However, people's awareness of the SDGs remains modest, especially at grassroots level within local communities and amongst young people who are the future of Viet Nam and will play key roles in achieving the SDGs by 2030. Therefore, it is of great importance to raise SDG awareness amongst stakeholders, especially local communities and young people. Viet Nam has taken significant steps to help young people realize their role in realizing the SDGs, with local and international NGOs supporting SDGs at local and community levels. The mass media is also an essential channel to disseminate legislation and policies on sustainable development to raise public consciousness. In recent years, journal, radio and television media have been contributed in communication, awareness raising of sustainable development for all.

## Integration of SDGs in national development policies

Viet Nam has nationalized the global 2030 Agenda in the SDG NAP, with 17 SDGs and 115 specific targets that fit national conditions and development priorities. In fact, such sustainable development perspectives are well integrated into the SEDS 2011-2020 and SEDP 2016-2020. Many SDGs also being integrated into the national development policy system, including laws, socio-economic development strategies and plans as well as action plans of ministries, agencies and provinces. SDGs will be integrated in the future SEDS 2021-2030 and SEDP 2021-2025 as well as in Viet Nam's next medium-term investment and annual SEDPs.

## Institution and arrangements to implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in Viet Nam

The National Council on Sustainable Development was established in 2005 and is responsible for providing the GOVN and Prime Minister with advice on implementing SDGs in Viet Nam. The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) is the lead agency to implement the 2030 Agenda and NAP. The Planning-Finance Departments of other ministries and related agencies and provincial Departments of Planning and Investment (DPI) are focal agencies to implement the 2030 Agenda. Some ministries, related agencies and provinces have also established steering committees, sustainable development offices or/and supporting units on sustainable development.

The National Assembly, Viet Nam Fatherland Front and social organizations will play an important role in monitoring implementation during the SDG implementation process.

The inter-sectoral working group on SDGs in Viet Nam has also been formulated to strengthen coordination between ministries, related agencies and organizations in implementing the NAP.

In addition, the VBCSD, led by the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), plays an important role in involving the business community in SDG implementation.

The UN SDG Technical Working Group was formed to cooperate with the GOVN in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the network of local and international NGOs, socio-political and socio-professional organizations as well as and Association of Persons with Disabilities have conducted activities to implement SDGs and made direct contributions to the VNR.

## Achievement of SDGs in Viet Nam

**SDG 1:** Poverty reduction policies in Viet Nam are relatively comprehensive in content and supported targets. The National Target Programme (NTP) on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (2016-2020) and NTP on New Rural Development (2010-2020) are major policies related to SDG 1. Viet Nam has realized MDG 1 on eliminating extreme poverty and hunger. Based on the international income poverty line, the national poverty rate was considerably reduced from 49.2 per-cent in 1992 to 14.8 per-cent in 2008 and just 2.8 per-cent in 2014. The multi-dimensional poverty rate also reduced from 9.2 per-cent in 2016 to less than 7 per-cent in 2017. However, based on multi-dimensional poverty criteria, the poverty rate for ethnic minority groups remains relatively high. Social security policies have been implemented nationwide and achieved positive results. By the end of December 2017, more than 13.9 million people had social insurance; by the end of 2015, 100 per-cent of the poor and social protection beneficiaries were provided free insurance cards, and about 81 per-cent of near-poor people had health insurance. The access to basic social services such as electricity, hygienic water has been on a rising trend. Monthly social support is now provided for the social protection beneficiaries in almost 60 provinces/cities.

**SDG 2:** Some policies related to SDG 2 include Resolution 80/NQ-CP on sustainable poverty reduction, the Plan of Restructuring the Agricultural Sector towards Improving Added Value and Sustainable Development, National Nutrition Strategy for 2011-2012 and Vision to 2030. In 2017, the number of households facing food shortages reduced by 31.7 per-cent compared to 2016 thanks to GOVN efforts to implement relief actions and social security policies. Under-five malnutrition (low weight for age) was reduced from 14.1 per-cent in 2015 to 13.1 per-cent in 2017. However, the nutritional status disparity among social groups and geographical areas remains a constraint against the target of reducing all types of child malnutrition in the future. Labour productivity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries is trending up. In 2005-2016, labour productivity jumped 4.5-fold, from VND 7.5 million/person in 2005 to VND 32.9 million/person in 2016.

**SDG 3:** To achieve SDG 3, a number of key policies have been rolled out, including the Law on Social Insurance, Law on Medical Examination and Treatment, National Strategy to Protect, Care, and Improve Public Health in 2011-2020 and Vision to 2030. With great efforts to improve maternal health care services, Viet Nam achieved MDG 5 with a 75 per-cent reduction in the maternal mortality rate in 2015 compared to 1990. However, Viet Nam may not realize the national target of minimized child mortality rate by 2030. National statistics on new cases of HIV/AIDS and related deaths have declined in recent years. Regarding the National Tuberculosis Control Programme, Viet Nam has made great strides in controlling tuberculosis, with a reduced number of new cases (375 cases per 100,000 people in 2000 to 187 cases per 100,000 people in 2015). Some 73 per-cent of Viet Nam's population has access to essential health services, health insurance coverage was as high as 86.4 per-cent in 2017. Positive changes in the traffic safety have been seen. To the end of 2017, the number of traffic accidents had declined by 7 per-cent as compared to 2016. Although Viet Nam has attained numerous targets regarding health indicators in recent years, the country also faces a number of challenges.

**SDG 4:** Education is defined as the top national priority, with 20 per-cent of government budget dedicated to education and training. Content of SDG 4 is reflected in the Law on Education, Education Development Strategy (2011-2020) and Vocational Training Development Strategy (2011-2020). Viet Nam enjoys widespread education coverage, with 92 per-cent of 3-5 year old children going to kindergarten, 99 per-cent of primary school aged children enrolled in school and 99.7 per-cent of children completing primary education during the 2016-2017 school year. The literacy rate of children aged 15 or over was 95 per-cent in 2016. However, many children from poor households, remote areas and ethnic minority groups still struggle to access quality and inclusive education. The building of a learning environment that is safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective is a big challenge for Viet Nam. The percentage of trained labourers increases annually, just 10.3 per-cent in 2000 but double in 2016. In 2017, 2,690,000 persons received vocational training, including 600,000 rural labourers. High-quality vocational training establishments have been founded. Annually, more than 10,000 trainees benefit from advanced training programmes. Nonetheless, the gender gap is getting wider in access to vocational training for some ethnic minority groups. Therefore, there must be appropriate policies and measures to fill this gender gap in training.

**SDG 5:** Viet Nam is determined to implement its commitments on gender equality. The principle of gender equality is mentioned in the Constitution and important laws such as the Law on Gender Equality, Law on Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and People's Councils, and Law on Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. Gender equality in Viet Nam has gradually become a cross-cutting issue in all political, economic, cultural and social sectors and obtained remarkable achievements, such as women accounting for 26.7 per-cent of deputies in the National Assembly (term 2016-2021) in 2017 and taking key leadership roles in 12 out of 30 ministries and related agencies. There is an increasing trend in female-owned enterprises, at present 31.6 per-cent of enterprises are female-owned. However, women still represent a lower percentage of leadership roles than targeted in the



National Strategy on Gender Equality in 2011-2020. Despite great efforts to eliminate early marriage and all forms of gender-based violence, the former is still seen in rural, mountainous and remote areas heavily populated by ethnic minority people. Women (72.9 per-cent) participating in the workforce in Viet Nam remains lower than men (83.0 per-cent) and a gender gap remains in terms of salary. Women must do the vast majority of unpaid housework.

**SDG 6:** The Law on Water Resources and National Strategy on Water Resources are two important policies to implement SDG 6. The NTP on New Rural Development (2016-2020) is especially focussed on meeting the needs of the poor, ethnic minorities and those living in remote areas. The number of households accessing clean water rises annually, hitting 93.4 per-cent in 2016. To June 2017, 84.5 per-cent of urban residents were supplied water through concentrated water supply systems. In 2017, 41 concentrated waste water treatment plants were operated with total design capacity of 950,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day-night and 12 per-cent of waste water was collected for treatment. Viet Nam has shifted from mono-sectoral management to integrated water resource management approach with establishment of four river basin organizations (Red-Thai Binh, North-Central Region, South-Central Region, Dong Nai) and effective implementation of cooperation activities with member countries of the Mekong River Commission. Eight wetlands in Viet Nam have been designated as Ramsar Sites. Water pollution remains a big challenge for Viet Nam.

**SDG 7:** The main content of SDG 7 is expressed in the Law on Electricity, Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy and National Strategy for Energy Development until 2020 and Vision to 2050. As of 2016, more than 99 per-cent of households could access electricity. According to the World Bank's 2017 Competitiveness Assessment indicators, access to electricity in Viet Nam ranked at 78.69 out of 100, meaning an increase on 32 grades compared to 2016 to rank 64th out of 190 countries. Viet Nam could reach the goal of ensuring access to affordable energy sources for all citizens by 2030. Although it has started policies towards sustainable and efficient use of energy, Viet Nam still lags behind many countries regarding efficient energy use and non-hydropower renewable energy exploitation. The ratio of renewable energy to the final energy consumption structure is currently very low at 0.4 per-cent. To date, nearly 2 per-cent of the total households in mountainous and remote areas, have no access to electricity, creating difficulties to reach the goal of universal access to electricity by 2030.

**SDG 8:** The Labour Code, Law on Employment, Law on Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, the Overall Plan for Economic Restructuring associated with the transformation of the growth model towards improved quality, efficiency and competitiveness capacity during 2013-2020, Strategy on Green Growth 2011-2020 and Vision to 2050, and National Programme on Industrial Promotion until 2020 are important policies related to SDG 8. Regarding SDG 8.1 on sustaining annual GDP growth rate of 5-6 per-cent, Viet Nam exceeded this target in 2015-2017. In 2017, jobs were created for about 1,641,000 labourers, a rise of 1.5 per-cent compared to 2016. Despite an increase in the number of jobs generated in the national economy, these increases have slowed in recent years. The unemployment rate has remained at more than 2 per-cent recently, including urban unemployment of more than 3 per-cent. By the end of 2016, about 17,000 persons with disabilities were supported to have vocational training and jobs. Although the GOVN has taken a range of measures to promote job creation, growth has not been stable and not met SEDS/SEDPs targets. Overall, the job market is characterized by many shorter-term positions which fail to generate productivity and incomes. Payment gaps between men and women are still prominent, while the productivity of various sectors and fields is limited and held back by use of out-of-date production technologies.

**SDG 9:** SDG 9 is reflected in a range of policies, such as Resolution 13-NQ/TW on Building Synchronous Infrastructure Systems to turn Viet Nam into a modern industrial country by 2020 and the Industrial Development Strategy until 2025 and vision to 2030. Viet Nam's infrastructure receives priority



investment, up to 20 per-cent of total national spending annually. Transport infrastructure, including roads, railways, airports and sea-river ports have been destinations for significant investment with the total number of passengers in 2011-2015 raising by 9.6 per-cent/year. In the first nine months of 2017, 1,066.17 million tonnes of goods and 3,012.96 million passengers were transported, increases of 10.4 per-cent and 11.1 per-cent, respectively against the same period in 2016. However, infrastructure is lagging behind the country's rapid rate of socio-economic development and remains fragmented and low quality. In the arena of industrialization, significant steps have been made, with manufacturing contributing 13.7 per-cent to GDP in 2015 and 15.3 per-cent in 2017. Progress has also been made to formulate a policy framework to realize green banks and green financial products. To December 2017, 28.35 per-cent of households and 54.19 per-cent of the population had access and used the internet, respectively. Spending on science and technology is still limited, accounting for less than 1 per-cent of State budget spending.

**SDG 10:** Viet Nam's Constitution 2013 regulates that "All people are equal before law. No one is subject to discriminatory treatment in political, civil, economic, cultural or social life". As such, the country is increasingly focussing on addressing inequality in society and this is reflected in numerous policies on education, health, access to credit, housing, legal aid, business development, science and technology, ethnic minorities, vocational training and employment. The expenditure-based poverty rate of 40 per-cent of the population with the lowest income was reduced by 6.8 per-cent annually during 1993-2014. The GOVN has made progress in reducing the income inequality, with GINI of 0.43 in 2016. The GOVN boosted access to public services, especially for the poor and vulnerable. So far, monthly social aid and free health insurance cards have been provided to 2,783,474 social protection beneficiaries nationwide, including 30,292 orphans, abandoned children and children without nurturing care, 1,524,192 elderly people, 1,126,126 persons with disabilities, 5,006 people with HIV/AIDS from poor households and 97,858 single-parent poor households. However, income inequality has tended to increase and the risk of increasing inequality in accessing services, especially those related to economic, cultural and social rights, exist between geographical areas, communities and resident groups. Viet Nam has made active contribution to raising the voice of developing countries in the regional and global mechanisms. Its position has been enhanced at multilateral institutions/fora, shown by the high number of votes for Viet Nam into important UN bodies and agencies.

**SDG 11:** The Law on Housing, National Strategy on Housing Development until 2020 and Vision to 2030, Law on Urban Planning and NTP on New Rural Development (2010-2020) are important policies related to SDG 11. The national floor area per person increased from 16.7m<sup>2</sup> in 2009 to 23.4m<sup>2</sup> in 2017. However, safe and affordable dwellings remain difficult for poor and near-poor households as prices are too high compared to incomes despite GOVN support policies. Transport systems have improved recently. Some 65 per-cent of transport infrastructure is at airports, 30 per-cent bus stations and 70 per-cent bus shelters in cities to enable persons with disabilities to access and use. All buses have priority seats. Rural infrastructure has been enhanced, some 99 per-cent of communes have roads to centres, connections to the national electric grid, primary schools, children's schools and health clinics and irrigation systems have improved. However, land for urban transport (especially in big cities) has not met national standards. Generally, urban areas have not been planned in a comprehensive and sustainable way. The capacity of participatory residence planning and management remains weak. Viet Nam is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters and climate change, while effective and timely response capacity remains limited.

**SDG 12:** The Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy, National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011-2020), National Strategy on Green Growth (2022-2020) and Vision to 2050 and Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production until 2020 are key policies related to SDG 12. The latter strategy has been implemented nationwide, attracting the participation of more than 9,000 enterprises in mining,

steel manufacturing, food and beverage, chemicals, construction and other processing industries. Viet Nam has started to use “green” and energy saving labels for electric and electronic products, and is applying sustainable public procurement practices in accordance with relevant green economy standards. The Viet Nam Sustainability Index (VNSI) was introduced by Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange in July 2017 to evaluate the sustainability performance of 20 companies listed on the stock market. Some companies (big or multi-national ones) have implemented sustainability practices and integrated sustainability information in periodic reports. To orient consumption towards sustainability, Viet Nam has applied economic tools such as natural resource taxes on mineral mining and water resources, an environmental protection tax and environmental protection fees on waste water. However, sustainable consumption has been paid little attention. Sustainable consumption activities have been limited, with mainly awareness raising activities, which remain fragmented with small-scale impacts.

**SDG 13:** Viet Nam is one of the world’s most affected countries by climate change. In response to the significant threat climate change poses to Viet Nam, the GOVN ratified the Convention Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The content of SDG 13 is mentioned in the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation until 2020, National Strategy on Climate Change, National Strategy on Green Growth in 2011-2020 and Vision to 2050 and related action plans. Institutional capacity has been enhanced through establishment of the National Committee on Climate Change. Technical infrastructure, observation systems and forecasting technology in the meteo-hydrological sector have been modernized, while the GOVN has conducted a considerable amount of work to develop climate change scenarios in different regions. The extensive and intensive integration of response requirements in socio-economic development plans has been stipulated by the Law on Environmental Protection. Resources have been effectively mobilized and utilized for climate change response and mitigation. However, response activities face difficulties and challenges, including limited inter-regional linkages, insufficient participation of the private sector, inadequate legal frameworks and lack of budget.

**SDG 14:** To date, numerous policies related to SDG 14 have been improved and finalized, such as the Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Vietnamese Sea, Law on Natural Resources and Environment of Sea and Islands, Law on Fisheries, Strategy for Fisheries Development, Strategy for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Natural Resources and Protection of Marine Environment, and National Strategy on Bio-diversity until 2020 and Vision to 2030. The Law on Fisheries (2017) includes new clauses to regulate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The investigation, study and evaluation of bio-diversity in the sea and islands of Viet Nam have been paid special attention. However, mangrove eco-systems have seriously degraded with 67 per-cent lost as compared to 1943. Therefore, it will be challenging for Viet Nam to reach SDG 14.2 by 2030. While the country has established 10 marine reserves, the slow pace of establishment and operation of new maritime reserves is a big challenge to fulfil SDG 14.5. More than 70 per-cent of vessels and boats in Viet Nam operate inshore, heightening fishing pressures and imbalances between fishing capacity and aquatic resources.

**SDG 15:** Numerous policies related to SDG 15 have been issued, including Law on Forest Protection and Development, Law on Bio-diversity, Law on Forestry and related strategies. The formulation of master plans is considered an important tool to conserve bio-diversity, with 18 provinces having formulated and approved provincial master plans for bio-diversity conservation. Exploitation of natural forest is managed more closely, closing natural forests nationwide by 2017 and about 225,000 hectares of concentrated forests are planted annually. Therefore, forest cover has been quickly increased to 41.5 per-cent in 2017. Viet Nam has successfully implemented the policy on payment for forest environmental services. On average, more than VND 1,200 billion is collected each year, helping to pay for more than

five million hectares of forests. In 2017, more than VND 1,675.581 billion was collected, meeting 101.5 per-cent of the plan for 2017 and equal to 130 per-cent of revenue in 2016. Viet Nam has implemented the integration of desertification prevention into climate change responses, natural disaster mitigation and has carried out different activities to conserve endangered, precious and rare species. Viet Nam has developed a database on genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and formulated guidelines for access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. However, insufficient coordination and consensus remains in assigning State management responsibilities for bio-diversity. Finance for bio-diversity conservation is too limited to meet State management objectives. The exploitation, trading and consumption of endangered wild animals and plants have not been controlled. The population of wild species continues to decline, with regulations to combat alien invasive organisms yet to be formulated.

**SDG 16:** Viet Nam has made great efforts to ensure equal access to justice for all its citizens. Major judiciary and legislative reforms (Criminal Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Law on Enforcement of Custody and Temporary Detention, Law on Anti-Corruption, Law on Access to Information, Law on Religion and Folk Beliefs) have been implemented to allow people to access their human rights. Between 2011-2016, People's Courts at different levels conducted first-instance trials for 1,193 cases and trials for 1,130 cases of human trafficking. In 2017, Viet Nam established the National Committee for Children and a national telephone hotline for children. Birth registration for under-five children has risen continuously. Between 2007-2016, GOVN legal assistance organizations provided defense support for 51,721 cases for the poor, ethnic minorities and some others who could not hire lawyers. To December 2017, Viet Nam had 849 mass media agencies. Administration reform has been emphasized with effective solutions, creating vigorous transformation of the administrative structure from central to grassroots levels. Indexes to measure citizen's and organizations' satisfaction levels of public services have been applied, such as Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI). However, numerous challenges remain to build a rule-of-law through State and judiciary reforms.

**SDG 17:** Content of SDG 17 is reflected in the Overall Strategy for International Integration until 2020 and Vision to 2030. The GOVN has made progress in international economic integration. Viet Nam has diplomatic relations with 187 nations; is a member of many regional and global organizations and fora; becomes the hub to link the regional economy to the FTA network with 59 partners. Achievements have also been made in the tax liberalization, through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and international economic cooperation frameworks. On 8 March 2018, Viet Nam officially signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Vietnam has made significant progress in the clearance of goods at international border crossings by 100 per cent processing and customs procedures that have been automated throughout the country through the implementation of the Customs Clearance System electronic. The country has enhanced financial mobilization from other sources, including the private sector through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). To 2016, three PPP projects were finalized, worth USD 667 million. The GOVN has been creating and enabling environment and encouraged all social organizations and people to make contribution to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

### The linkage in SDG implementation in Viet Nam

The 17 SDGs are interactive. The implementation of one SDG will have an influence on another. With the theme "Transformation toward a resilient and sustainable society", in-depth SDGs (6, 7, 11, 12, 15) in HLPF 2018 are particularly interactive. Particularly, SDG 11 on ensuring safe living environment (dwellings) is one of criteria of multi-dimensional poverty and, therefore, related to SDG 1 (poverty elimination). In addition, SDG 11 is also linked to SDGs 8 and 9. SDG target 11.6 on mitigating pollution in urban

environments is related to and has the same target as SDG 12 on ensuring sustainable production and consumption. SDG target 11.8 on economic, social and environmental linkages in development planning work is closely related to SDG target 13.2 on integrating climate change measures into national development policies, strategies, planning schemes and plans. Similarly, SDG target 11.5 on reducing the number of deaths and people affected, and substantially decreasing the direct economic losses caused by natural and other disasters depends much on SDG 13 on responding effectively to climate change and natural disasters. Successful implementation of SDG target 11.2 will make a contribution to achievement of SDG 3 to halve road accidents in 2020 as compared to 2011. The development of large-volume public transport services is also a solution to help people access and use sources of energy in a sustainable way (SDG 7).

## Means of implementation

### *Financial resources*

The majority of funding for medium-term public investment plans (2016-2020) is being channeled towards implementing the SDGs. The amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Viet Nam as a lower middle-income country since 2010 has greatly declined in recent years. FDI into Viet Nam has rapidly increased and remained robust since becoming a full member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Viet Nam is one of the top 10 countries receivers of remittances globally, accounting for 2.5 per-cent total remittances in 2017. Domestic private finance has sharply risen since 2000, a four-time increase to USD 24.2 billion in 2015. Implementation of SDGs will come at a significant cost. In order to successfully achieve the 17 SDGs, Viet Nam must mobilize all resources, especially from enterprises and the private sector, to enhance public finance through improving efficiency in tax systems and policies, public finance and debt management, mobilize FDI and FII, plan the smooth transition to the "ODA graduation" period, including the strengthened use and management of available ODA and mobilization of new assistance for climate change and green growth. Besides such efforts to mobilize resources, it is important to effectively use current resources. Viet Nam must continue efforts to cut public spending, enhance public investment efficiency and strengthen linkages as well as interactions between resources (for example, enhancing public investment in "pulling" private investment, linkages between FDI and domestic private investment). Such efforts will require the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in a national integrated financial framework, illustrated in five-year SEDPs, medium-term public investment programmes and three-year financial plans.

### *Statistical capacity*

Viet Nam is formulating the Roadmap and Indicator System to monitor and evaluate SDGs, expected to be issued in 2018. The country has established a statistical working group, comprised of representatives from ministries, related agencies and led by the MPI's General Statistics Office, to oversee SDG monitoring and evaluation.

The nationalization of SDG indicators shows that many indicators do not have metadata<sup>1</sup>. As such, new types of collection will be required and involve complicated calculation methods and data from non-conventional sources. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation will be a great challenge for Viet Nam.

As Viet Nam's current statistical system and capacity have not yet met SDG statistical requirements, the country must take a number of steps to achieve this objective, including strengthening the capacity

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical data of the statistical indicator include: concept, content, method of calculation, disaggregation, income period and data source.

of statistics staff, especially at local level, mobilizing financial and technical resources to meet demand for regular and long-term data collection for SDGs and build a mechanism/modality to effectively use statistics produced by non-governmental domestic and international agencies.

### *Science and technology*

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in 2017 the Global Innovation Index (GII) ranked Viet Nam 47<sup>th</sup> out of 127 countries, climbing 12 places compared to 2016. Viet Nam must continue to shift from quantity-based growth model (capital and labour) to a quality-based one (productivity is the key element). Viet Nam is now actively changing the way it manages its government, the Government has acted with modern information tools to create a favorable environment for the implementation of new ideas, to promote the creativity of enterprises and people. To successfully implement the SDGs the cooperation, experience sharing and technology transfers from the countries with more advanced science and technology are imperative for Viet Nam.

## **Lessons learnt**

Lesson 1: Strong commitment of the GOVN to sustainable development

Lesson 2: Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing SDGs.

Lesson 3: Combined promotion of domestic potential and international cooperation.

## **Difficulties, challenges and next steps**

### ***Difficulties and challenges***

- Viet Nam is one of the world's most affected countries by climate change and sudden natural disasters which will affect the SDG implementation process in the country.
- As a result of intensive and extensive integration, fluctuations in the global economy will have knock-on consequences for Viet Nam. Viet Nam is also facing challenges from environment, society and other non-traditional threats.
- Financial demands to implement the SDGs will remain challenging as the national budget is limited, and ODA is contracting due to Viet Nam's status as a lower middle-income country.
- The inter-sectoral nature of the SDGs will present coordination challenges in terms of policies, ministries and agencies.
- As many SDG indicators do not have metadata, for Viet Nam to monitor and evaluate implementation of 17 SDGs it will need new types of collection, complicated calculation methods, and data from non-conventional sources.

### ***Next steps***

Next steps to implement the 2030 Agenda for Viet Nam are to:

- Raise society's awareness and actions to implement and achieve the SDGs in Viet Nam.
- Involve the whole political system, ministries, agencies, provinces, business community, mass organizations, communities and development partners in implementing SDGs.

- Promote coordination among stakeholders, especially governmental agencies, enterprises, socio-political and socio-professional organizations and international community to implement the SDGs.
- Formulate and issue a system of statistical indicators on sustainable development, enhance information and data collection for monitoring and evaluating SDG achievements of Viet Nam.
- Enhance the mobilization of domestic and foreign financial resources, especially from private sector, to implement SDGs.
- Integrate SDGs into the formulation of annual and five-year SEDPs, strategies, policies and development projections of ministries, sectors, provinces and agencies.
- Strengthen international cooperation to promote technical and financial support and knowledge transfers for SDG implementation.

## Conclusion

Viet Nam's Voluntary National Review aims to share the initial achievements of the 2030 Agenda with the international community as well as the difficulties, challenges and lessons learnt during the SDG implementation. The VNR preparation process was an opportunity to raise awareness and involve all stakeholders, including the National Assembly, GOVN, socio-political and socio-professional organizations, local and international NGOs, business community, UN system in Viet Nam, development partners, research institutes and scientists. This also laid firm foundations for future SDG monitoring and evaluation and mobilization of social resources for SDG implementation in Viet Nam.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

After more than 30 years' reforms, Viet Nam has gained achievements in sustainable development, especially in MDG implementation during 2001-2015. Three (poverty reduction, universal primary education and gender equality) out of eight goals were achieved ahead of schedule. Maternal mortality was reduced by three-fourths and under-five mortality was reduced by two-thirds compared to 1990 and the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and measles was controlled. Experience in achieving the MDGs will provide a solid foundation to tackle the SDGs.

As a member country of the UN, Viet Nam has actively participated in the sustainable development process globally, with a strong commitment to Agenda 21 on sustainable development, MDGs and responses to climate change. At the UN Summit in September 2015, the GOVN pledged to concentrate all necessary resources and involve all ministries, agencies, provinces, organizations, communities and people to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda and all SDGs. SDGs were nationalized in the SDG NAP in May 2017 (hereunder referred to as NAP).

Participation in the VNR's formulation and presentation at HLPF 2018 is one of the important tasks of the NAP. The objective of this review is to assess the results and share experiences with international community about the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in Viet Nam.

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND FORMULATION PROCESS OF VNR

### Methodology to formulate the VNR

Methods used to formulate this review included: (i) reviews of domestic and international reports on sustainable development, (ii) collection of statistics on SDG indicators from formal and informal sources and (iii) wide consultations and inputs from stakeholders. During formulation of this VNR, some related evaluation and analysis methods and tools proposed by the UN were referred to.

### VNR formulation process

The VNR formulation process involved intensive and extensive participation of the National Assembly, ministries and agencies, socio-political organizations (such as Women's Union, Youth Union), socio-professional organizations, UN agencies in Viet Nam, development partners, domestic and international NGOs, representatives from the business community, research institutes and scientists. The process also received comments from vulnerable groups (women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities) on matters related to sustainable development to ensure no one is left behind.

This process included the following major steps:

- Step 1: Organize a kick-off workshop to discuss the process, raise awareness and involve all stakeholders in the formulation process.
- Step 2: Establish an Inter-Sectoral Working Group on SDGs, composed of representatives from ministries, agencies, organizations and stakeholders.
- Step 3: Ministries and agencies report on targets they are responsible for.

- Step 4: Work with development partners, UN agencies in Viet Nam, domestic and international NGOs, socio-political and socio-professional organizations and research institutes to mobilize resources and input information for the VNR.
- Step 5: Draft the VNR.
- Step 6: Conduct consultations through workshops, documents and emails asking for comments. Besides consultations led by MPI, Viet Nam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA) and Women's Union also organized workshops on draft VNR consultations. Comments for the VNR were also provided by UN agencies in Viet Nam, domestic and international NGOs, and development partners such as GIZ.
- Step 7: Finalize the VNR, using comments received.
- Step 8: Prepare a VNR presentation (develop content and format, prepare video, translate and print VNR).

### 3. AWARENESS OF THE 2030 AGENDA: FROM MDGs TO SDGs

As a member of the UN, Viet Nam has been actively participating in the world's sustainable development process through the issuance of the Strategic Orientation for Sustainable Development in Viet Nam (Viet Nam Agenda 21), Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2011-2020, and recently SDG NAP. Viet Nam has signed numerous international conventions related to environmental protection and sustainable development, especially UN conventions like the UNFCCC and CBD.

To follow the achievement of MDGs and implement international commitments as per the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Viet Nam issued the SDG NAP with 17 goals and 115 specific targets<sup>2</sup>, which fit national conditions and development priorities.

During the sustainable development process, Viet Nam has actively conducted communication activities to improve awareness for stakeholders, including ministries, agencies, domestic and international organizations, business community and social organizations to strengthen sustainable development capacity. However, people's awareness of the SDGs remains modest, within local communities and amongst young people<sup>3</sup>, who are the future of the country and will play a key role in achieving the SDGs by 2030. Therefore, it is of great importance to raise awareness of the SDGs amongst stakeholders, especially local communities and young people. Viet Nam has taken significant steps to help young people realize their role in achieving the SDGs. Local and international NGOs in Viet Nam play an important role in realizing SDGs at local and community levels. The mass media is also an essential channel to disseminate legislation and policies on sustainable development to raise public awareness. In recent years, the media and broadcasting in Vietnam has made many contributions in the communication, raising people's awareness on sustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> 115 specific targets of Vietnam reflect 150/169 global targets. The unselected targets are global ones and not suitable at national level, or not suitable to Vietnam's development conditions of Vietnam.

<sup>3</sup> Recently, the first-ever Youth Survey on SDGs has been carried out by UNDP in Vietnam, with more than 7,000 young people from all the 63 provinces/cities (nearly 75 per-cent of respondents are women and 65 per-cent live in urban areas). Notably, almost three fourth of the respondents said that they had never heard about SDGs before. The survey reveals that young people, generally speaking, are interested in SDGs but do not know what to do through their daily activities and how individuals' actions can improve the society.



## 4. SDG INTEGRATION INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Reflecting on the MDGs, Viet Nam achieved three (poverty reduction, universal primary education and gender equality) out of eight goals ahead the schedule. In 2015, maternal mortality rate was reduced by three-fourths and under-five mortality was reduced by two-thirds compared to 1990 and the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and measles was controlled. Viet Nam also met goals on gender equality and woman empowerment.

One of the significant lessons learnt from Viet Nam's MDG success widely recognized by the international community was it selected the right modalities to "nationalize" MDGs and the integration of MDGs into SEDSs and SEDPs at national, provincial and sector levels. Experiences from MDG implementation in Viet Nam also shows that annual and five-year SEDPs are the best mechanisms to link development goals and resources to realize such goals.

These lessons are applicable to SDG implementation in the 2030 Agenda. Viet Nam has nationalized the global 2030 Agenda in the SDG NAP with 17 SDGs and 115 specific targets which fit national conditions and development priorities. One of the tasks in this NAP is "Integrating sustainable development goals during the formulation of annual SEDPs of the country, strategies, policies, master plans of ministries, sectors, localities, agencies. By 2020, Viet Nam's sustainable development goals will have been fully mainstreamed into the SEDS for the 2021-2030 period, the SEDP for the 2021-2025 period and sectoral, local development master plans for the 2021-2030 period".

In fact, the sustainable development perspective is cross-cutting in SEDS 2011-2020 and SEDP 2016-2020. Many SDGs have been integrated into the national development policy system, ranging from laws, strategies, SEDPs to actions of ministries, agencies and provinces. SDGs will be integrated into SEDS 2021-2030, SEDP 2021-2025, and annual SEDPs of Viet Nam in the future.

## 5. INSTITUTIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE 2030 AGENDA AND SDGs IN VIET NAM

The NAP specifies responsibilities of stakeholders, from central to local levels, for implementing the SDGs. The National Sustainable Development Council, established in 2005 and renamed "National Council on Sustainable Development and Competitiveness Enhancement", provides the GoV and Prime Minister with advice on sustainable development in Viet Nam. The MPI is the focal point, takes lead and cooperates with ministries and agencies to organize NAP implementation. Ministers, heads of ministerial-level agencies, heads of governmental agencies, chairpeople of provincial-level people's committees are responsible to the Prime Minister for organizing implementation and results of the NAP and SDGs by 2030.

Planning-Finance Departments of ministries and Planning-Finance of provincial-level DPIs are focal agencies to implement the 2030 Agenda. Some ministries, agencies and provinces have also established steering committees, sustainable development offices and/or supporting units on sustainable development

The National Assembly, Viet Nam Fatherland Front and social organizations play an important role in monitoring the implementation and social criticism during the SDG implementation process. As regulated, MPI shall take the lead and work with ministries, related agencies, provinces and organizations to monitor, supervise and evaluate results of SDG implementation and NAP; prepare annual reports on SDG implementation and submit them to the GoV, National Assembly, Viet Nam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, socio-professional organizations, NGOs and business community actively

participate in the implementation of SDGs and NAP within their authority and assignment specified in the NAP; report their NAP results to MPI for consolidation and submission to the GoV and National Assembly.

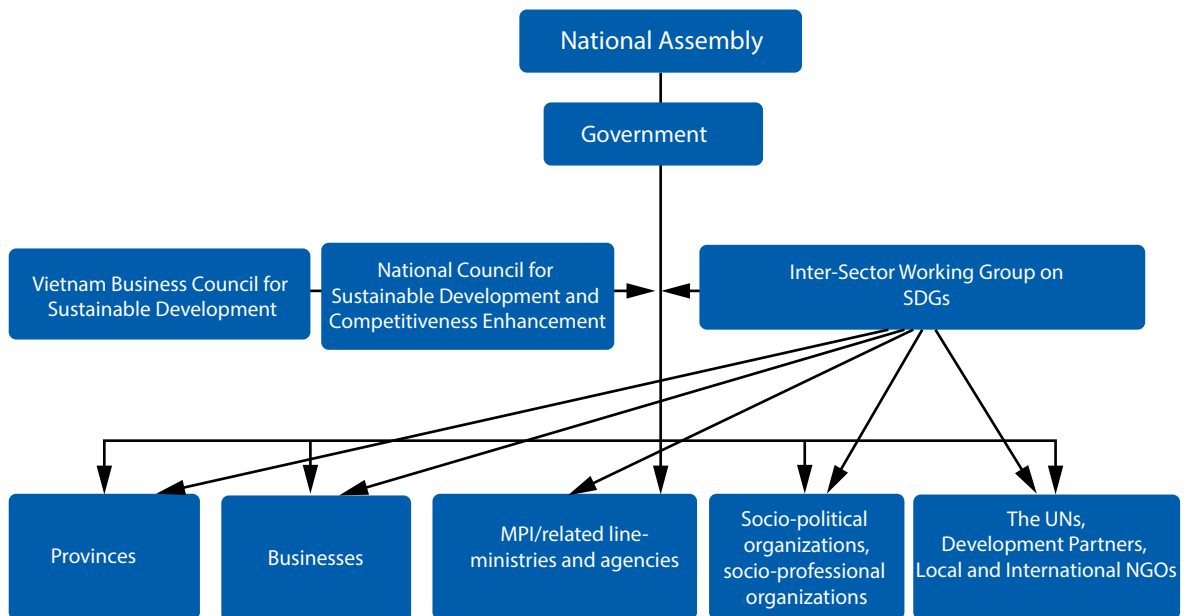
The Inter-Sectoral Working Group on SDGs was founded to enhance coordination among ministries, sectors, agencies and organizations to implement the NAP and SDGs of Viet Nam.

VBCSD is supervised by the VCCI and plays an important role in engaging the business community in implementing the SDGs. It orients, attracts and links the business community to exchange and scale-up good practices and business models towards sustainable development. This emphasizes the active role of enterprises in realizing the 17 SDGs in Viet Nam and their commitment to build a better world through better business.

The UN SDG Technical Working Group was established to cooperate with the GOVN in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the networks of local and international NGOs, of social organizations like the Women's Union and Youth Union as well as the Association of Persons with Disabilities have conducted activities to implement SDGs and made direct contributions to the VNR.

To enhance coordination and cooperation among stakeholders in SDG implementation, numerous forums and dialogues are organized annually, notably the National Conference on Sustainable Development, Business Forum on Sustainable Development and Viet Nam Development Partnership Forum (VDPF)<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 1. Institutional arrangement for SDG implementation in Viet Nam**



<sup>4</sup> VDPF is a high-level policy dialogue forum between the GOVN and Development Partners on critical policies in which are mutually interested to promote socio-economic development in a comprehensive way and improve life quality for Vietnamese people.

## 6. RESULTS OF SDGs IMPLEMENTATION IN VIET NAM

The essential elements of the 17 SDGs in Viet Nam have been evaluated and reviewed, using the following steps: (1) Review of policies related to the SDG; (2) Major results of the SDG; (3) Illustrative examples of SDG implementation.

### 6.1. SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

#### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 1**

The system of poverty reduction policies in Viet Nam is relatively comprehensive in terms of content and supported targets. The NTP on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPP) in 2016-2020 has innovative mechanisms to organize its implementation and is more specific on the integration of gender and vulnerable groups than previous programs. In addition, the 2011-2020 Development Strategy of the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policies outlines the GOVN's efforts in defining solutions in order to develop more effective support service products for poor and near-poor households and the beneficiaries of support policies. Furthermore, NTP-SPP 2010-2020 has also made a considerable contribution to sustainable poverty reduction in Viet Nam.

For ethnic minority groups, the GOVN has issued the "Decision approving a number of MDG indicators for ethnic minorities associated with the SDGs after 2015". According to this Decision, in 2015-2025, the percentage of poor ethnic minority households will be reduced by 3-4 per-cent/year (double the national target); under-five malnutrition (low weight for age) will decline to under 14 per-cent by 2020 and under 8 per-cent by 2025.

Although the poverty reduction policy system is relatively comprehensive to support economic development and ensure social security for the poor, the rate and coverage of support is not high and the content of support, as well as beneficiary targets, remain fragmented in a range of documents and there are many contact points guiding implementation.

#### **(2) Major results of SDG 1**

Viet Nam's impressive achievements Viet Nam in poverty reduction can be attributed to the combination of various important factors: (i) an inclusive growth model, which enables many people to participate in and benefit from growth; (ii) a good system of social security policies, e.g., social insurance, health insurance, and social support; (iii) accessible and affordable public services such as education and health; and (iv) relatively equal access to assets, especially land.

Viet Nam has achieved the MDG on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. The income poverty rate sharply reduced from 58 per-cent in 1993 to less than 5 per-cent in 2015<sup>5</sup>, a remarkable achievement. Based on the international income poverty line<sup>6</sup>, the national poverty rate reduced considerably from 49.2 per-cent in 1992 to 14.8 per-cent in 2008 and 2.8 per-cent in 2014 (World Bank<sup>7</sup>). The multi-dimensional poverty rate also decreased from 9.9 per-cent in 2015 to 9.2 per-cent in 2016 and less than 7 per-cent in 2017, while improving the access of the poor to basic social services: access to health insurance and telecommunication use rose by 11.65 per-cent and 5.21 per-cent<sup>8</sup> respectively. Although different methods are used to measure poverty, their results are relatively consistent, showing a reduction every year. Viet

5 The national poverty line is approved by the Prime Minister for each period: in 2011-2015, 400,000 VND/person/month for rural poor households, and 500,000,000 VND/person/month for urban poor households (Decision 09/2011/QD-TTg issued on 30 January 2011).

6 International income poverty line is 1.9 USD/day, using purchase power of 2011.

7 World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=poverty-and-equity#>.

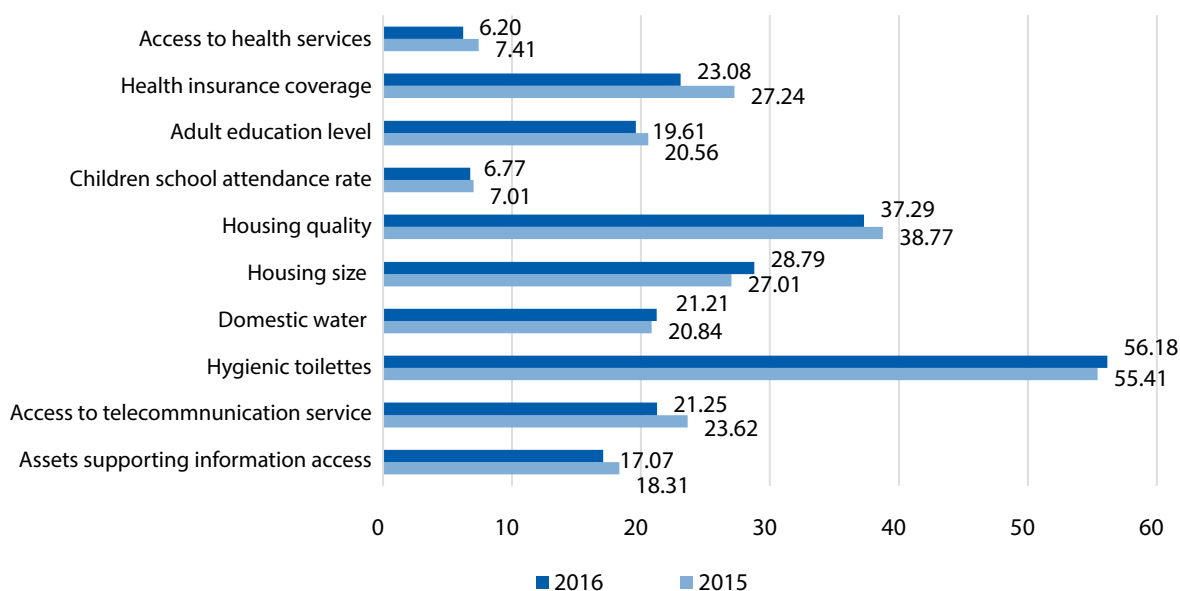
8 MOLISA.

Nam's success in poverty reduction has been recognized by the international community, and Viet Nam has been assessed by the UN as one of the countries with the most impressive progress on the MDGs.

The GOVN has introduced numerous measures to sustainably reduce poverty for ethnic minority people and bridge the gaps between ethnic minorities and between geographical regions. The rate of ethnic minority poverty reduction from 2014-2016 was the highest it has been in two decades (poverty was reduced by 13 per-cent, from 57.8 per-cent in 2014 to 44.6 per-cent in 2016).

The comparison of the multi-dimensional poverty line and the income poverty line shows a difference. In 2016, the national income poverty rate was 5.8 per-cent while the multi-dimensional poverty rate was 9.2 per-cent<sup>9</sup>. In addition, the multi-dimensional poverty rate in rural areas (11.8 per-cent), the Northern mountainous region (23 per-cent) and the Central Highlands (18.5 per-cent) was very different from the national poverty line in 2016. This reveals that when the dimensions of poverty include access to all basic social services, the non-income dimensions need more improvement. According to a survey conducted by CEMA in 2015<sup>10</sup>, the multi-dimensional poverty rate among ethnic minorities was 35.7 per-cent, 3.5 times higher than the national multi-dimensional poverty rate (9.8 per-cent)<sup>11</sup>. This results in a risk that girls get married early, have difficulty accessing educational opportunities, have a greater burden of housework, and have fewer livelihood options<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, more attention should be paid to supporting vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, especially women and girls, to escape from poverty in a sustainable manner and, at the same time, reduce the poverty disparity between different regions of the country.

**Figure 2. Multi-Dimensional Poverty Deprivations at National Level (per-cent)**



Source: MOLISA, National Office for Poverty Reduction

9 In 2016, the multi-dimensional poverty line was: in rural areas, income of 700,000 VND/person/month or lower, or income of more than 700,000 -1,000,000 VND/person/month but lack of 3 or more indicators measuring the level of deprivation of access to basic social services; in urban areas, income of 900,000 VND/person/month or lower, income of more than 900,000 -1,300,000 VND/person/month but lack of 3 or more indicators measuring the level of deprivation of access to basic social services.

10 CEMA, "Survey on the socio-economic situation of 53 ethnic minorities in 2015", <http://www.cema.gov.vn/ket-qua-dieu-tra-thuc-trang-kt-xh-53-dan-toc-thieu-so-nam-2015.htm>.

11 MOLISA, "National Survey on Poor and Near Poor Households 2015", [http://giamngheo.molisa.gov.vn/doc/Q per-centC4 per-cent90 per-cent201095 per-cent20per-cent20K per-centC3 per-centAA per-centCC per-cent81t per-cent20qua per-centCC per-cent89 per-cent20 per-centC4 per-cent91i per-centC3 per-centAA per-centCC per-cent80u per-cent20tra per-cent20HN, per-cent20HCN.PDF](http://giamngheo.molisa.gov.vn/doc/Q%20per-centC4%20per-cent90%20per-cent201095%20per-cent20K%20per-centC3%20per-centAA%20per-centCC%20per-cent81t%20qua%20per-centCC%20per-cent89%20per-cent20%20per-centC4%20per-cent91i%20per-centC3%20per-centAA%20per-centCC%20per-cent80u%20per-cent20tra%20per-cent20HN,%20per-cent20HCN.PDF).

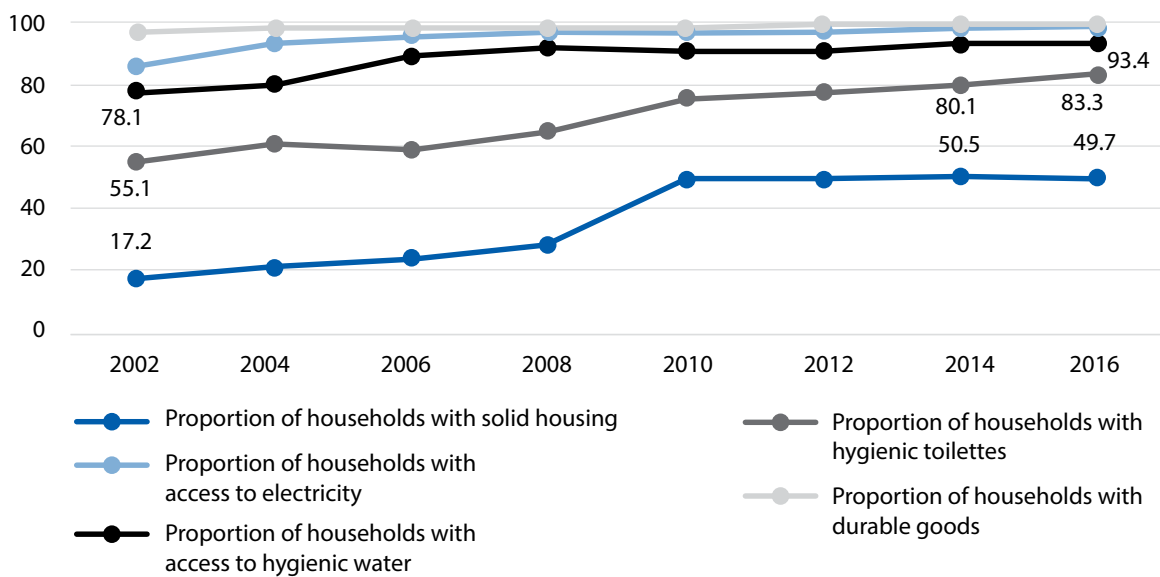
12 GSO and UNICEF, 2015. Viet Nam Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014.

Social security policies have been implemented nationwide and achieved some positive results. With the issuance of the Law on Social Insurance 2006 and its revision in 2014, the coverage of social insurance has been expanding. As at the end of December 2017, more than 13.9 million people had social insurance (accounting for 29 per-cent of labour force); while 11.7 million people had unemployment insurance (accounting for 24.4 per-cent of labour force).

According to a report by Viet Nam Social Insurance, 100 per-cent of poor people and beneficiaries of social support policies had been provided with free health insurance cards, while 81 per-cent of near-poor people had health insurance, as at the end of 2015. However, this indicator has not been regularly measured to assess the progress in delivering access to basic services as mentioned in the SDG.

Access to basic social services (Figure 2) like electricity, and clean water has been on a rising trend, meaning that the living standards of households improved between 2002 and 2016. In particular, housing conditions have remarkably improved, with a threefold increase in households with concrete houses. Policies on housing support for the poor have been well implemented. As at March 2018, more than 570,000 poor households in rural areas had been provided with housing support.

**Figure 3. Access to basic living conditions (per-cent)**



Source: GSO, VHLSS 2002-2014, estimate 2016

Monthly social support for beneficiaries of social protection has been provided in nearly 60 provinces/cities. A grassroots network of social support has been planned and developed nationwide, with 418 social support establishments, including 195 public establishments and 223 non-public establishments (33 elderly care centres, 74 establishments taking care of persons with disabilities, 144 establishments taking care of children, 102 combined establishments, 31 establishments taking care of persons with mental illness, and 34 social centres)<sup>13</sup>. There are specific provisions on support, allowances for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Social support is provided monthly for 896,644 persons with serious and very serious disabilities<sup>14</sup>.

13 MOLISA.

14 Social assistance report 2016, MOLISA.

**Box 1. Poverty Reduction in Lao Cai**

A good example of poverty reduction is the implementation of Scheme No. 9 on sustainable poverty reduction in Lao Cai province 2016-2020, which targets “reduction of poor households in the province by 4-5 per-cent per year, with less than 1 per-cent relapsing into poverty, and reduction of more than 2,000 near-poor households/year”.

Since 2016, Lao Cai has invested in socio-economic development programs and projects to create more jobs and focus on vocational training. In addition, the province has also promoted high-tech agriculture. Furthermore, five basic social services of the multi-dimensional poverty (education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and access to information) have been supported with a specific roadmap and indicators.

At the end of 2017, Lao Cai had more than 36,000 poor households, accounting for almost 22 per-cent. In other words, after two years of the scheme’s implementation, the average poverty reduction rate was nearly 6 per-cent, higher than the scheme target. Furthermore, 4 out of 5 indicators (education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and access to information) were basically achieved, although they were difficult indicators.

*Source: Lao Cai Radio and Television, <http://laocaitv.vn/chinh-tri-xa-hoi/giam-ngheo-ben-vung-thanh-tuu-va-thach-thuc>*

## 6.2. SDG 2: End hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agricultural development

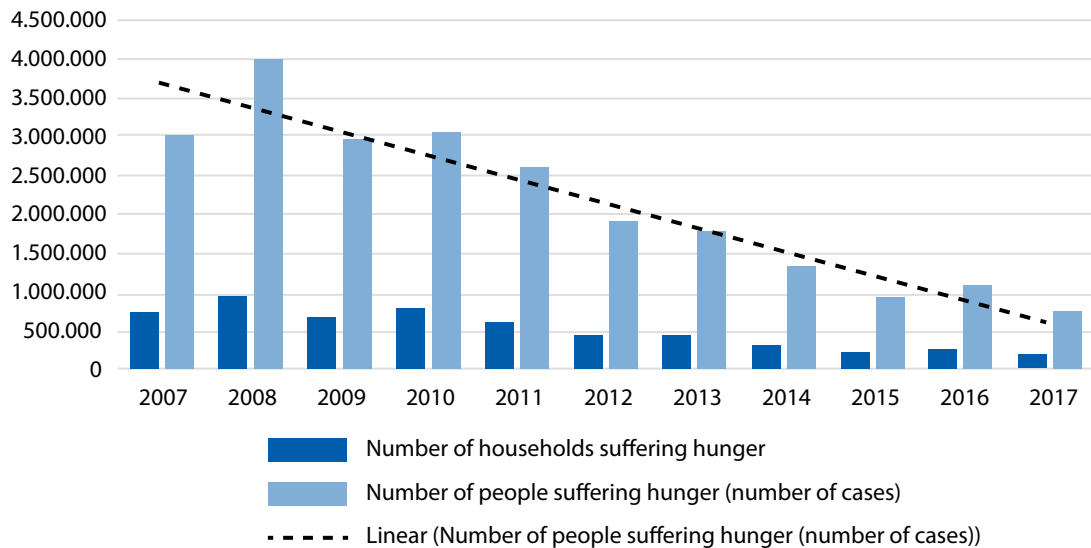
### (1) Review of policies related to SDG 2

Viet Nam has issued several policies related to SDG 2: Resolution 80/NQ-CP on sustainable poverty reduction, specifying targets for 2011-2020; Decision 899/QD-TTg approving the project “Agricultural restructuring towards improving added value and sustainable development”; the scheme on development of hi-tech agriculture until 2020 to enhance application of science, technology and technical advances to production, develop clean, resilient and climate-smart agriculture; and the National Nutrition Strategy 2011-2020 with a vision to 2030, focusing on improving nutrition for mothers and children. The NTP on New Rural Development in 2016-2020 has also made a contribution to the achievement of SDG 2.

The policies related to target 2.1 mention children but they will have to further integrate and concentrate on children, elderly people, the poor and gender equality.

### (2) Major results of SDG 2

Viet Nam achieved comprehensive reduction of hunger nationwide during the MDG implementation period. As at 2015, the number of households experiencing hunger was reduced by three times compared to 2007, to 227,500, and more than 2 million people escaped hunger. In 2016, the number of households experiencing hunger rose by more than 16.7 per-cent due to natural disasters, serious drought and salt water intrusion in some regions. However, in 2017, this figure declined by 31.7 per-cent compared to the previous year thanks to the great efforts of the GOVN in implementing policies and providing relief, as well as social security activities. This has made a considerable contribution to the goal of ending hunger in SDG 2.

**Figure 4. Number of households and people suffering hunger**

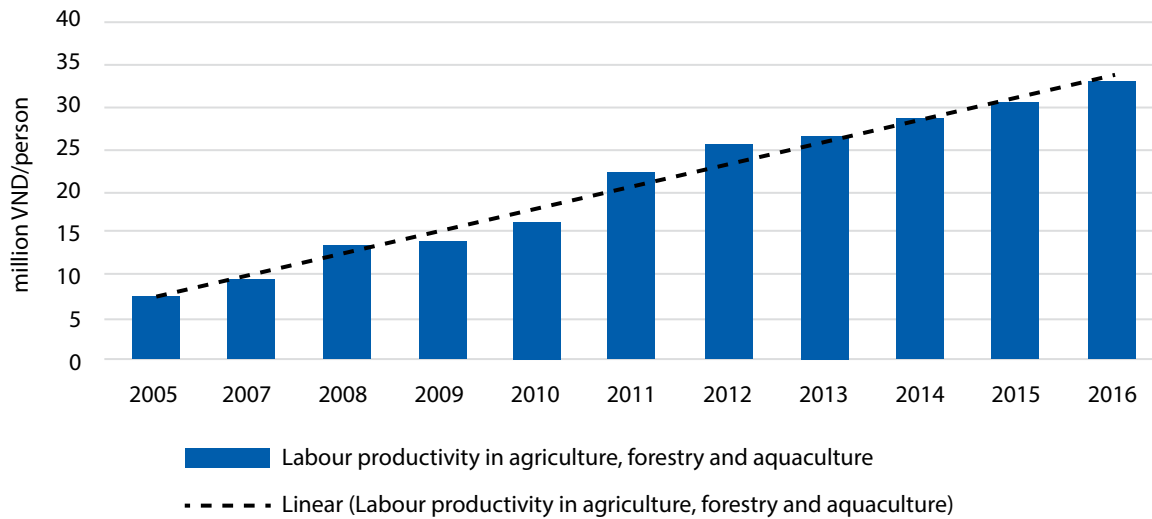
Source: GSO

The rate of under-five malnutrition has improved, especially in 2010-2016, and this can be viewed as an optimistic signal of poverty reduction. The under-five malnutrition rate (stunting) in Viet Nam was 24.6 per-cent and 24.5 per-cent in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The under-five malnutrition rate (underweight) was reduced from 14.1 per-cent in 2015 to 13.9 per-cent in 2016 and 13.1 per-cent in 2017<sup>15</sup>. However, slow reduction of the under-five malnutrition rate has been recorded in the whole nation, and particularly in some regions like Northern mountainous region, North Central Region, South Central Region and Central Highlands. In such regions, the income poverty rate and multi-dimensional poverty rates are higher than in the other regions. In other words, the nutrition gap among different geographical regions will possibly become a challenge for Viet Nam to reach the target of ending all forms of child malnutrition in the near future.

For agricultural production, to provide sufficient food, the GOVN has implemented numerous projects and programs, such as “the Plan for restructuring the agricultural sector towards improving added value and sustainable development”, which specifies 13 provincial projects and plans for agricultural restructuring. After four years’ implementation, income and living conditions in rural areas have been improved, with an increase of annual per capita income from VND 18.9 million in 2012 to around VND 29.2 million in 2016. The labour productivity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries has increased every year. From 2005 to 2016, the labour productivity rose as much as 4.5 times, from 7.5 million VND per person (in 2005) to 32.9 million VND per person (in 2016).

<sup>15</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, Statistics on child nutrition status over years.



**Figure 5. Social labour productivity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (million VND/person)**

Source: GSO

Viet Nam is one of the countries most impacted by climate change. Natural disasters, drought, salt water intrusion and environmental pollution vary in a complex way, affecting sustainable agricultural production. In particular, natural disasters often cause famine, which prevents the GOVN from a timely and quick response. In addition, the growing population and rapid rural-urban migration are creating significant pressures on the health system. This will possibly affect progress in targets on ending hunger and improving nutrition.

### Box 2. Climate smart agriculture activities

Being Viet Nam's most important agricultural region, the Mekong delta accounts for 55 per-cent of national rice production and 70 per-cent of aquaculture production. However, its enormous achievements over the past century are highly vulnerable with the increasing incidence of natural disasters and climate change uncertainty. Many cultivation areas are degraded, leading to reduced production. Additionally, a large proportion of agricultural production growth has been traded off by the increasing environmental cost from overuse of production inputs such as intensive land use, inefficient water use, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which further contribute to ecosystem degradation.

MARD and its respective provincial departments have introduced 61 climate smart rice production and sustainable shrimp farming models, which benefit around 58,000 people. For example, the Alternate Wetting and Drying technique in rice production helps farming households reduce water and pesticides by 30 per-cent, but increase their income by 40 per-cent. This technique has been piloted on 30 ha and scaled up to around 35,000 ha already and continues to grow.

Source: Integrated Coastal Management Programme (ICMP), MARD

## 6.3. SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

### (1) Review of policies related to SDG 3

Some current laws relating to the implementation of SDG 3 are the Law on Health Insurance, the Law on Medical Examination and Treatment, the Law on Children, the Law on HIV/AIDS, the Law on Tobacco



Control, and the Law on the Elderly. A number of important strategies have been issued, i.e., the National Strategy for Protection, Care and Promotion of People's Health in 2011-2020 and Vision to 2030, the National Population and Reproductive Health Strategy in 2011-2020, the Viet Nam Youth Development Strategy in 2011-2020, the National Strategy on Malaria Elimination and Prevention in Viet Nam in 2011-2020 and Orientation to 2030, the National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Viet Nam by 2020 and Vision to 2030, the National Strategy on Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases, Bronchial Asthma and Other Non-Communicable Diseases in 2015-2025, the NonCommunicable Disease Prevention Plan in 2015-2020, and the National Road Safety Strategy to 2020 and Vision to 2030.

In addition, some Resolutions<sup>16</sup> and Action Plans of the MOH, other ministries and provinces that guide the implementation of the Resolutions have set several goals and targets to 2025 and 2030, including SDG targets on health.

However, the existing policy system has not yet responded to developments in the context relating to health care needs for the following reasons<sup>17</sup>: control of communicable diseases remains a challenge for the health system; the increased impact of out-of-scope health risks (i.e.: climate change and environmental pollution) and the inability of the health sector to respond; inequalities between regions and groups of people in terms of health status, burden of disease and limited access to health care services; limited cross-sectoral coordination in policy development and slow implementation of policies.

## **(2) Major results of SDG 3**

Viet Nam's most remarkable achievement in terms of health care in recent years has been the improved capacity to provide and access health services in Viet Nam. Viet Nam is ranked at high level compared to other countries in the Western Pacific Region, with 73 per-cent of the population of Viet Nam having access to essential health services in 2017.

The health service delivery system has been widely developed. Enhanced investments in healthcare facilities have increased people's access to health care services. Capacity to forecast, monitor, prevent and control epidemics has been improved. Major diseases have been prevented and controlled. Human resources have been developed rapidly in terms of both quantity and quality and the healthcare service delivery capacity has been improved. Medical technology is growing. Many previously untreatable diseases have been detected early, promptly treated and cured. Viet Nam is one of 39 countries in the world that produce vaccines.

The proportion of the Vietnamese population participating in the health insurance system increased from 5.4 per-cent in 1993 to 86.4 per-cent in 2017. The proportion of out-of-pocket expenditure has declined significantly (from 63 per-cent in 1993 to about 40 per-cent in 2017). Financial support has been provided for medical examination and treatment of the poor, near poor, children under 6, the elderly, ethnic minorities in socio-economically disadvantaged regions and other disadvantaged groups.

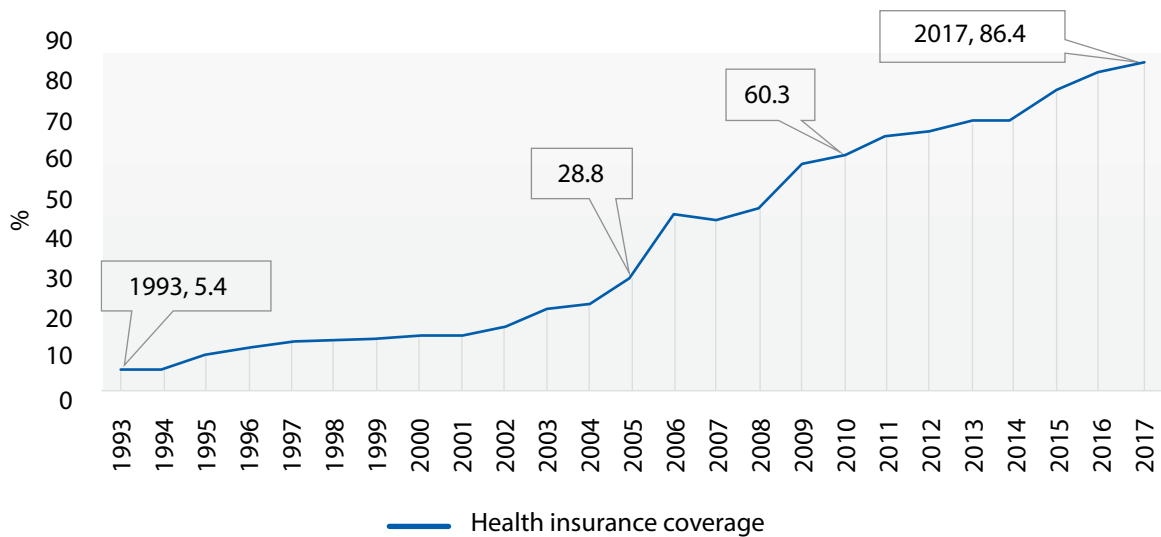
Population quality has gradually improved. The Human Development Index (HDI) and the average life expectancy are both rising rapidly. Health indicators of the Vietnamese people are much higher than the average of countries with the same per capita income.

<sup>16</sup> Resolution 20-NQ/TW issued by 25 October 2017 by Central Executive Committee regarding strengthening protection, care and improvement of people's health in the new situation; Resolution 21-NQ/TW issued by 25 October 2017 by Central Executive Committee regarding to population work in the new situation.

<sup>17</sup> Report on SDG implementation by MOH.

Viet Nam has successfully completed MDG 5 on reducing maternal mortality. However, gaps in maternal mortality rates between regions and socio-economic groups remain a big concern. The maternal mortality rate for ethnic minority women is four times as high as that of Kinh women<sup>18</sup>. Thus, disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority women should be given special attention to improve their maternal health and not leave them behind.

**Figure 6. Percentage of population with health insurance (per-cent)**



Source: Viet Nam Social Insurance and MOH<sup>19</sup>

The under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births decreased from 22.1 in 2015 to 21.6 in 2017. Given the slow decline during 2011-2015, it is expected that the infant mortality rate for under-1 children will be 11.7 per 1,000 live births by 2030, and the under-five mortality rate will be 17.6 per 1,000 live births by 2030. Viet Nam will face many of challenges to meet SDG 3 on reducing child mortality. Moreover, the child mortality rate is still high among ethnic minority groups<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, during the delivery of efforts to control child mortality in Viet Nam, disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority communities need special attention.

Up to 2016, Viet Nam has had 9,912 new HIV infections, 5,976 new AIDS patients and 2,131 AIDS deaths. Recent statistics on HIV and AIDS cases and related deaths show a declining trend in recent years. Although the number of new infections has decreased in the whole country, the number of people with HIV has increased in some areas such as the North Central, Central Coast and South East regions.

Through the National Tuberculosis Program, Viet Nam has realized many achievements in tuberculosis control, particularly in achieving one of the MDG 6 targets of reducing tuberculosis incidences. New tuberculosis incidences decreased from 375 per 100,000 in 2000 to 187 per 100,000 in 2015. Following this success in achieving the MDG 6 targets, Viet Nam is likely to continue to reduce the number of tuberculosis deaths and cases.

<sup>18</sup> Ethnic minority women often cannot access the services as health centres are distant, health service quality is low, the women have language and cultural barriers and cannot afford medicine and hospital fee. Therefore, the coverage of prenatal health care for them remains low. One out of five does not receive prenatal care; in the Northern mountainous provinces, about 40-60 per-cent of pregnant women deliver their babies at home.

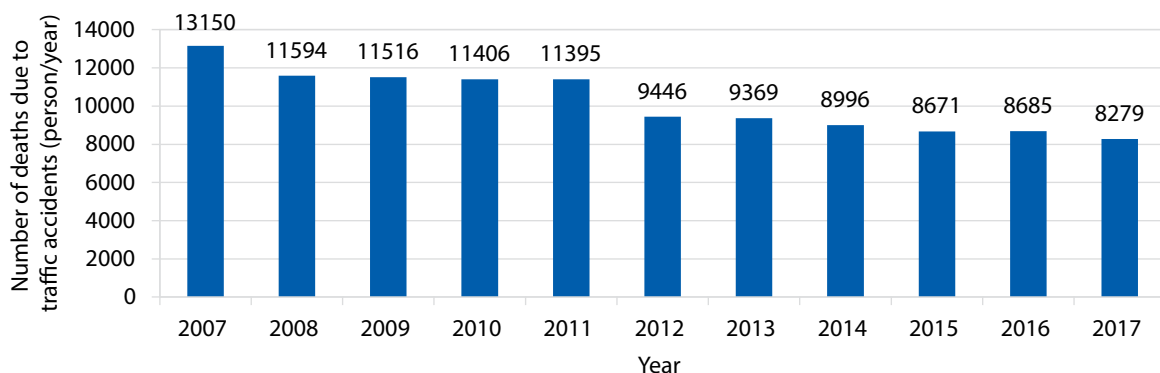
<sup>19</sup> Data between 1993 and 2006, from Report on Health Insurance policy implementation for 15 years (1992 – 2007) by MOH.

<sup>20</sup> Some ethnic minority groups have very high mortality rate of under-1 and under-5 children, i.e., (53.9‰ and 87.1‰ respectively), Mang (45.3‰ and 71.8‰ respectively), H'mong (27.7‰ and 42.4‰ respectively), mainly due to nutrition factors, prenatal care and maternal care.

According to an MOH Survey conducted on the use of cigarettes among adults in Viet Nam (GATS 2015), the smoking rate in 2015 has decreased compared to 2010. The standardized age-based tobacco use among people aged 15 and older was 22.5 per-cent, i.e. a slight decline compared to 2010 (23.8 per-cent). This partly reflects the effectiveness of the Tobacco Control Law 2013. By complying with the goals of implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Viet Nam has enjoyed the reduction of tobacco use rate.

Regarding traffic safety, traffic accidents in Viet Nam have been continuously reduced against three measures: number of traffic accidents, deaths and injuries<sup>21</sup>. In 2017, the number of traffic accidents decreased by 7 per-cent as compared to 2016. In 2017, the country saw 8,279 people killed in traffic accidents, equivalent to 8.76 deaths per 100,000 people<sup>22</sup>.

**Figure 7. Deaths caused by traffic accidents in Viet Nam in 2007-2017**



Source: National Traffic Safety Committee

In relation to SDG Target 3.5 relating to control and reduction of traffic accidents, Viet Nam will be able to reach the target on all the three criteria i.e. the number of traffic accidents, deaths and injuries, by 2030.

Regarding protection of the health of the elderly, more than one third of provincial hospitals have geriatric hospitals that serve the growing needs of the elderly. In 2017, MOH also developed and approved the Scheme of Elderly Health Care for the period 2017-2025.

Although Viet Nam has realized certain achievements in improving people's health indicators, many difficulties and challenges are currently being faced by Viet Nam, including: the high rate of poor households, maternal and child mortality in some mountainous areas which is 3-4 times as high as in the delta and urban areas and nearly twice as high as the national average. The rate of child malnutrition is still high and life expectancy is low in the North West, and Central Highlands. Public health expenditure is still limited and the rate of out-of-pocket costs for health care is high. The population is large and continues to grow. Viet Nam is one of 10 countries with the fastest ageing population in the world and high levels of gender imbalance at birth. Free migration is not well controlled, resulting in large pressures on the health care system. The disease pattern in Viet Nam is being transformed with multiple burdens of communicable and non-communicable diseases, accidents, injuries, poisoning. Some new and strange diseases are appearing and can become unpredictable.

21 Comparison of traffic accident figures in 2011 and 2015 shows that the number of traffic accidents declined by 22,144 cases (from 44,548 persons in 2011 to 22,404 cases in 2015), equivalent to -49.7 per-cent. The number of deaths due to traffic accidents was reduced by 2,724 persons (from 11,395 persons in 2011 to 8,671 persons in 2015), equivalent to -23.9 per-cent. The number of injuries dropped by 28,178 persons (from 48,734 persons in 2011 to 20,556 persons in 2015), equivalent to -57.8 per-cent.(from 44,548 persons in 2011 to 22,404 cases in 2015).

22 National Transportation Safety Board.

**Box 3. Model of early childhood disability detection and intervention (ECDDI) for children from 0 to 6 years old**

The Sustainable Health Development Center (VietHealth), a Vietnamese NGO, works in medical and public health areas, especially in sexual and reproductive health care, primary health care, mother and child health care, detection and rehabilitation, special education intervention for children with disabilities.

In implementing its mission, since 2012, VietHealth has been utilizing the model of Early Childhood Disabilities Detection and Intervention for children under six year-old in 100 per-cent communes of 25 selected districts in some provinces including Vinh Long, Thua Thien Hue, Bac Giang, Phu Tho, Yen Bai, Da Nang, Tay Ninh, Dong Nai and Binh Phuoc. Within five years, about 100,000 children under six years old have received physical and development screening at communities. According to local statistics, there are about 1,5 1.7% of children with disabilities in every 10,000 children being screened, of which the number of intellectually disabled children Interventions for inclusive education and specialized education account for about 65-70% and the number of children with mobility disabilities requiring interventions for surgery and rehabilitation is about 30-35%. Children with disabilities will be identified and classified according to mobility impairments, intellectual disability or multiple disabilities in four levels from mild to very severe as well as development of fish intervention plans for each case. VietHealth conducts trainings for preschool teachers on special education interventions and trainings for parents to implement interventions for children with disabilities identified through screening, evaluation and classification of disabilities. of the children with disabilities in rehabilitation at home and training on rehabilitation training for health workers

By 2018, the greatest success of VietHealth is the Early Detection and Early Intervention model supported by People's Committees of provinces and cities, and incorporated in the provincial plan of supporting people with disabilities and allocating resources to implement. The early detection and intervention in the localities implementing the model also brought practical results with 84,774 children being screened for the first time, 5,155 children were screened for the second time and 1,122 children were intervened. With the achievements, early in 2018, the Ministry of Health and Viethealth signed a cooperation agreement to support VietHealth to implement the model in localities and coordinate in mobilizing resources for replication of the model.

*Source: ECDDI Project Report from Sustainable Health Development Centers (VietHealth)*

**6.4. SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all****(1) Review of policies related to SDG 4**

Education is defined as the top national priority, with 20 per-cent of government budget dedicated to education and training. Some specific targets of SDG 4 have been reflected in a number of laws and policies, including the Law on Education, the Law on Vocational Education, the Law on Vocational Training, the XI Party Central Committee Resolution of reformation, inclusivity of education and training and the Education Development Strategy 2011- 2020<sup>23</sup>. In addition, a number of other important strategies have also been enacted, such as the 2011– 2020 TVET Development Strategy, Vocational Training for Rural Workers to 2020, Viet Nam Human Resources Development Strategy 2011-2020, Viet Nam Youth Development Strategy 2011-2020, the Decree No. 20/2014/ND-CP on Education Universalization and Illiteracy Eradication, the Action Plan on Gender Equality in Education 2016-2020, the Framework on Building a Learning Society for the period 2012-2020 and the Scheme on Stamping out Illiteracy by 2020<sup>24</sup>. The Government has agreed to grant an exemption from tuition fees for five-year-old children

<sup>23</sup> Target enrollment rates is 99 per-cent for primary school and 95 per-cent for lower secondary school; 80 per-cent of young people have secondary education or equivalent; 70 per-cent of children with disabilities go to school.

<sup>24</sup> Target at literacy rate of 98 per-cent by 2020 for people aged between 15 and 60, and 90 per-cent for ethnic minority people aged between 15 and 60.

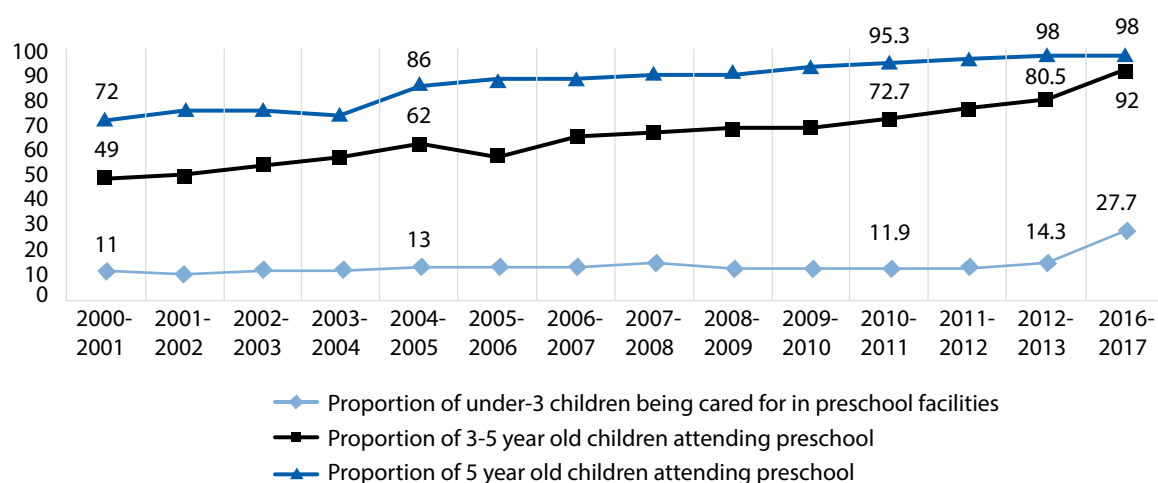
in socio-economically disadvantaged areas from 2018. In addition, people with disabilities have also received attention via the promulgation of the National Law on Persons with Disabilities 2012 and the Inclusive Education Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities 2006.

However, the policies related to SDG 4 still have some shortcomings, which need to be improved, namely: inadequate or low level of support for pupils and students; inadequate implementation of the State management regulations on education; lack of unity in many localities, especially in the decentralization of personnel and finance. There are no programs or policies to promote lifelong learning, to meet the demand for learning, or to improve the capacity and skills of the elderly population.

## (2) Major results of SDG 4

Preschool education plays an important role in preparing children to enter primary school, with the proportion of children under-three being cared for in preschool facilities increasing from 11.0 per-cent in 2000-2001 to 27.7 per-cent in 2016-2017. The rate of children attending pre-school has increased dramatically from 49 per-cent to 80.5 per-cent in 13 years from 2000 to 2013, with an average increase of 2.42 per-cent per year, while in the 2016-2017 school year, this rate continued to increase significantly, reaching 92 per-cent.

**Figure 8. Enrolment rate at kindergarten facilities (per-cent)**



Source: Ministry of Education and Training and UNESCO

For five-year-olds entering the first grade, the enrolment rate increased from 72 per-cent in school year of 2000-2001 to 98 per-cent in 2016-2017. At present, children with disabilities are also provided with access to care and access to education. In particular, the Inclusive Education Support and Development Centres in localities have supported intervention for children with disabilities and professional support for education of children with disabilities in preschools<sup>25</sup>.

In the school year 2016-2017, Net enrolment rates for primary, lower secondary, upper secondary school are 99 per-cent, 92.5 per-cent, and 63.3 per-cent, respectively; and the completion rate of elementary school is 99.7 per-cent<sup>26</sup>. The gradual increase in primary and lower secondary school completion rates has shown the positive impact of educational policies and programs and the investment of resources from the Government and society.

<sup>25</sup> Some provinces have high rate of children with disabilities entering school, i.e., Hau Giang (95 per-cent), Bac Ninh (90 per-cent), Quang Tri (87.6 per-cent), Nam Dinh (87.2 per-cent), Vinh Phuc (87 per-cent), Phu Tho (86.5 per-cent) –Report by MOET.

<sup>26</sup> Report by MOET.

With ethnic minority students, the system of ethnic minority boarding schools and semi-boarding schools is being developed both in terms of scale and quality. In addition to the general educational curriculum, the schools organize other activities such as physical education and sports, life skills education, specialised education and vocational training...

However, there remain difficulties and constraints in access to education among children from poor households in remote and mountainous areas. There are still five-year-old children, at primary school age (6-10 years) and especially lower secondary school age (11-14 year-olds) who have never attended school or have dropped out in rural, mountainous, remote and isolated areas, as well as poor children, migrant children, children with disabilities, ethnic minority children, and especially ethnic minority girls.

With the effort to eradicate illiteracy and to achieve universal education, the literacy rate of the population from 15 years old and over nationwide has increased remarkably over the past decades and by 2016 had reached 95 per-cent, an increase of over 7 per-cent as compared to 1989. This indicates a positive shift in the implementation of literacy programs and the improvement of gender equality in access to education services. In 2016, the literacy rate of men is estimated to be 96.6 per-cent, while the rate for women has risen to 93.5 per-cent and it is expected that by 2030 the gap will be narrowed. According to CEMA (2015) statistics, only 72 per-cent of ethnic minority people can read and write Vietnamese language, which is lower than the national average<sup>27</sup>. However, at present, due to the lack of regular and adequate statistics, it is not possible to thoroughly assess the progress towards equal access for vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and children in vulnerable situations.

One of the challenges for the education sector is the lack of appropriate infrastructure and facilities in many locations across the country, especially those located in remote and isolated areas, where facilities are still in short supply, affecting inclusive education. The quality of education for ethnic minority children still needs to be improved. The Government should increase the attractiveness of financial resources outside the State budget to support the development of quality education. At the same time, for local authorities, there should be integration of sustainable development in education and training in local SEDPs and financial development plans so that corresponding financial and manpower mobilisation plans can be arranged.

Creating a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all is a great challenge for Viet Nam in achieving SDG 4. While gender-based violence in schools is becoming a concern among the public, studies in Viet Nam show that gender issues related to violence against children in school receive little attention and girls are at higher risk for violence and harassment, while boys are more likely to experience physical violence<sup>28</sup>.

The percentage of trained labourers has increased steadily over the years. In 2000, this rate was 10.3 per-cent and by 2016 it had doubled. In 2017 alone, 2.69 million people received vocational training, including 600,000 rural labourers. According to CEMA (2015) statistics, the proportion of male labourers receiving training is higher than female in some ethnic minority groups such as the Si La, San Diu, Co Tu, and Bo Y groups by about 3.5-6 per-cent. Only a few ethnic groups such as the Tay, Lo Lo, Ngai and Pu Péo groups recorded a higher proportion of female trained labourers than male. The growing disparity between male and female labourers in vocational training approaches poses a challenge for appropriate policies and solutions to reduce gender gaps.

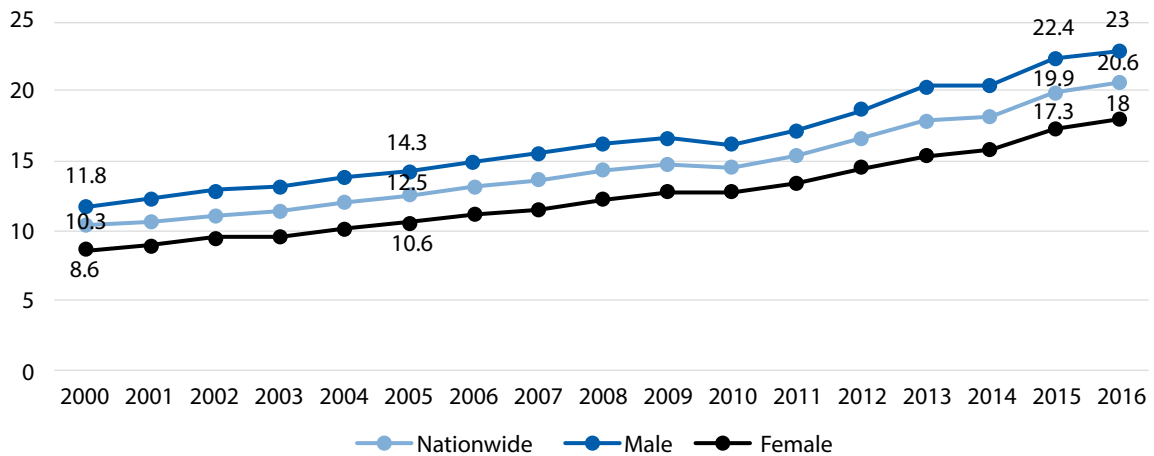
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27 Of which, for some ethnic minority groups (e.g., H'Mong, Mang, Lu...), half of their population is illiterate. In addition, for all ethnic minority groups, illeracy rate of women remains higher than men (73.4 per-cent and 86.3 per-cent respectively).

28 UNESCO Viet Nam, towards a safe, equal and inclusive learning environment, Report on School-related Gender-based Violence in Viet Nam, 2016.



**Figure 9. The proportion of labourers receiving training (per-cent)**



Source: GSO

By the end of August 2017, there are 1,974 vocational education institutions, including 388 junior colleges, 551 professional secondary schools and 1,035 vocational training classes with about one million trainees<sup>29</sup>. To address the shortage of skilled labour, Viet Nam has established high quality Vocational and Educational Training Centres. These facilities<sup>30</sup> provide high quality training and advanced training at the international level in high demand occupations. Partnership with enterprises is the principle raised by these facilities. Every year more than 10,000 trainees benefit from improved training programs at these high quality facilities and improve the capacity and skills of teaching and management staff<sup>31</sup>.

#### Box 4. Improving literacy for ethnic minority children

In recent years, ChildFund Viet Nam has been working in Hoa Binh province to improve writing skills through experiential learning cycles and improve comprehensive reading for ethnic minority children in primary schools. Regular pre-tests and post-tests at schools showed that at least 30 per-cent of students improved their learning results from “weak level” to “average level”. The Department of Education and Training of Hoa Binh province has been replicating the Writing Skills through Experiential Learning Cycle project in all districts in the province. Since 2017, ChildFund has been working with Ministry of Education and Training to replicate the project in some selected schools in four provinces namely Lao Cai, Bac Giang, Ninh Binh, and Nam Dinh.

As of 2017, World Vision International in Viet Nam has supported 184 Village Children’s Reading Clubs and 39 ethnic minority mother assistants working in preschool classrooms, contributing significantly to the improvement in the reading comprehension of about 5,682 children in 30 districts across 14 provinces in Viet Nam. Literacy measurement showed that the percentage of students who could read with comprehension increased from 67 per-cent in 2015 to 71 per-cent in 2017. An external evaluation of the ethnic minority mother assistants model that World Vision implemented in collaboration with the GOVN to facilitate effective learning among ethnic minority students showed significant improvement in the language readiness of ethnic minority children. The ethnic minority mother assistant practice (called “Local Language Collaborators” by the GOVN) has been mainstreamed into the national education system of 42 provinces where ethnic minority children live.

Source: ChildFund and World Vision International in Viet Nam

29 MOLISA.

30 International Technology College LILAMA 2, Vocational College of Machinery and Irrigation (VCMI) and College of Technology II (HVCT).

31 Vietnamese-German Programme on reform of vocational training.

## 6.5. SDG 5: Achieve gender quality; empower and create enabling opportunities for women and girls

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 5**

Viet Nam has shown a strong commitment to implementation of its international commitments on gender equality<sup>32</sup>. Gender equality principles are mentioned in the Constitution<sup>33</sup> and important laws such as the Gender Equality Law; the Law on the Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and People's Council<sup>34</sup>, the Law on Support to Small and Medium Enterprises<sup>35</sup>; and the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents<sup>36</sup>.

The National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2011-2020 introduced strategic measures to reduce the gender gap in all areas for women, especially for women in rural areas. The Prime Minister issued Directive 18/CT-TTg dated 16 May 16 2017 on Enhancing Measures to Prevent Violence and sexual abuse against Children. Specific measures to address sexual harassment are also provided for in Labour Code 10/2012/QH13, Article 8 and Article 183.

Viet Nam is also implementing a series of programs and projects, including the Program for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in the 2016-2020 and Vision to 2030; the NAP on Prevention of Domestic Violence 2014-2020; the Project on the Reduction of Domestic Violence in Rural Areas of Viet Nam in 2015-2020; Annual Plan to Minimize teen marriage and consanguineous marriage in ethnic minorities in 2018; the Programme on Support to gender equality among ethnic minorities in 2018-2025.

However, the policies related to SDG 5 still have some gaps and discrepancies that need to be improved. Those policies on training, re-training, appointment and nomination of candidates remain general and not synchronized with the Law on Gender Equality. There is a lack of specific policy integration in the Law on Marriage and the Family 2014 to ensure equal rights of people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities' right to equality in marriage and in decisions to have children, in accordance with the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as well as the Law on Persons with Disabilities of Viet Nam. Some policies stipulated in the Law on Gender Equality have not been promulgated by the Government in a timely manner.

### **(2) Major results of SDG 5**

Gender equality in Viet Nam has gradually become a cross-cutting issue in all fields of political, economic, cultural and social life with many outstanding achievements. The rate of female deputies in the National Assembly for the term of 2016-2021 is 26.72 per-cent, an increase of 2.62 per-cent compared to the previous term. The proportion of female deputies to the People's Council for the term of 2016-2021 at all levels increased compared to the previous term. The percentage of female deputies participating in the provincial People's Council increased from 21.57 per-cent in the 1999-2004 term to 26.54 per-cent in the 2016-2021 term; while at the district and commune level 27.85 per-cent and 26.59 per-cent of deputies are female, respectively for the term of 2016-2021. In addition, by the end of August 2017, key leader of 12/30 ministries are women.

32 The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, through the Plan to implement the recommendations of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

33 The Constitution 2013 of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam regulates that "1. Male and female citizens have equal rights in all fields. The State has a policy to guarantee equal gender rights and opportunities; 2. The State, society, and family create conditions for the comprehensive development of women and promotion of their role in society; 3. Sex discrimination is strictly prohibited" (Article 26).

34 Which requires that female candidates make up at least 35 per-cent.

35 Which requires that priority is given to the SMEs owned by women and enterprises which use a large number of female employees.

36 Which regulates sufficiently and specifically gender mainstreaming in the formulation of legal normative documents.



However, the above proportion has not met the target set out in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2011-2020, i.e. over 35 per-cent. The proportion of women participating in the National Assembly in Viet Nam is not commensurate with the proportion of women in the population, in the labour force and there is an uneven rate in different terms of the National Assembly. The rate of women in management and leadership positions at all levels is still low compared to the target set out in the National Strategy on Gender Equality, and the rate of women in sectoral leading positions and localities is still modest.

There is an increasing trend in female-owned enterprises, at present 31.6 per-cent of enterprises are female-owned. Up to 98 per-cent of the women-owned businesses are micro, small and medium enterprises, of which micro-enterprises account for 71.7 per-cent, and the remaining small and medium enterprises account for 28.3 per-cent<sup>37</sup>.

Since 2015, Viet Nam has organized a national action month on gender equality and prevention and respond of gender-based violence with the participation and attention of the public, which has contributed to raising awareness of the enforcement of gender equality legislation in Viet Nam. In the first six months of 2017, the total number of victims of domestic violence was reported at 9,228 people in total 61/63 provinces and cities, the number of victims provided with counselling services was 5,116, and the number of domestic violence perpetrators provided with counselling services was 4,628/8,396 people<sup>38</sup>.

Hotline 111 was established and operational in late 2017. The mass media have increased their time for disseminating information on legislation and communicating knowledge and skills for child protection, and criticizing child sexual abuse behaviours.

Viet Nam has made efforts to eliminate adolescent marriage and all forms of gender-based violence. However, early marriage remains in rural, mountainous and isolated areas, where a large number of ethnic minority people live<sup>39</sup>, and the Mekong Delta. More than half of all married women (58 per-cent) revealed that they had suffered at least one of three types of violence (physical, sexual and emotional) by their husbands<sup>40</sup>.

A study by ActionAid and MOLISA shows that women, on average, spend 5 hours (314 minutes) for unpaid care work, 2 hours (125 minutes) more than men. If women were paid for their care work they would contribute to more than 20 per-cent of Viet Nam's GDP. In the areas with low quality public services, women spend 9 hours for unpaid care work. Women in the Northern mountainous region spend nearly 2 hours (107 minutes) each day collecting fuel and water while women in cities spend only 3 minutes, mostly due to their lower access to infrastructure and service.<sup>41</sup>

Viet Nam has committed to ensure universal access to reproductive and sexual health services. In 2016, maternal mortality was about 58/100,000 live births (reduced by 0.3/100,000 as compared to 2015). As predicted, this target may be achieved in 2020. However, several problems still exist: more than 1/3 of young people lack access to proper contraceptive measures as well as information<sup>42</sup>. Access to family planning services remains limited, especially for unmarried young women, migrant women and women living in mountainous and isolated areas. Male partners may prevent women from using contraceptive

37 Enterprise survey 2013, GSO.

38 Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

39 The survey on the socio-economic situation of 53 ethnic minorities shows that those married early make up 26.59 per-cent (male: 26.04 per-cent, female: 27.12 per-cent) GSO.

40 National study on domestic violence against women in Viet Nam in 2010.

41 ActionAid, AFV and MOLISA (2017), Unpaid Care Work - Sharing is Caring? <http://www.actionaid.org/vi/Viet Nam/publications/cong-viec-cham-soc-khong-luong-san-se-la-yeu-thuong>.

42 UNFPA, 2013. World Population Day 2013: Adolescent pregnancy. <http://Viet Nam.unfpa.org/public/pid/14588>.

measures, worsening the consequences of gender inequality. The adolescent pregnancy rate is rising<sup>43</sup>, more than 6 per-cent of women aged between 15 and 19 give birth although their early pregnancy may bring about health risks<sup>44</sup>.

Female workers make up 48.3 per-cent of labour force, more than 46 per-cent of female workers have been provided with vocational training in accordance with the rural vocational training scheme; 48 per-cent of female labourers have been provided with jobs each year. 72.9 per-cent of women participate in the workforce in Viet Nam, lower than men (83.0 per-cent) and a gender gap remains in terms of salary (the average income of a man is at least 10.1 per-cent as high as income of a woman with the same qualification in 2015)<sup>45</sup> and male with vocational training or higher income are more than 15% of female with the same level of education.

While women make up 60 per-cent<sup>46</sup> of the agricultural labour force, only 9 per-cent of farm owners are women<sup>47</sup>. This partly results from their lower access to resources, including land, than men. Therefore, policies and interventions related to agriculture and rural development in Viet Nam are making efforts toward an equal access to agricultural resources for women.

**Table 1. Workforce disaggregated by sex and rural-urban location (per-cent)**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	II/2017
Aggregated	76.76	77.52	77.51	77.41	76.75	75.89
Men	81.25	82.07	82.12	82.44	81.66	80.84
Women	72.53	73.23	73.19	72.69	72.13	71.18
Urban	69.98	70.32	70.17	70.93	70.29	69.86
Rural	80.15	81.10	81.28	80.78	80.23	79.13

*Source: Calculations from Labour-Employment survey, 2012-second quarter 2017*

Viet Nam is also one of the first Asia-Pacific countries to implement gender mainstreaming, particularly in the Law on State Budget 2015. This Law has principles for State budget management (Article 8) and basis for budget drafting (Article 41). However, its guidelines have not been issued in a timely way. Consequently, it is difficult to allocate appropriate budget for gender equality activities.

43 MOH, 2014. Report by the Maternal and Child Health Department.

44 GSO and UNICEF, 2015. Viet Nam Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014.

45 GSO (2016) report on labor force survey in 2015, available at: [https://www.gso.gov.vn/Default\\_en.aspx?tabid=515](https://www.gso.gov.vn/Default_en.aspx?tabid=515), page 12.

46 ICARD, 2012.

47 GSO, 2014. Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census 2014.

**Box 5. Progress in gender equality in Viet Nam**

In Asia-Pacific, Viet Nam is one of the few countries with female deputies making up more than 25 percent of seats in the National Assembly. The number of female deputies holding important positions in the National Assembly agencies has risen recently. Women in the 2016-2021 term make up 26,72 percent<sup>48</sup>, an increase of 2.62 per-cent as compared to the previous term. However, this percentage remains lower than the target of more than 35 per-cent set out in the National Strategy on Gender National Equality in 2011-2020. In particular, Viet Nam has the first-ever Chairwoman in the National Assembly (14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly), a Vice Chairwoman out of four Chairpersons (accounting for 25 per-cent), five women out of 18 members of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly (accounting for 27.8 per-cent); 3/13 Committees, Councils and Bureaus led by women (accounting for 23.1 per-cent); five Vice Chairwomen out of 34 Vice Chairpersons of Ethnic Council and Committees (accounting for 14.7 per-cent) and 13 female members out of 45 standing members (accounting for 28.9 per-cent).

*Source: Report 454/BC-CP by the Government on 17/10/2017 regarding implementation of the national gender equality target*

**6.6. SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all****(1) Review of policies related to SDG 6**

Viet Nam has issued and implemented a number of policies related to SDG 6, including management, conservation and rational use of water resources. This has been emphasized in laws and policies, such as the Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Construction, Law on Biodiversity, Law on Water Resources as well as Resolution No.24-NQ/TW of the Central Committee on pro-active Climate Change Adaptation and strengthening of natural resources management and environmental protection.

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly also adopted Resolution No.142/2016/QH13 on the five-Year SEDP in 2016-2020 with important environmental indicators including the ratio of people accessing clean water by 2020 amounting to 95 per-cent of the urban and 90 per-cent of rural populations.

The Prime Minister has issued many important policies pertaining to SDG 6-related issues, such as the National Strategy on Water Resources to 2020, National Strategy for Environmental Protection up to 2020 with a vision to 2030, National Programme on Safe Water Supply 2016-2025, National Plan of Action to improve efficiency of water resource management, protection and utilization during 2014-2020 and NTP on new rural development during 2016-2020. Given the target of improved water use efficiency, in addition to the Law on Water Resources adopted in 2012, the GOVN approved four other decrees<sup>49</sup>.

However, national water resources planning and a baseline water resource master plan have yet to be formulated. There are still shortcomings in implementation of activities to achieve goals and other documents relating to conservation and sustainable development of wetlands. Coordination among stakeholders in the management of water-related issues is impeded by overlaps and ineffectiveness.

**(2) Major results of SDG 6**

As of June 2017, the proportion of urban population supplied with tap water through the concentrated water systems was estimated at 84.5 per-cent (an increase of 1 per-cent compared to the end of 2016)

48 132 women out of 494 deputies of the National Assembly. Source: The National Assembly Website <http://quochoi.vn>.

49 Decree 343/2015/ND-CP issued on 6 May 2015 regulates the establishment and management of water resource corridor management; Decree 54/2015/ND-CP issued on 8 June 2015 provides for incentives for economical and efficient water use activities; Decree 33/2017/ND-CP issued on 3 April 2017 stipulates penalties for administrative violations against regulations on water and mineral resources; Decree 82/2017/ND-CP issued on 17 July 2017 imposes the calculation method and charge for granting waterright.

and the ratio of water losses was 23 per-cent (a decrease of 0.5 per-cent compared to the end of 2016)<sup>50</sup>. Although the urban water supply capacity has increased by 1.6-fold compared to 10 years ago, current urban water supply systems have not kept pace with demand due to increased urbanization, urban population and mushrooming industrial parks.

Regarding clean water sources<sup>51</sup>, the ratio of households with access to such water sources has increased continuously during 2002-2016, with an overall national ratio of 93.4 per-cent at the end of the target period. Especially, during 2010-2016 the ratio of households with access to improved water sources jumped by 2.9 per-cent from 90.5 per-cent, which translates into an average annual rise of 0.41 per-cent. Given this rate, it is estimated the target of 100 per-cent of households nationwide accessing clean water could only be met by as late as 2032.

Rural clean water supplies have been prioritized through many investment programmes and projects<sup>52</sup> funded by many sources. The percentage of rural population with access to central water supply system reached 43.5 per-cent (Table 2).

**Table 2. Present status of concentrated water supply works**

No	Region	Number of works	Present status of concentrated water supply works			
			Sustainable (per-cent)	Average (per-cent)	Ineffective (per-cent)	Unoperated (per-cent)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16,342</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>12.0</b>
1	Northern Mountainous Area	7,184	25.7	40.5	19.6	14.2
2	Red River Delta	802	55.0	26.9	6.8	11.3
3	North Central Area	1,308	15.3	48.0	29.7	7.0
4	South Central Area	1,360	17.4	35.7	28.0	19.0
5	Highlands	1,268	22.2	32.7	14.7	30.5
6	South East Area	278	50.2	26.4	17.2	6.2
7	Mekong Delta	4,141	56.4	35.1	6.3	2.2

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2017*

According to a study on unpaid care in Viet Nam published in 2016, woman in one district of northern Ha Giang province could save up to 54 working days per year if they could access clean water where they lived<sup>53</sup>. In general, grassroots awareness on the use and payment of clean water services is limited, particularly where there are water resource advantages and in mountainous and isolated areas with low educational levels. The central Viet Nam Women's Union has mobilized social support to poor households affected by saltwater intrusion in waterways due to climate change impacts, so they can access clean water storage facilities for domestic activities.

50 MOC.

51 According to GSO, sources of sanitary drinking water include tap water, rain water, water from dug wells/built wells/drilled wells with pumps, filtered spring water.

52 NTP for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation is a highly social program. It contributes not only to improved living conditions and awareness of rural people but also to the socio-economic development of the nation, especially for the poor, ethnic minority people and people living in remote areas. The goal of the program is in line with the goal the GOVN has committed with the international community and is one of important criteria of the NTP on New Rural Development until 2020.

53 Action Aid and MOLISA, 2018, Survey of unpaid care work: Redistribution for sustainable development.

Within seven years from 2010, the ratio of households using sanitary latrines<sup>54</sup> increased by 7.6 per-cent from 75.7 per-cent to 83.3 per-cent<sup>55</sup>, with an average increase of 1.08 per-cent per year. It is estimated that by 2032, the target of all households nationwide having hygienic latrines will be reached. Viet Nam is focusing on socialization mechanisms and policies for public hygiene services, while it is also studying architectural models and planning orientations for public toilets in big cities and provinces, including norms and architectural models for public toilets supporting persons with disabilities. Pilot projects for such public toilets are being rolled out before being replicated on a wider scale.

During the VNR development process, groups of H'Mong ethnic minority women from the northern mountainous province of Ha Giang and the Central Highlands province of Dak Lak were selected for consultation on access to clean water, sanitation and sustainable energy. The results revealed that H'Mong households' access to water resources has improved thanks to a number of GOVN and donor-supported projects, such as suspension reservoirs and concentrated tanks. However, water quality is not guaranteed unless it is filtered or impurities are treated. Regarding hygiene issues, H'Mong households in the studied areas have not made much improvements. In general, many have not formed the habit of using latrines partly due to living habits, limited knowledge and instead practice open defecation.

Water environmental pollution in river basins has not decreased and is now a great challenge for Viet Nam<sup>56</sup>. Surface water in many river basins is contaminated with organic matters and the main cause is untreated or inadequately treated wastewater discharged from industrial parks, industrial clusters, production facilities, domestic activities, urban services and wastewater from upstream mineral exploitation.

In 2016, some 64.2 per-cent of industrial parks met solid waste and wastewater treatment standards and 54 per-cent of hospitals had sewage treatment systems. By 2017<sup>57</sup>, up to 41 concentrated wastewater treatment plants were in operation with a total design capacity of 950,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day-night. The ratio of collected and treated wastewater is 12 per-cent and 50 wastewater treatment plants are being designed or constructed with total designed capacity of 2.2 million m<sup>3</sup>/day-night. Among 781 municipalities, only 44 have sewage treatment facilities up to required standards (equivalent to 5.63 per-cent in 2016). Thus, the target set for the 2030 is quite ambitious for Viet Nam to achieve.

To ensure efficient and sustainable utilization of water, investigations of surface and groundwater resources have been intensified. The GOVN is focused on searching for water sources to prevent drought in highland areas and other locations where water scarcity and salinity intrusion are factors amid other climate change-related vulnerabilities. In addition, water resources planning for 2020-2035 in provinces and cities nationwide are being developed.

Viet Nam has shifted its approach from single-sector to integrated water resources management through a proposal for four river basin organizations (Hong-Thai Binh, North Central, South Central and Dong Nai) and effective implementation of cooperation activities with member countries of the Mekong River Commission.

54 GSO, sanitary latrines include septic, semi-septic latrine, pour flush latrines, and double pit pour flush latrines; in 2006 and 2008, it is the ratio of households using sanitary latrines to the total number of households.

55 This rate also shows remarkable disparity between regions. The Central Highlands, Northern Hilly and Mountainous Region, and the Mekong Delta continue to have relatively lower rate than other regions, under 70 per-cent. South-eastern Region and the Red River Delta have relatively high rate, more than 97 per-cent. Therefore, to increase the percentage of households using sanitary latrines, the GOVN must introduce support policies for the regions with high percentage of poor and vulnerable people, i.e., Central Highlands, Northern Hilly and Mountainous Region, and the Mekong Delta.

56 MONRE.

57 MOC.

Eight wetlands have been recognized as Ramsar sites, 45 wetlands are planned as inland water conservation zones, 47 wetlands will become wetland reserves and nine important wetlands in Viet Nam have been designated as biosphere reserves by UNESCO.

### **Box 6. Community-based water resource management model for shrimp farming**

During March to July 2017, the Centre for Environmental and Community Research supported an innovative aquaculture water quality improvement model in Nam Phu Commune, Tien Hai District, Thai Binh Province. Its purpose was to provide aquaculture farmers with necessary knowledge to control water quality and aquaculture techniques. Twenty households, with youth groups in Thuy Lac and Thu Pho villages, received technical expertise on pond environmental treatment techniques, water quality control, breed selecting and feeding techniques, common disease and water environment-based treatments. The use of simple water quality control tools was also guided.

Through technical training, villagers gained a deep understanding of the importance of water management and became experts in using water quality monitoring toolkits provided by the project. Hop Pho villagers decided to renovate water supply canals for their ponds. Up to 10 households are collecting water into ponds along the canal and four persuaded six other households to pay VND 10 million to rent a dredging machine and clean the canal of litter and wastewater contaminants. They also agreed to jointly protect the canal and no household can discharge rubbish, livestock wastewater or dirt into it. As a result, this once badly polluted and shallow canal is now a clean and valuable source of water for all 10 households.

**Figure 1: Canal pre-rehabilitation**



**Figure 2: Canal post-rehabilitation**



*Source: Centre for Environment and Community Research*

## **6.7. SDG 7: Ensure access to sustainable, reliable and affordable energy for all**

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 7**

In order to achieve the goal of ensuring access to sustainable energy for all, Viet Nam has issued many important policies, especially the Law on Electricity with the goal of sustainable electricity to meet people's and the nation's socio-economic development needs. The Electricity Plan VII is also aimed at "Ensuring that most rural households have access to electricity by 2020". Given the goal of increased share of renewable energy in the country's total primary energy consumption, Viet Nam's Renewable Energy Development Strategy to 2030 with a Vision to 2050 sets specific targets relating to the ratio of renewable energy within the country's energy structure, power production and ratio of power produced from priority renewable energy sources such as hydropower, solar, wind and biomass up to 2050. The Electricity Plan VII has been adjusted to the goal of 7 per-cent by 2020 and 10 per-cent by 2030 of electricity generated from renewable energy. Moreover, Viet Nam has also enacted the Law on Economic and Efficient Use of Energy and Viet Nam National Energy Development until 2020 with



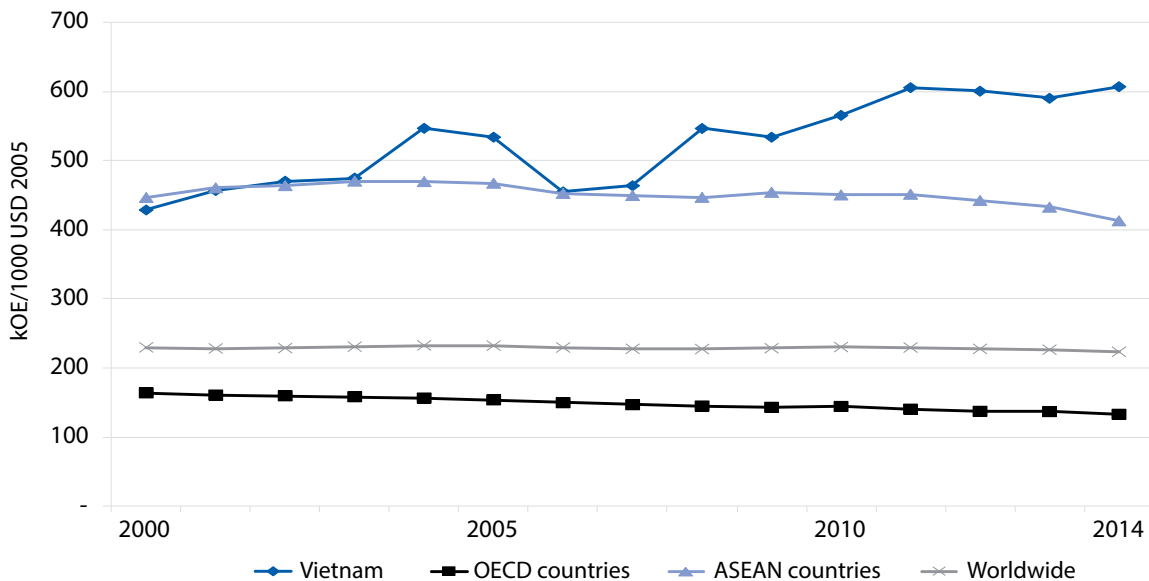
a Vision to 2050 to promote more efficient use of energy in production and consumption. The strategy of cleaner production in the industry sector by 2020 has also led to cleaner production practices by industry, such as 5-8 per-cent of energy, material and fuel consumption. Overall, Viet Nam's current energy policies largely reflect key aspects of SDG 7.

**(2) Major results of SDG 7**

A high proportion of Viet Nam's population now has access to electricity thanks to energy sector reforms and strong development of the national and some island-based power grids. By 2016, more than 99 per-cent of Vietnamese households could access electricity. According to the World Bank's 2017 Competitiveness Assessment indicators, Viet Nam's access to electricity score was 78.69 out of 100, an increase of 32 grades compared to 2016 and the country ranked 64th out of 190 countries/economies. This is Viet Nam's highest grade increase since 2013<sup>58</sup> and its overall business environment ranking increased by 14 places compared to 2016. Given the electricity sector's development, especially with electricity infrastructure investment under the programme of electricity supply to rural, mountainous areas and islands and electricity cost subsidies for poor households and social policy household in place, Viet Nam is on track to achieve its goal of ensuring universal access to affordable electricity by 2030.

While electricity consumption per capita in Viet Nam has rapidly increased in recent years. the country still has a low per capita electricity production and consumption ratio below the averages of many nations regionally and globally. Despite initial steps towards sustainable and efficient use of energy, Viet Nam still lags behind many countries in terms of efficient energy use and exploitation of renewable energy other than hydropower. As shown in Figure 10, the energy consumption intensity of Viet Nam by KoE/USD 1,000 of 2005 GDP fixed price has risen sharply in recent years and now exceeds ASEAN and global averages.

**Figure 10. Energy use intensity of Viet Nam and other countries in 2000-2014 (koE/1000 USD GDP in 2005)**



Source: Viet Nam Energy Association (VEA)

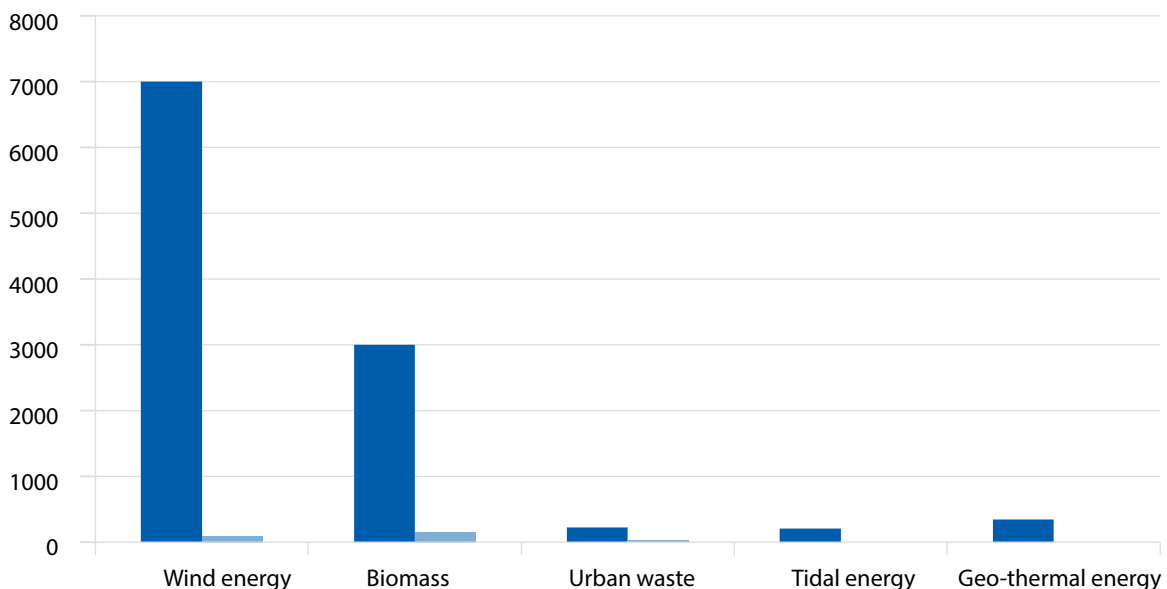
58 In 2013, Viet Nam was ranked 156<sup>th</sup> for electricity access indicator.

The reasons for this phenomenon are: i) industrial sectors with high energy consumption do not contribute significantly to GDP, ii) industries use out-of-date technologies with low energy use efficiency, iii) electricity prices remain low and are regulated by the State and households are not encouraged to use electricity efficiently, iv) power production efficiency is not high as thermal power still accounts for a large proportion and electricity production losses are high and v) industry and public awareness of efficient energy use and conservation remains low. These are significant challenges for Viet Nam to achieve SDG 7.3 relating to improved energy efficiency.

Recently, Viet Nam has issued and enforced many policies to encourage development of renewable energy, especially wind and solar power projects. The country currently has 77 registered industrial wind projects in 18 provinces and cities with total capacity of 7,000 MW. However, only three projects completed and connected to the national power grid with capacity of 48.2 MW. If all the registered projects were put into operation, Viet Nam would achieve the government's goal of realizing wind energy capacity of 6,200 MW by 2030. The use of biomass energy is also growing in rural areas and it is predicted that 2,000 MW could be reached by 2030.

However, the proportion of renewable energy in final energy use structure is still small (only 0.4 per cent), lower than many regional countries. As evaluated by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT), Viet Nam has great potential for renewable energy development which has yet to be exploited (Figure 11).

**Figure 11. Potential to develop some types of renewable energy in Viet Nam (MW)**



Source: Electricity Regulatory Authority of Viet Nam, MOIT (ERAV)

Regarding solar power, Viet Nam can exploit as much as 4-6 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> in many localities across the country, yet only 5 MW of solar power has been produced so far. The mobilization of funds for renewable energy development in Viet Nam face many obstacles, such as: i) lack of a law on renewable energy, ii) the pricing mechanism for solar electricity and renewable power is not attractive to investors and iii) lack of flexible mechanism for investors to participate in electricity market, especially in electricity transmission and distribution. These are key challenges to overcome if Viet Nam wants to achieve SDGs 7.2 and 7.4 by 2030.

Investment in expanding and upgrading energy infrastructure to serve people, especially those in remote, mountainous and island areas has been significantly encouraged by the GOVN. This is reflected in the



issuance and implementation of the “2013-2020 programme on electricity supply to rural, mountainous and island areas” since 2013. Recently, the EU entered into an agreement with the MOIT to fund the “Programme to support energy development policy and enhance access to sustainable energy in rural, mountainous and island areas”. This programme will invest in 23 rural and mountainous electricity supply sub-projects connected to the national grid in 23 provinces. The two rural electricity supply sub-projects using renewable energy in northern Cao Bang and Bach Long Vy island will also be launched.

However, nearly 2 per-cent of households in remote areas nationwide still have no access to electricity and investment needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas remains significant. According to the MOIT, the medium-term national budget of 2016-2020 can only ensure as much as 8 per-cent of investment to the Programme on power supply to rural, mountainous and islands areas during 2016-2020. The remaining capital will be mobilized largely from ODA, foreign preferential loans and other financial sources. This is also an obstacle to overcome if Viet Nam is to achieve SDG goal 7.4.

In summary, to meet SDG 7 objectives, in addition to continued investments in energy infrastructure with prioritized renewable energy development, Viet Nam must further improve its institutional and policy system towards more sustainable energy production and use. Its focus should be the development and implementation of energy consumption norms for industries and implementation of energy audits for all users.

#### **Box 7. Electricity supply programme to rural, mountainous and island areas: Initial results and challenges ahead**

The GSO reports that after years of intensive investment and implementation, the electricity supply system has reached all communes and most villages and hamlets. This is the result of the Programme of supplying electricity to rural, mountainous and island areas during 2013-2020. Given total investment of VND 28 trillion, the programme plans to supply electricity to 12,140 villages without electricity nationwide. After five years' implementation, numerous people in remote and isolated villages can now enjoy access to electricity to promote socio-economic development and improve living standards.

However, the goal of bringing civilized light to remote areas has yet to be achieved. MOIT figures show that as many as 251,308 rural households in 6,162 villages in all three regions of Viet Nam can not access the national electricity grid, while the programme only has less than two years to go.

According to Electricity of Viet Nam (EVN), although the electricity sector has made great efforts to implement the electricity supply programme to rural, mountainous and island areas, a lack of capital is hindering achievement of targets. During 2016-2020, the estimated programme capital demand will reach VND13,720 billion, whereas the State budget only allocated VND 1,450 billion, equivalent to 10.6 per-cent of total needs. During 2011-2015, EVN implemented rural investment projects nationwide, focused on ethnic minority areas in the north, Central Highlands and southwest regions worth USD 640 million and nearly VND 3,500 billion. The majority of funding was foreign loans.

Therefore, to supply electricity to remote and ethnic minority areas to reduce poverty and development gaps, efforts from sectors and local authorities are needed as well as capital from development partners, domestic and international organizations. This is essential for the programme of rural, mountainous and island power supply to reach its target.

*Source: Electricity of Viet Nam (EVN)*

## 6.8. SDG 8: Ensure sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment and decent work for all

### (1) Review of policies related to SDG 8

Important laws that contribute to the promotion of SDG 8 include: the Labour Code, Law on Employment, Law on Labour Safety and Sanitation, Law on Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises and Law on Planning.

The Government has issued policies related to SDG 8, namely: National Green Growth Strategy 2011-2020 and Vision to 2050; the Overall Plan for economic restructuring associated with the transformation of the growth model towards improved quality, efficiency and competitiveness capacity during 2013-2020; the National Action Program on Sustainable Production and Consumption by 2020 with a vision to 2030; the National Program on Industrial Promotion until 2020; The Scheme for Supporting Small and Medium enterprises in the development of sectoral linkage clusters, the Strategy for Labour and Social International Integration until 2020 with a vision to 2030<sup>59</sup>; the Youth Development Strategy 2011-2020<sup>60</sup>, the Viet Nam ILO National Cooperation Program for Sustainable Employment 2017-2021<sup>61</sup>, Tourism Development towards Sustainability which is promoted through the Viet Nam Tourism Development Strategy to 2020 with a vision to 2030 and the Master Plan of Viet Nam Tourism Development to 2020 with a vision to 2030.

However, policies related to SDG 8 still have some shortcomings that need to be improved. Some of the concepts of UN goals are not covered in the indicators commonly mentioned in Vietnamese documents or ones are not fully interpreted<sup>62</sup>. Viet Nam's goals are largely general for national coverage and lack inclusive development aspect as well as the focus on the marginalized. Some M&E indicators proposed by the UN have not been systematically collected and their data are not available in Viet Nam, for example indicators of raw material footprints, and detailed domestic raw material consumption by national and international sub-sector categories.

### (2) Major results of SDG 8

Viet Nam's annual average GDP growth of 5-6 per-cent has exceeded the SDG 8.1 target for the three year period of 2015-2017 (6.7 per-cent, 6.2 per-cent and 6.8 per-cent respectively). During the first three year period of the SDGs – 2015 - 2017 labour productivity was higher than that during 2011-2015, i.e. 6.5 per-cent, 5.3 per-cent and 6.0 per-cent respectively. In 2017 alone, 126,859 enterprises were newly established, creating an additional 161,300 jobs. This is the initial result of restructuring, transformation of the growth paradigm, improving the business environment and facilitating the operations of enterprises (see Figure 12).

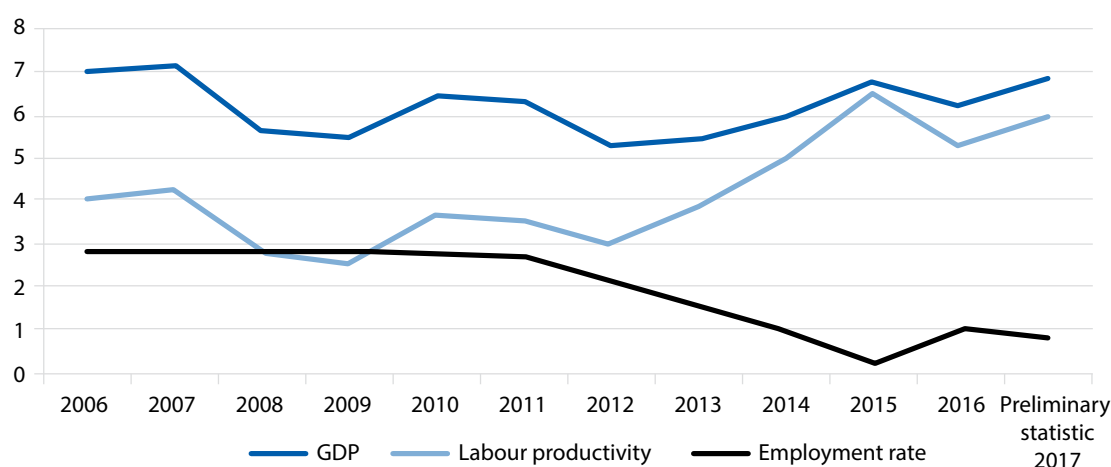
59 To promote the implementation of Decent Work Country Programme in 2017-2021; increase quality job opportunities for workers; implement gender equality, narrow gender gaps, eliminate step by step gender prejudice and inequality in social life, especially jobs in rural, poor, mountainous areas and the areas resided by ethnic minority people (Decision 145/QĐ-TTg).

60 Focus on labourers at working age (Decision 2474/QĐ-TTg issued 30 December 2011).

61 The program aims at decent work for all, with priorities to promote decent work and enabling environment for sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities; reduce poverty by extending social protection for all and reduce unacceptable forms of work, especially for the most vulnerable; and build effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights and at work.

62 For example, Viet Nam often sets out GDP growth target (economic target) and rarely mentions GDP growth/capita (this target covers also the social aspect, which is population growth), and this is not a planned target although it can be calculated on the basis of GDP and population data.

**Figure 12. Annual growth in GDP, labour productivity and number of employed workers, 2006-2017 (per-cent)**



Source: Calculation based on GSO data

Due to the implementation of the Law on Public Investment in 2015, public expenditure, investment efficiency, extensive investments, investment waste and losses and basic capital construction debts have gradually been controlled. However, resource utilization, especially the use of state resources, has not been significantly improved. From 2010 to now, the incremental capital output ratio (ICOR<sup>63</sup> index) has always been above 6 (except for 2011 and 2015) while the index was only 3 to 4 in the region). Given the current state of the budget, the trend of public investment boosting Viet Nam's growth is unlikely to continue. To maintain sustainable growth, Viet Nam needs to prioritize and promote innovation, creativity and efficiency with a priority given to improved efficiency of public investments.

Improved energy efficiency in production and consumption to reduce energy use is a significant measure that will reduce the impact of economic growth on the environment. Over the past decade, Viet Nam has implemented a series of policies and measures adopting this direction, such as by prioritizing renewable energy development in line with Viet Nam's conditions, and promoting economical and efficient energy use in production and domestic uses through the application of energy-saving technologies. Resolution No. 142/QH13/2016 of the National Assembly setting out the 5-year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020 has integrated the target of reduced energy consumption per GDP into the national socio-economic index system.

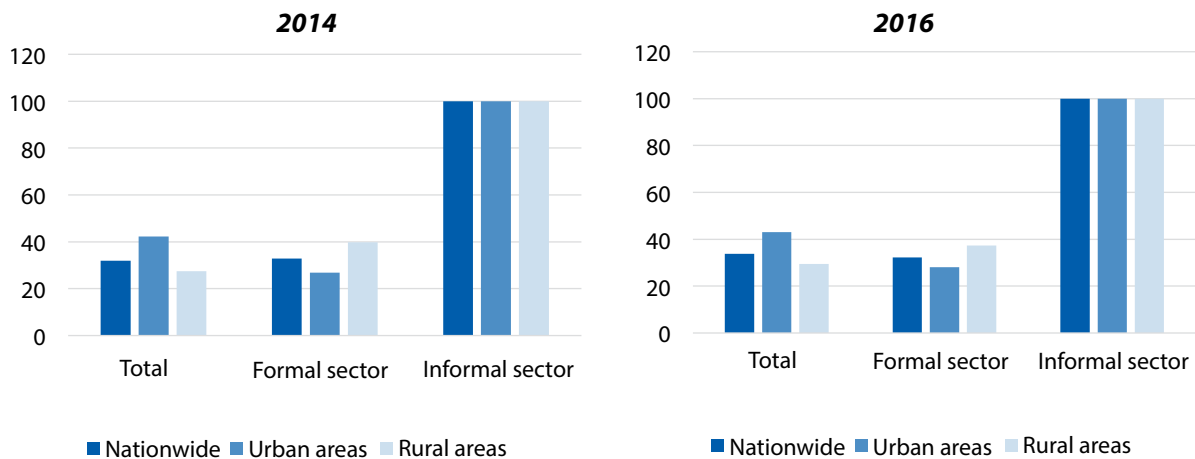
Full employment, productivity and equity demonstrate the implications of the concept of decent and sustainable employment, which is reflected through the number of new jobs created and the quality of jobs. The number of jobs created in the economy has increased, yet slowed down from 2.7 per-cent in 2010 to 0.2 per-cent in 2015. In 2016 and 2017, employment growth rates were higher, i.e. 0.9 per-cent and 0.8 per-cent, respectively. Employment growth among women is generally higher than that for men, except in 2015 when the number of female workers in the economy was slightly reduced (-0.4 per-cent). In 2017, as many as 1,641,000 jobs were created in the country (an increase of 1.5 per-cent compared to 2016), of which 1,505,000 workers were employed inside the country.

An important criterion for evaluating employment quality is the income of workers. The income of paid employees in the public sector has generally improved. Improvement of employment quality is also reflected in the shift of labour from areas with low and unstable productivity and income, where

63 Incremental Capital-Output Ratio.

labour conditions are not ensured (the informal sector and agro-aquaculture-forestry sectors), to higher income areas. Moreover, informal employment still makes up a large share of the labour market in Viet Nam i.e. 33.8 per-cent.

**Figure 13. Proportion of workers in informal employment (per-cent)**



Source: Labour and employment survey 2014, 2016

By the end of 2016, as many as 17,000 people with disabilities had received vocational training and jobs. There are 15,000 disabled workers working in 400 enterprises, some of which owned by people with disabilities and 16,000 people working in household based enterprises or being self-employed<sup>64</sup>.

The issue of ensuring a safe working environment for employees is increasingly emphasized. Serious occupation-related accidents and incidents shall be promptly inspected and examined for causes and accountability to avoid negative impacts.

Recently, the unemployment rate has remained above 2 per-cent, with the urban unemployment ratio above 3 per-cent. Under-employment is less than 2 per-cent and is mainly found in rural areas. In the first three years of implementation of the SDGs (2015-2017), the unemployment and under-employment rates have remained stable at low levels. However, employment is generally not sustainable when most of the employment is short-term with low productivity and income. There are income gaps between men and women for the same type of work. Women are still found in the informal employment sector with low incomes and an unsecured and unstable working environment.

The tourism industry in Viet Nam has increasingly contributed to larger share of GDP – from 3.4 per-cent in 2006 to 3.6 per-cent in 2010, 3.7 per-cent in 2015 and 3.8 per-cent in 2016. However, the contribution of the sector has not reached the tourism development potential of Viet Nam.

Some of challenges being faced by Viet Nam during the implementation of SDG 8 include: uneven economic growth development between different regions and ethnic groups, and the industrial revolution 4.0 and its far-reaching effects on countries with low development like Viet Nam. Viet Nam's growth rate over time mainly depends on intensive investments with state investment as the majority and with limited efficiency. The productivity of many sectors and fields is low. Production technologies of many enterprises are backward. Resources are utilized in wasteful and inefficient manner. The contribution of Total Factor Productivity (TFP) to growth is limited. National competitiveness has not been significantly improved.

<sup>64</sup> 2016 report on support for persons with disabilities in Viet Nam.

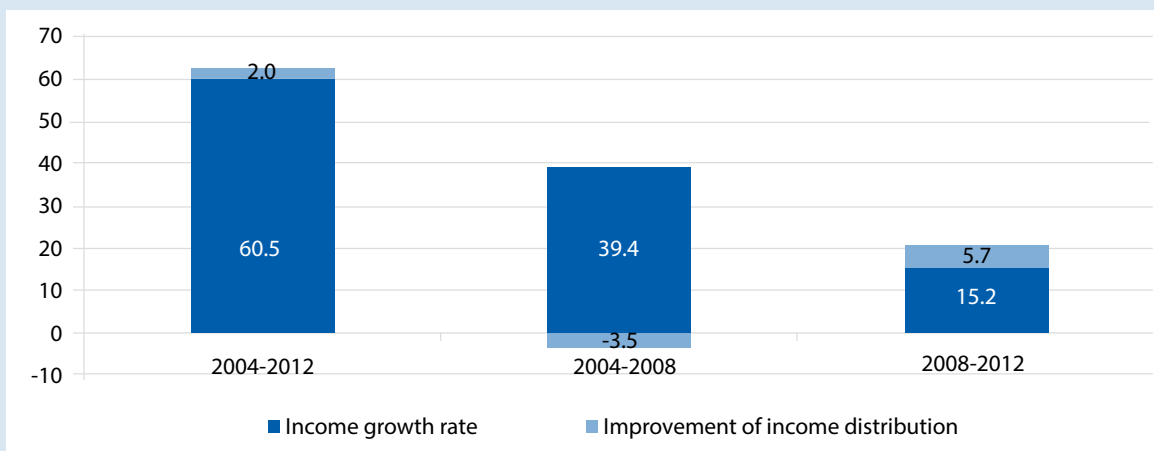
To overcome these difficulties and challenges, Viet Nam should speed up and effectively implement the Master Plan on Economic Restructuring associated with the transformation of the growth paradigm towards improved quality, efficiency and competitiveness for the period 2013-2020. Development of the knowledge economy should be linked with economic development, environmental protection and the green economy. Technologies should be upgraded and renewed to quickly grasp and apply the scientific and technological achievements of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 in industrialization, modernization and in-depth development. The mobilization and effective utilization of resources both inside and outside the country should be enhanced. Priority solutions in infrastructure development in poor areas should be adopted to improve human resource quality and increase start-up support activities so that these areas will not be left behind.

**Box 8. Overwhelming economic growth and poverty reduction in Viet Nam**

Since the beginning of Viet Nam’s economic reform in 1986, the country has maintained a high growth rate for a long time and this has benefited the people. The annual growth rate during 1986-2014 was 6.5 per-cent which is an impressive figure compared to the world average of 2.8 per-cent and to 4.5 per-cent in least developed countries, 3.8 per-cent in low-income countries and 4.8 per-cent in lower-middle income countries in the same period. Average GDP per capita has increased by 21 times, from under USD 100 in the late 1990s to USD 2,190 in 2015. During this time, Viet Nam exceeded the average GDP per capita of USD 1,000 in 2008 to join the lower-middle income group. In a relatively short span of only two decades, about 30 million Vietnamese people have escaped poverty.

Viet Nam has also maintained inequality at a relatively low level. The consumption based GINI index is not high and has fluctuated between 0.35-0.37 in the past decade. Viet Nam is ranked in the middle of the World Economic Forum’s inequality scale for lower-middle income countries, i.e. 17<sup>th</sup> out of 34 countries. Most Vietnamese people have joined in and benefited from growth due to the inclusive nature of growth. During 2004-2012, the inclusive growth index increased by 62.5 per-cent or 6.3 per-cent per year, mainly thanks to increased income of 60.5 per-cent or 6.1 per-cent per year. Income distribution was slightly improved, i.e. 2 per-cent during this period or 0.2 per-cent per year, reflecting the average income distribution pattern and relatively rapid income growth; yet income distribution remains and has significantly increased the inclusive growth index. Inclusive growth means that most Vietnamese people benefit from a steady increase of income.

**Figure 14. Change of inclusive growth targets, 2004-2012**



Source: UNDP, 2016

## 6.9. SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure; promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization; and foster renovation

The contents of SDG 9 are reflected in many of policies and strategies of Viet Nam. The Viet Nam Transport Development Strategy to 2020, Viet Nam Railway Transport Development Strategy to 2020 with a vision to 2050 and Resolution No.13-NQ/TW dated 16 January 2012 on Building a Comprehensive Infrastructure System to make Viet Nam a Modern Industrialized Nation by 2020 are important policies that orient the transport infrastructure development of the country. The formation of a comprehensive infrastructure system is considered one of the three breakthroughs of the 2011-2020 Socio-Economic Development Strategy and is also an important factor that has promoted and restructured the economy. Sustainable and inclusive industrialization is also one of the main focuses of the Socio-Economic Development Strategy, Viet Nam Sustainable Development Strategy, and Viet Nam Industrial Development Strategy to 2025 with a vision to 2035<sup>65</sup>.

However, policies relating to SDG 9 still have some gaps to be improved. Some concepts of the UN goals are not covered in the indicator groups that are commonly mentioned in legal documents of Viet Nam or not fully interpreted as “inclusive”. Some implications of the SDG goal have not been addressed in the policies and strategies of Viet Nam, such as credibility, sustainability, and equitable access. Some M&E indicators proposed by the UN have not been systematically collected in Viet Nam<sup>66</sup>.

### **(2) Major results of SDG 9**

In the past, there has been intensive investment in the infrastructure system with highest proportion coming from the GOVN, accounting for 20 per-cent of the total state sector investment. There has been significant investment in transport infrastructure including roads, railways, airways, maritime and waterways. A number of important and essential works have been put into use to ensure better connections between different parts of the country and improved international trade. This has created a new appearance for the country and positively contributed to socio-economic development, international economic integration and ensured national defence and security. Viet Nam's infrastructure, especially in urban areas, is at the same level as other countries with similar levels of development. Special attention has been paid to rural transportation with many bridges built to facilitate the movement of people, especially in remote and isolated areas. However, the infrastructure system has not met development needs. It is not synchronous, lacking effective connections, and is of low quality, especially in large cities, which has resulted in overloaded traffic and frequent congestion. Much of the infrastructure in areas with severe climate impacts and frequent natural disasters are not sustainable enough to withstand abnormal weather conditions, with limited resilience and recovery capacity.

The number of passengers traveling during 2011-2015 increased by 9.6 per-cent per year, including a growth rate of 14.7 per-cent in the aviation industry. The volume of cargo circulated during 2011-2015 increased by 1.1 per-cent per year on average, including road transport of 7.3 per-cent. Annual transport capacity in 2016 and in the first 9 months of 2017 met targets with 1,160 million tons of cargo transported in 2016, up 10.9 per-cent and 3,313 million arrivals, an increase of 9.4 per-cent compared to 2015. The first 9 months of 2017, transport volume of 1,066.17 million tons was reported an increase of 10.4 per-cent and 3,012.96 million passengers an increase of 11.1 per-cent over the same period in 2016.

<sup>65</sup> In accordance with Decision 879/QĐ-TTg issued on 9 June 2014.

<sup>66</sup> For example, the percentage of rural population living less than 2 km from roads; percentage of the increased value of small-scale industries to the total increased value of the whole industrial sector; percentage of small-scale industry with borrowings and credit limit; CO<sub>2</sub> emission per a unit of added value; percentage of spending for research and development to GDP.

There have also been significant achievements in industrialisation. Although the industry share since 2010 has remained at 26-28 per-cent of GDP, the industrial structure has positively shifted towards a reduced proportion of mining industry and gradually increased proportion of manufacturing and processing industries. The ratios of manufacturing and processing industries contributions to GDP are 13.7 per-cent in 2015; 14.3 per-cent in 2016 and 15.3 per-cent in 2017. Industries, sectors and products have been restructured towards improved national value, value-added, improved quality and higher competitiveness of products. The share of people working in the manufacturing and processing industries in 2015 was 15.3 per-cent, which is higher than the average of 13.9 per-cent during 2011-2014, and continued to rise to 16.6 per-cent in 2016 and 17.3 per-cent in 2017. However, industrialization in Viet Nam is not very sustainable; a lot of industries are not environmentally friendly and inclusive. The development of some industries has not yet relied on competitive advantages and efficient utilization of domestic resources. Labour productivity is low. The ratio of manufacturing and processing industries only made up 13 per-cent of GDP during 2011-2015 which is much lower than that of other countries in the region. Development of a number of industries has been leading to pollution and destroying the environment with extremely serious consequences.

The IT infrastructure in Viet Nam has improved considerably in recent years. Viet Nam is considered as a country with high prevalence of telecommunications services compared to other countries in the world. By December 2017, the proportion of households having access to Internet is 28.35 per-cent with 54.19 per-cent of the population recorded as internet users (equivalent to 50 million people, compared to 30.8 million in 2013, higher than the world average of 33 per-cent.)<sup>67</sup> The number of telephone subscribers in 2016 was 130 million including mobile subscribers of 121 million, equivalent to 130.8 per-cent of the population. There are an estimated 10.5 million broadband internet subscribers. This is a very high figure compared to many countries at same level of development. In 2017, mobile communications have taken new steps with the deployment of 4G-LTE networks on the 1800 MHz band by internet service providers across the country. From mid-2017, the innovation capacity of Viet Nam increased by 12 grades and it is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in the world for the first time thanks to the important contribution of information technology<sup>68</sup>. In 2016, in the UN e-Government survey, Viet Nam is ranked 89<sup>th</sup> out of 193 countries in the world 10 grades higher compared to 2014 – and has jumped from the group of countries with average development to the highly developed group.

Expenditures on science and technology are still very low<sup>69</sup>. The total social investment in science and technology has never exceeded 0.6 per-cent of GDP. The number of scientific research staff per 1 million people has remained stable at nearly 2,800 people since 2012.

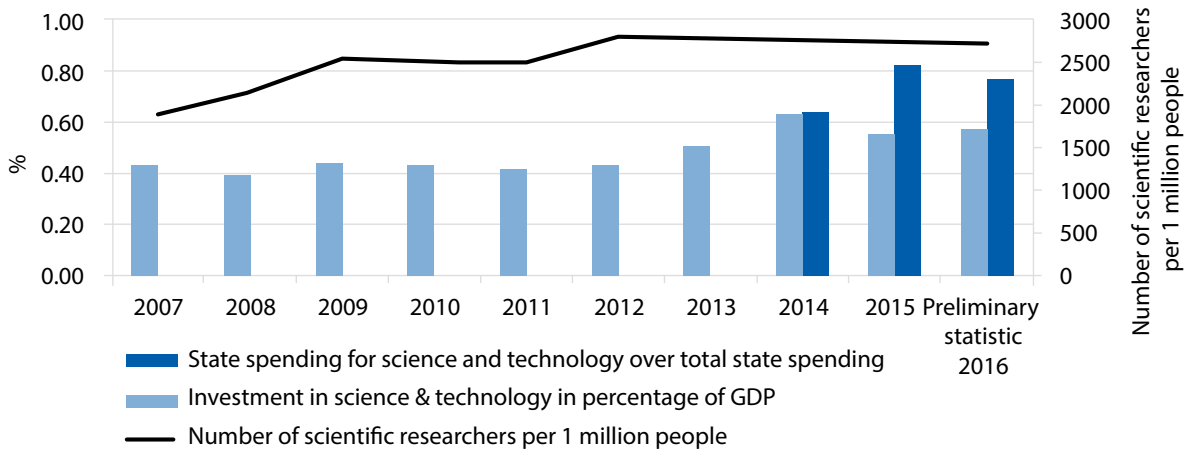
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67 MOIC.

68 Source: *VITIC (2017)*.

69 Regular budget for science and technology makes up less than 1 per-cent of total state budget. This rate was 0.83 per-cent and slightly declined to 0.77 per-cent in 2016.



**Figure 15. Proportion of spending on science and technology (per-cent) and number of science and technology staff/1 million people**

Source: Calculations based on data from GSO website

The state budget spending on science and technology development is extensive and inefficient. The science and technology potential has not met requirements. Management mechanisms for science and technology are slowly reformed, especially in terms of financial autonomy, self-responsibility and rewarding talent. The human resource capacity in science and technology is limited and there are insufficient leading scientists. The number of inventions and scientific works published in prestigious international magazines is still modest.

In order to successfully implement the SDG 9, Viet Nam needs to continue to significantly improve the synchronicity, reliability, accountability and sustainability of transport systems and the connectivity of all types of vehicles nationwide. Industrial growth should be maintained in sustainable manner and a “green industry” should be promoted. Mechanisms and policies to strongly promote scientific research, technological development and technological innovations by enterprises should be amended and supplemented in order to boost technology supply and demand.

### Box 9. Green and Sustainable Banking in Viet Nam

The restructuring of Viet Nam’s economy towards green growth, climate change response and sustainable development requires significant financial resources. According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the ability of the state budget to meet funding needs is very limited. Private financing plays a vital role to close the financing gap by contributing about two-thirds of the green financing need.

In the current practice, most of the external financing for local businesses come from banks capital (accounting for 70-80 per-cent). Therefore, green banking system reform is the key to unlock this capital source, mobilise and channel private capital flows towards green and sustainable investments. For the past few years, the State Bank of Viet Nam (SBV-the central bank of Viet Nam) has undertaken fundamental steps to establish policy frameworks that enable green banking practices and green financial products. These efforts contribute directly to the VSDG target 9.3a. “Improve banks’ supply capacities and businesses’ absorptive capacities, with regards to green credit and green banking services”.



The SBV Banking Sector Strategy encompasses green and sustainable banking. The Directive by the Governor on promoting Green Credit and Environmental and Social Risk Management in green credit granting activities was issued in 2015. Later, the Green Project Catalogue with classification and definition of six green sectors was introduced in 2017 and applied on voluntary basis for screening loans at 23 banks. This common green taxonomy provides consistency and clarity on what investments can be considered as green and serves as a basis for reporting to SBV as required by SBV in 2017 on green credit reporting. These report data can be used by SBV for monitoring and developing green credit policies and green credit programs to promote investments in green sectors. SBV has launched some credit programs with incentives to encourage participation from local commercial banks in channelling capital into priority green sectors, such as organic and hi-tech agriculture. Further green credit programs on green energy and waste management are planned. These efforts and achievements from green banking sector reform have been acknowledged in the Global Progress Report by the Sustainable Banking Network (February 2018). According to the assessment, Viet Nam is at an established stage of sustainable finance development, along with China, Brazil, Indonesia and Colombia.

*Source: Compiled from press releases by SBV and Macroeconomic Reform/Green Growth Programme funded by BMZ and implemented by GIZ in cooperation with SBV.*

## 6.10. SDG 10: Reduce inequalities

### (1) Review of policies related to SDG 10

Throughout institutional reform, Viet Nam has always recognized the right to equality of opportunity for all as codified in the Constitution. Article 16 of the Constitution 2013 states that “*Everyone is equal before the law. No one shall be discriminated against based on his or her political, civic, economic, cultural or social life*”. In order to continue the institutionalization of the Constitution, the National Assembly of Viet Nam has adopted many important laws, such as the Civil Code, Law on Access to Information, Budget Law and Public Investment Law, Law on Legal Aid, and Law on Religion and Folk Beliefs. Decision 225/QĐ-TTg on administration reforms during 2016-2020 was issued on 4 February 2016 to promote greater transparency and participation of people in national and local socio-economic issues. Many Decrees and Decisions of the Prime Minister have been issued related to supporting policies for education, health care, preferential credit, housing, legal aid, production development, science and technology development, ethnic minorities, vocational training and employment.<sup>70</sup>

Viet Nam ratified the United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in February 2015 and promulgated the Plan for the Implementation of the Convention and the Disability Support Program for the period 2012-2030<sup>71</sup>. Viet Nam has paid special attention to and implemented many projects and policies to<sup>72</sup> narrow the socio-economic gaps between ethnic groups.

<sup>70</sup> Policies to reduce inequality include exemptions from tuition fees for children in public schools; policy to subsidise food for children aged 3-5 years attending pre-schools; health care policy and free health insurance cards for children under 6 and some other groups of children; policies for the informal labor sector and migrant population, in order to reduce the gap and discrimination between those with and without permanent resident registrations. The GOVN has issued a decision on the abolition of permanent resident registrations and other citizen related papers in administrative procedures, complying with the Law on Residence. The Law on Legal Aid (2017) provides for the beneficiaries of legal aid, which include victims of domestic violence, children, ethnic minorities, poor people, and people with disabilities.

<sup>71</sup> Recent data indicate that about 32 per-cent of children with partial disabilities and 90 per-cent of children with disabilities aged 5-17 have never attended school or have dropped out of school (MOET and UNICEF, 2013). In 2011, MOET estimated 1.2 million children with disabilities (MOET, 2011).

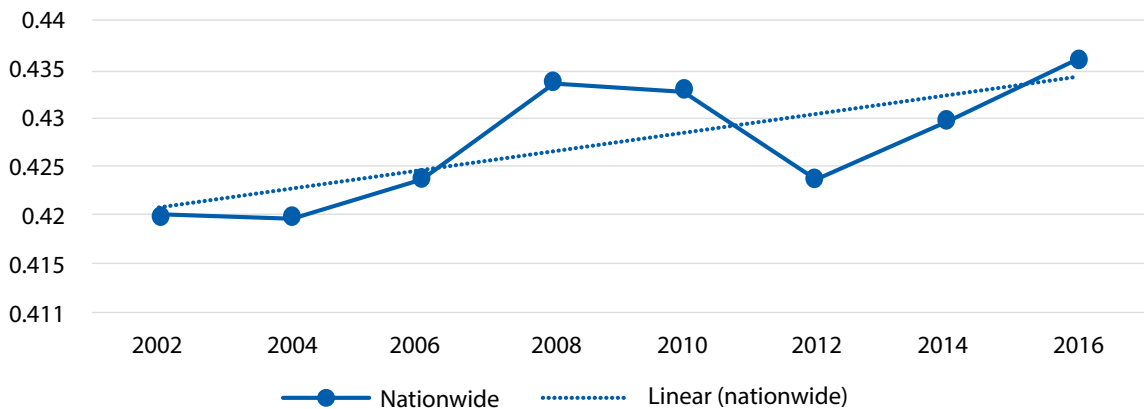
<sup>72</sup> Scheme to support socio-economic development of ethnic groups with very small population for 2016-2025; Specific policy to support socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas during 2017-2020; Scheme of “Supporting gender equality in ethnic minority areas during 2018-2025”.

However, policies related to SDG 10 still have some shortcomings that need to be addressed: including lack of policies for addressing inequalities and promoting equitable access to quality basic services for ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, single elderly people and migrants. In particular, there is a lack of comprehensive policies for social security, expansion of social insurance schemes, unemployment insurance and health insurance for informal groups. The GOVN should work to achieve the goal of expanding social protection coverage to 50 per-cent by 2020 and eliminate gender discrimination in retirement age, pension calculation formulas and social protection policies for the elderly.

## (2) Major results of SDG 10

The GOVN continues to pursue a sustainable poverty reduction program for the period 2016-2020 working towards zero inequality. The poverty rate (by expenditure) among the bottom 40 per-cent of incomes declined on average by 6.8 per-cent per year from 1993-2014. Viet Nam is also making progress in reducing income inequalities with the GINI index reaching 0.43 in 2016<sup>73</sup>. (Figure 16)

**Figure 16. Income distribution inequality coefficient (GINI coefficient)**



Source: GSO, 2016

Despite progress in poverty reduction, there is a rising trend of a gap in living standards between different groups. It is noteworthy that gender inequality has increased in the Northern Uplands and the Central Highlands where ethnic minority groups mainly reside. This will be one of the challenges for sustainable poverty reduction in particular and for future sustainable development of Viet Nam in general.

Viet Nam is committed to measures for promoting the participation in political, economic and social life of all persons, regardless of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion, education, economic condition or other status<sup>74</sup>.

Regarding social security and social insurance, Viet Nam has developed and implemented policies to reduce risks to vulnerable groups, poor, near poor and other disadvantaged groups, including further increasing access to public services, access to and use of insurance services, and social security programs (Box 10).

<sup>73</sup> GSO, VHLSS2014.

<sup>74</sup> Good implementation of the grassroots democracy regulations has promoted the role, potential and creativity of the people, encouraged different layers of people to participate actively in movements of patriotic emulation; continuously enhanced democracy in the Party's activities and the State management at different levels; improved democratic atmosphere in the society and community activities; contributed to fulfill political, economic, cultural, social tasks, protected political security and social safety; and built the grassroots political system to be more and more transparent and strong.

Ethnic minority people are encouraged to participate in the political system, social management and state management. In the National Assembly XIV of 2016-2021, there are 86 ethnic minority representatives, accounting for 17.3 per-cent. Socio-economic development policies for ethnic minority areas have achieved positive results. In 2016, the rate of households living in multi-dimensional poverty among ethnic minorities and in mountainous areas decreased by 2 per-cent as compared to 2015 (a reduction of 1.3 per-cent 1.5 per-cent at national level) and 98 per-cent of people who escaped poverty will not fall back into poverty again.

Viet Nam has made an active contribution to raising the voice of developing countries in regional and global mechanisms. Its position has been enhanced at multilateral institutions and fora, which is demonstrated by its election to various agencies of the UN, e.g. the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) from 2014 to 2016, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 2016 to 2018, and the World Heritage Committee and Executive Council of UNESCO from 2015 to 2019. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Vietnam has actively proposed several initiatives such as the Resolution on Climate Change and Child Rights (adopted by UNHRC consensus in July 2016, with 117 countries' support). Viet Nam has actively worked with the UN agencies to implement the "Delivers as One" initiative, promote its proactivity and creativity in management and use of development assistance and make a practical contribution to restructuring of the UN system. Viet Nam is the first country with the UN Green House, which is considered a symbol and example of successful cooperation between the UN and member countries.

Regarding migration and movement of people, Viet Nam is participating in the consultation to develop the content of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, proposed by the UN in September 2016.

However, Viet Nam is facing subjective and objective challenges to securing essential resources for development, especially relating to supporting policies and ensuring the rights of disadvantaged groups in society. The coverage of the social security system is still modest, especially for poor and vulnerable groups, despite certain achievements gained so far. The risk of increased inequality in access to services, especially services related to economic, cultural and social rights, is always present between geographic areas, communities and population groups. Globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 will also worsen such inequality.

#### **Box 10. Viet Nam's efforts to support disadvantaged groups in society**

As one of the nations heavily affected by climate change, with a rapid industrialization and urbanization, Viet Nam has a large number of people in need of social assistance across the country over 25 per-cent of the population.

Over the years, Viet Nam has made continuous efforts to develop a social security system and social assistance to support vulnerable groups. The national welfare system has developed a lifelong approach to addressing risks that come with aging, disability, childhood and unemployment. A network of social assistance facilities has been established and developed in 63 provinces/cities with 418 public and non-public social support facilities, including 195 public facilities and 223 non-public facilities.

Relating to social subsidies for social protection beneficiaries, Viet Nam has provided monthly social subsidies and issued health insurance cards to 2,783,474 people, including 30,292 orphans or abandoned children; 1,524,192 elderly people; 1,126,126 people with disabilities entitled to social subsidies; 5,006 people living with HIV/AIDS in poor households; 97,858 single parents raising their children in poor households.

As many as 1,524,192 elderly people are receiving monthly social allowances and about 10,000 elderly people are being cared for in social protection centres. As of June 2017, the number of people with disabilities receiving monthly social allowances is 913,262. Moreover, people with disabilities have access to health, education and vocational training.

Viet Nam has made significant progress in early childhood development and education. There is no gender difference in the enrolment rate at any level. All children under the age of 6 in Viet Nam are entitled to free medical examination and treatment at public health facilities. Viet Nam is implementing a project on community based care for disadvantaged children, a pilot model of vocational training associated with job creation for children in especially difficult circumstances, and a pilot model of families and individuals adopting children in especially difficult circumstances.

*Source: Summary from the following Reports: Report on evaluation of the implementation of targets and tasks in 2017, proposing objectives, tasks and directions for 2018 relating to social support, MOLISA, 2017; Viet Nam Child Situation Report, MOLISA, UNICEF, 2017.*

## **6.11. SDG 11: Promote sustainable and resilient urban and rural development; ensure safe living and working environments; ensure reasonable distribution of population and work force by region**

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 11**

Legislation and policies for implementation of SDG 11 (including key documents the Law on Housing and the National Strategy for Housing Development until 2020 and Vision to 2030) have laid the foundation for all citizens to appropriately access housing services. Decisions to adjust the Transport Development Strategy of Viet Nam to 2020 and Vision to 2030 and the Project on Restructuring of the Transport Sector for Industrialization, Modernization and Sustainable Development until 2020 are aimed at developing a sustainable transport system. In addition, the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, particularly the Master Plan on Disaster Response, Search and Rescue to 2020, has concretized disaster prevention and control, response, search and rescue. The National Strategy for Environmental Protection up to 2020 and Vision to 2030 aims at reducing environment-related damage to people. The Orientation for the Development of Urban Drainage and Industrial Parks in Viet Nam by 2025, with Vision to 2050, has specified water drainage issues in urban areas and industrial zones for action.

In order to promote sustainable urban development and increase resilience, Viet Nam has promulgated the Law on Urban Planning and Master Plan Orientation for Viet Nam's Urban System Development to 2025 and Vision to 2050. The National Strategy on Climate Change and the Scheme of Urban Development in response to Climate Change during 2013-2020 set out strategic tasks to achieve climate change adaptation and mitigation. The goal of sustainable rural development is also one of the priority orientations for sustainable development in the Strategy of Sustainable Development during 2011-2020 and is concretized through the NTP for New Rural Development during 2010-2020.

However, policies related to SDG 11 have not included adequately some M&E indicators proposed by the UN and these indicators have not been systematically collected in Viet Nam<sup>75</sup>.

75 E.g. The ratio of urban population living in slums, illegal settlements or inappropriate houses, the ratio of population having convenient access to public transportation disaggregated by age group, sex and persons with disabilities, and the ratio of cities where residents can participate in urban planning and management of the cities in a regular and democratic manner.

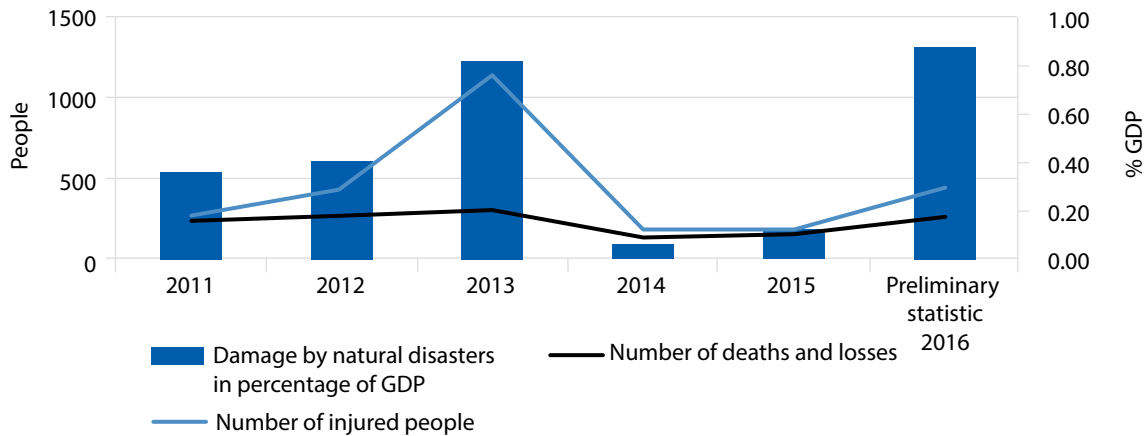
## **(2) Major results of SDG 11**

Viet Nam is experiencing strong urban development, with more than 770 cities, towns and rural towns across the country. As such, housing has rapidly improved. Housing area per capita has increased from 16.7 m<sup>2</sup> in 2009 to 23.4 m<sup>2</sup> in 2017 and the proportion of households with simple and temporary houses decreased from 9.2 per-cent in 2014 to 7.8 per-cent in 2016. Given such achievements, the realization of SDG 11.1 is feasible. However, safe and affordable housing remains a problem for poor and near-poor households due to high costs compared to their income, despite support and subsidies from the GOVN. According to data from the Ministry of Construction (MOC) in 2017, there were 2,500 old apartment blocks (more than 3,000,000 m<sup>2</sup>) built before 1994, including more than 600 damaged blocks.

Viet Nam has policies to encourage development and use of public passenger transport in urban areas, instead of private transport, towards sustainable and environmental-friendly transport systems. Given the significantly improved traffic systems recently, people are travelling more easily, thanks to better access to all means of transport. The number of passengers during 2011-2015 increased by 9.6 per-cent/year, including the aviation industry with the highest growth rate of 14.7 per-cent during the time, 11.2 per-cent in 2015 and 9.3 per-cent in 2016. Transportation infrastructure ensures accessibility for people with disabilities and as much as 65 per-cent of its capacity is qualified and meets demands of all customers. Some 30 per-cent of inter-provincial, 70 per-cent of inter-city bus stops and 100 per-cent of buses have priority seats, all railway stations have priority doors and 57.6 per-cent of national railway stations have convenient shuttle services for people with disabilities who use wheelchairs. However, land area for urban transport (especially in big cities) has not met relevant national standards. Traffic in Viet Nam is not yet safe, accessible nor sustainable. The main means of transport for Vietnamese people is still motorbikes. Public transport vehicles are not prevailing and convenient, mainly bus system other than multiple means of transport. Logistics services are limited in terms of deployment and connection.

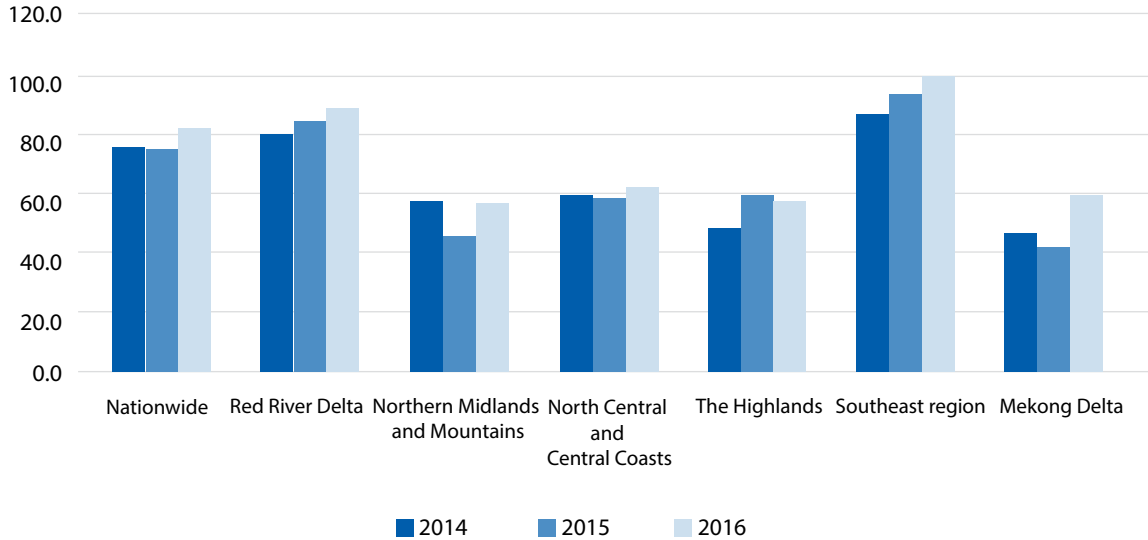
Cities and towns are promoting the construction, renovation and expansion of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, clean water supply facilities, drainage, electricity and lighting to meet increasing needs of urban residents. Rural infrastructure has also been significantly improved, with more than 99 per-cent of communes have roads built to the communes' centres, covered by the national grid, primary schools and kindergartens, health clinics, new and improved irrigation systems and clean water supply systems. By the end of 2016, up to 4,498 communes had concentrated clean water works.

Viet Nam is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters and climate change, especially storms, flash floods, landslides and droughts. Such events have intensified during 1990-2017 and have caused losses of human life and damage to the economy. However, capacity to respond quickly and effectively to climate change and natural disasters is still limited.

**Figure 17. Damage caused by natural disasters in 2011-2016**

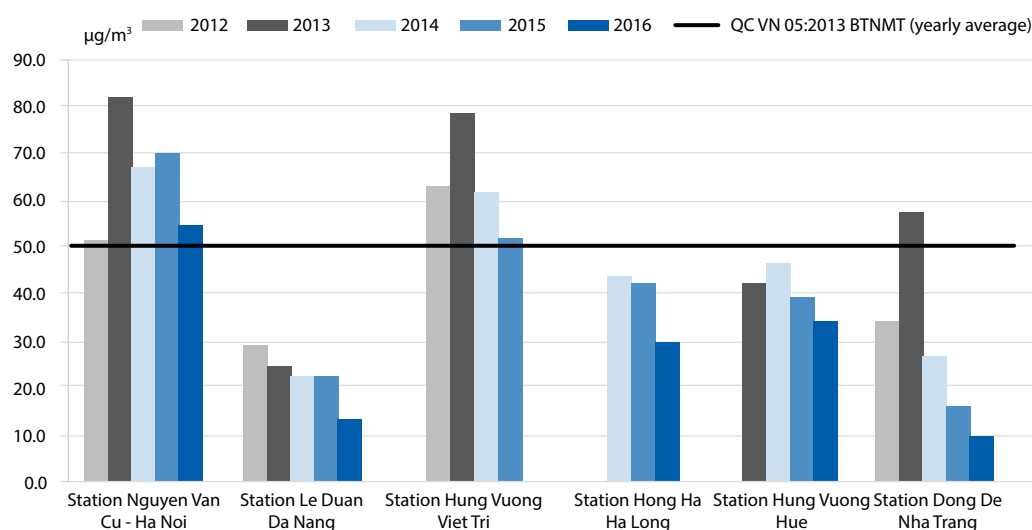
Source: GSO

The collection and treatment of normal solid waste has improved, with approximately 80 per-cent treated in 2016. The South-East is the leading region in treating normal solid waste, with almost all normal solid waste collected and treated in compliance with national standards and technical regulations. This region is followed by the Red River Delta, with 90 per-cent of solid waste treated.

**Figure 18. Percentage of collected normal solid waste treated in compliance with national standards and technical regulations (per-cent)**

Source: GSO

However, Viet Nam's urban areas are generally not comprehensively nor sustainably planned. Moreover, participatory settlement planning and management capacity is weak. Viet Nam has implemented emission controls on cars, yet the target emission standard is low and does not meet the objective of reducing air pollution in urban areas. Viet Nam is currently studying measures to raise emission standards for cars. In some large cities like the capital Ha Noi, the number of days with dust levels of  $PM_{10}$  and  $PM_{2.5}$  exceeding the allowable limit of Vietnamese standards is still relatively high.

**Figure 19. Variation of PM<sub>10</sub> concentration at some automatic and continuous monitoring stations**

Source: MONRE, 2016

For successful implementation of SDG 11, Viet Nam must further improve its policies to facilitate housing development within all economic sectors and people. These policies apply to encouraging the use of new, advanced and environmentally friendly construction materials, introducing new housing technologies to ensure good quality and low prices, raising the quality of planning and implementation management at all levels, improving institutions for sustainable urban development management, improving the planning of waste collection and treatment systems as well as step-by-step construction and operation of such systems. These policies also include conducting concentrated waste water treatment in urban centres to Grade IV or higher and monitoring waste water post-treatment as well as closely strengthening and monitoring implementation of the National Strategy on Integrated Solid Waste Management.

#### **Box 11. Policies to support housing development for social policy beneficiaries who cannot afford houses at market prices and their initial results**

The Law on Housing 2014 and Decree No.100/2015/ND-CP specify incentive mechanisms and define responsibilities of relevant agencies in the development of social housing.

The development and implementation of social housing mechanisms and policies have benefited millions of households and individuals who receive State support to improve housing. As of 2017, Viet Nam had provided housing support to 121,361 households with meritorious services, including 63,417 newly-built houses and 57,623 upgraded ones.

Currently, provinces are implementing support activities to 6,719 households, including 2,333 newly built and 4,386 improved or renovated ones, 373,400 ethnic minority households have been supported to improve their houses under Programme 134, 900,000 houses of gratitude have been built, 330,000 rural poor households with housing difficulties have been supported under Programme 167, Programme 167 phase 2 has continued (in accordance with Decision No.33/2015/QĐ-TTg) to support 48,242 households from October 2017 and 130,600 households have been floodproofed under programme "Building residential clusters and houses in flooded areas of the Mekong Delta, Phase I". These programmes are still being implemented nationwide.



Regarding houses for low-income people and workers in industrial parks nationwide, as many as 186 projects with 75,700 flats equivalent to 3.7 million m<sup>2</sup> (including 100 social housing projects for industrial park workers, 86 social housing projects for low-income people) have been launched. At present, provinces are conducting 191 projects, building 163,800 flats (including 70 social housing projects for industrial park workers and 121 social housing projects for low-income persons). Moreover, the social housing credit package during 2013-2015 (VND 30,000 billion) supported more than 56,000 households. Since 2016, when this support package ended, the social housing loan policy has followed in accordance with the Law on Housing and Decree No.100/2015/ND-CP through the Social Policy Bank and credit institutions.

*Source: MOC*

## 6.12. SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 12**

Viet Nam has issued numerous policies related to SDG 12, especially the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2011-2020, National Strategy on Green Growth in 2022-2020 and Vision to 2050, and Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production until 2020. The foundation for these policies was the issuance of the Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy. Particularly, the GOVN issued the NAP on Sustainable Production and Consumption until 2020 and Vision to 2030. This is the most comprehensive and direct document which explicitly mentions SDG 12 and is oriented towards sustainable production and consumption for Viet Nam until 2030.

Overall, these policies specify SDG 12 targets to be achieved by 2020, 2025 and even 2030. Especially, the NAP on Sustainable Production and Consumption is ambitious in that it states Viet Nam will have basically transformed its production and consumption models towards sustainability by 2030. This confirms the determination and commitment of the GOVN to transform the nation's production and consumption models towards sustainability.

### **(2) Major results of SDG 12**

The National Strategy on Green Growth has achieved considerable results, making a contribution to greening production and consumption. Notably, stakeholders' awareness (authorities, enterprises and people) of the necessity to restructure the economy towards a green growth model has been broadened, promoting implementation of SDG 12.

After 10 years' active implementation of projects promoting cleaner production among industrial enterprises through GOVN programmes and support from development partners, thousands of Vietnamese enterprises have been engaged in projects that harness cleaner production and energy efficiency. The Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production has been widely implemented in all 63 provinces/cities, with participation of more than 9,000 enterprises in the mining, steel manufacturing, food and beverage, chemical, construction and other processing industries. Numerous sustainable industrial production models and sustainable product designs have been developed. However, they have been applied on a small scale, mostly due to development partners' support. During 2011-2015, Viet Nam saved 5.6 per-cent in energy, equivalent to nearly 11.3 million tonnes of oil equivalent (TOE). Particularly, the energy intensity of energy-intensive industries has declined: 8.1 per-cent in steel, 6.3 per-cent in cement and 7.3 per-cent in textile industries. These results set in the Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production in Table 3 show that Viet Nam has, in general, being on the right track in achieving the set targets.



**Table 3. Results of the Strategy on Cleaner Industrial Production**

Indicators	Target of the Strategy		Implemented in 2015
	During 2010-15	During 2016-20	
Percentage of industrial production units aware of CP application benefits (per-cent)	50	90	55
Percentage of industrial production units applying CP and able to cut down the consumption of energy, fuel and raw materials per product unit (per-cent)	25	50	24
Percentage of DOITs having full-time cadres fully capable of providing guidance and advice on CP application (per-cent)	70	90	73

Source: Viet Nam Cleaner Production Centre

Regarding waste management and industrial waste mitigation from production through recycling and reusing, Viet Nam has initiated projects to reuse material waste and slagged ash to produce construction materials or recycle waste into energy. However, these projects remain at the pilot stage and are fragmented. The management and treatment of solid waste, especially industrial waste, have not been conducted in an integrated manner. Enterprises, in fact, have not paid much attention to minimizing, recycling, reusing and collecting energy from waste. Therefore, more efforts should be made so Vietnamese enterprises will not only realize the importance of sustainable production as well as consumption, but also take action independently to allow Viet Nam to achieve SDG 12 regarding sustainable production.

So far, 29 provinces have applied the system of rice intensification to 395,000 ha, to create high yields and reduce GHG emissions due to enhanced technology to reduce input costs. Technologies in aquaculture and fisheries processing have been improved, while sustainable models of shrimp-rice production as well as intensive, semi-intensive, extensive, ecological, VietGAP white leg, Biofloc and alternate Giant tiger prawn shrimp farming have been rolled out. Meanwhile seaweed and shrimp farming with bio-products and no chemicals as well as anti-biotics, ecological fish farming have been implemented in a range of provinces and standardized by competent authorities.

Viet Nam has used green labels, initiated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in 2009, to encourage effective production and consumption of natural resources and energy<sup>76</sup>. So far, MONRE has formulated and issued criteria to grant green labeling for nine product groups, such as packaging for washing powder, printing ink, batteries, electric lamps, office equipment and construction materials. However, only four groups have been granted with green label and all relied on support from internationally-supported projects. In addition, energy saving labeling for electric and electronic products has been institutionalized into compulsory requirements for producers as per the Prime Minister's Decision in 2011<sup>77</sup>. In 2017, "the list of devices and equipment subject to energy labeling and application of the minimum energy efficiency, and the road map for implementation" was broadened to cover four other product groups in need of energy labels (home appliances, office and trade equipment, industrial equipment and means of transport)<sup>78</sup>. Viet Nam has also implemented compulsory energy

76 For further information, see <http://vea.gov.vn/vn/khoahoccongnghenhanxanh/nhanxanhvn/Pages/default.aspx>.

77 The Prime Minister's Decision 51/2011/QĐ-TTg issued on 12 September 2011 provides for "the list of devices and equipment subject to energy labeling and application of the minimum energy efficiency, and the road map for implementation".

78 Note that only some products from the listed groups must have energy label. See more at: <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Tai-nguyen-Moi-truong/Quyet-dinh-04-2017-QĐ-TTg-danh-muc-phuong-tien-thiet-bi-phai-dan-nhan-nang-luong-321322.aspx>.

labeling for cars with seven seats or less since 1 January 2015, for cars with seven-nine seats since 1 January 2018 and issued a compulsory roadmap for energy labelling for motorbikes from 1 January 2020.

This labeling is an effective tool to provide consumers with information to realize green and sustainable products and gradually change their consumption patterns towards more sustainability. However, sustainable consumption has not been paid proper attention by enterprises, people and even government ministries/agencies, while activities related to sustainable consumption remain modest and have had minimal impacts.

The business community plays a key role in implementing SDG 12, especially sustainable production and consumption. In recent years, some initiatives and activities have been launched by the business community. Especially, some companies have applied sustainable practices and integrated such practices into their regular reporting<sup>79</sup>. Sustainable enterprise models have been honoured at annual sustainable enterprise development forums, where such companies share their experiences. In order to enhance sustainable development in the business community, the Corporate Sustainability Index (CSI) was formulated by VCCI as a basis to evaluate and select sustainable enterprises in Viet Nam. The VNSI was introduced by the Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange in July 2017 to evaluate the sustainability performance of 20 companies listed on the stock market. These companies have target programmes for sustainable development and report regularly on their social as well as environmental solutions. However, most enterprises in Viet Nam are not fully aware of the benefits from such sustainability reports and just a limited percentage of enterprises prepare such report<sup>80</sup>.

Viet Nam is applying sustainable public procurement practices. Green public procurement has just been applied to energy saving products and is regulated in the Prime Minister's Decision in 2011<sup>81</sup>. With this regulation, agencies that tap into the State budget must buy electric and electronic products with energy-saving labels. However, this decision affects consumption patterns of agencies towards sustainability, while procurement budgets make up a small proportion of total spending. No compulsory regulations have been defined for State budget-dependent agencies to apply green public procurement and no standards nor regulations on green public investment and spending have been set up.

In order to orient consumption towards sustainability, Viet Nam has applied some economic tools such as natural resources taxes of mineral mining and water, an environmental protection tax and environmental protection fees on wastewater<sup>82</sup>. The Law on Environmental Protection 2010 regulated eight groups subject to environmental protection tax, essential goods with possible large-scale impacts on people<sup>83</sup>. However, numerous goods and products which may result in environmental pollution are not subject to environmental protection tax. The Law on Natural Resources 2009 regulates eight groups subject to taxes<sup>84</sup>. However, this tax remains so low that it does not encourage sustainable exploitation of natural resources, especially mineral resources nor does it reduce crude mineral exports and promote value added by increasing processed natural resources before exports. Therefore, the National Assembly is considering revision of the Law on Natural Resources towards higher taxes and more management of

79 Some companies now (mainly big or multi-national companies) have applied sustainable practices and integrated sustainability information in their periodic reports (e.g., Unilever, Heniken, Bao Viet...).

80 A survey conducted by VCCI shows that only 3.9 per-cent of enterprises really have Sustainability Reports.

81 The Prime Minister's Decision 68/2011/QĐ-TTg issued on 12 December 2011 on the list of energy-saving devices that may be purchased by Government budget.

82 Decree 154/2016/ND-CP issued on 16 November 2016 on environmental fee for waste water.

83 Include: gasoline, lubricant, coal, hydro-chloro-fluoro-carbon liquid (HCFC), plastic bags, herbicide, termiticide, forest product preservative, restricted warehouse fumigants. See more at [http://www.moj.gov.vn/vbqp/lists/vn-per-cent20bn-per-cent20php-per-cent20lut/view\\_detail.aspx?itemid=26494](http://www.moj.gov.vn/vbqp/lists/vn-per-cent20bn-per-cent20php-per-cent20lut/view_detail.aspx?itemid=26494).

84 Include: metallic minerals and non-metallic minerals; oil, natural gas, coal gas; products of natural forest (excluding animal); natural aquatic product, including marine plants and animals; natural water (ground water and surface water); natural swallow's nests. See more at <http://hethongphapluatvietnam.net/luat-thue-tai-nguyen-nam-2009.html>.

natural resource exploitation. Importantly, Viet Nam has abolished direct subsidies and is phasing out indirect subsidies for fossil fuels<sup>85</sup>.

Communication to raise public awareness of sustainable production and consumption has been widely implemented through the mass media, which in turn has enhanced awareness of sustainable development for enterprises and consumers. According to the Sustainable Development Report in 2017 by Nielsen, a global marketing research corporation, Vietnamese consumers are the most oriented towards sustainable society and development in South East Asia. This platform should be further developed with attention paid to high-tech agriculture and support of women to master high-tech agriculture models.

Sustainable production and consumption is essential for Viet Nam to achieve SDG 12. Going forward, particular focus should be placed on: i) projects and programmes mentioned in the NAP on Sustainable Production and Consumption, ii) resources should be further mobilized from international sources, the State budget, business community and people to serve capacity building of science and technology towards sustainable production and consumption models, iii) distribution systems should be greened and a national supply chain should be developed and iv) access should be ensured for the poor and vulnerable to benefit from sustainable and safe products.

#### **Box 12. SWITCH Asia Programme in Viet Nam on promoting transformation towards sustainable production and consumption**

SWITCH Asia Programme in Viet Nam is part of the EU's cooperation programme on sustainable development in the region, including Viet Nam. The programme focuses on promoting the transformation towards sustainable production and consumption. It aims to promote participating countries to shift to sustainable production and consumption models through projects in sectors, such as forest development, corporate social responsibility (CSR), energy efficiency, sustainable aquaculture, capacity building and awareness raising for sustainable production and consumption. In Viet Nam, the programme has supported seven projects:

1. **CSR Viet Nam:** Helps Vietnamese SMEs adapt and adopt CSR for improved linkages with global supply chains in sustainable production. This project is conducted by UNIDO in Ha Noi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City. It has made a contribution to raising SMEs' awareness of CSR with its improved multi-dimensions; re-designed the procedure and criteria to select the national CSR prize in 2012, with inclusion of ISO 26000 aspects.

2. **SUPA:** Establish a sustainable Pangasius supply chain in Viet Nam. The project is implemented by Viet Nam Cleaner Production Centre (VNCPC). It aims that at least 70 per-cent of the targeted middle to large pangasius producing and processing SMEs and 30 per-cent of the feed producers in the project will apply cleaner production and use energy efficiently. At least 50 per-cent of targeted processing SMEs will provide sustainable products with ASC standard to EU and other markets.

<sup>85</sup> According to International Energy Agency (IEA), the ratio of fossil fuel subsidy to GDP in Vietnam has been much reduced in recent years, from nearly 4.5 per-cent of GDP to 0.1 per-cent of GDP in 2016, making Vietnam become the country with the lowest subsidy for fossil fuels in the region and in the world (Malaysia: 0.2 per-cent, Thailand: 0.1 per-cent, Indonesia: 1.7 per-cent; China: 0.3 per-cent). This result is attributed to the strong reforms in energy sector, including reform of state owned enterprises in energy sector, reform of energy taxes and prices in line with market mechanism, and enhanced investment in renewable energy projects... However, more attention should be paid to the mitigation of negative impacts of such reforms in order to protect the poor and communities affected by the said abolished subsidy.

3. **MEET-BIS Viet Nam:** Mainstream energy efficiency through Vietnamese business innovation support. It is implemented in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. The project aims to promote sustainable production of urban-based SMEs by supporting development of sustainable markets for affordable water and energy efficiency technologies. The project works with private sector suppliers to develop commercially attractive business innovation packages targeting SMEs.

4. **GetGreen Viet Nam:** Sustainable living and working in Viet Nam, implemented by Delft University of Technology in Ha Noi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. The projects aims at actions to create consumption behavior change towards sustainability. Such actions have great impacts on the environment through the small behaviours of the participants. It also helps improve capacity of consumer protection organizations and the GOVN in persuading and supporting consumers to have more environment-friendly consumption behaviours.

5. **SPIN-VCL:** Sustainable product innovation (SPI) in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. This project is implemented by Delft University of Technology in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. The project helps improve the innovative power of industry to improve environmental and societal quality of products made in the three countries. This is expressed through sustainable production projects here. The project contributes to a decrease in environmental impacts and improve social sustainability aspects connected to products over the whole lifecycle.

6. **Responsible and sustainable trade:** Sustainable and responsible trade promoted to wood-processing SMEs through forest and trade networks in China, India and Viet Nam. The project is implemented by WWF and aims to build capacity of wood processing SMEs for sustainable forest exploitation and wood production. About 600 SMEs of the three project countries apply sustainable production techniques and are certified sustainable forest products to national and international markets.

7. **Sustainable rattan:** Establish a sustainable production system for rattan products in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam. This project is implemented by WWF in the Mekong subregion. It aims that at least 50 per-cent of rattan processing enterprises will be sustainable by 2015, making a contribution to environmental improvements, strengthened competitiveness and poverty alleviation.

*Source: [http://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/13\\_scp\\_in\\_vietnam.pdf](http://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/13_scp_in_vietnam.pdf), Table 13.3.*

## 6.13. SDG 13: Respond in a timely and effective manner to climate change and natural disasters

### (1) Review of policies related to SDG 13

The GOVN signed the UNFCCC on 11 June 1992 and ratified it on 16 November 1994. The Government also signed the Kyoto Protocol on 3 December 1998 and ratified it on 25 September 2002.

To meet these international commitments, the GOVN has endeavoured to implement a co-ordinated policy and organizational system to respond to climate change. The most important orientation documents are the Party Central Committee's Resolution 24-NQ/TW on active response to climate change, the National Strategy on Climate Change and the National Strategy on Green Growth, and the Government's Resolution 120/NQ-CP on sustainable development of the Mekong Delta in adaptation to climate change. These policies are supported by key climate change programs such as the NTP to Respond to Climate Change and Green Growth in 2016-2020, the Plan for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the scheme for managing GHG emissions and carbon credit trading

in the world market. These policies identify overarching goals with a focus on adaptation objectives, and have been made concrete through important projects, programs and a variety of resources for implementation up to 2020. Climate change adaptation issues have been also codified through various legal documents such as the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, the Law on Irrigation, the Law on Water Resources, the Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy and the Law on Environmental Protection. Some guiding documents issued at ministerial level (including action plans to respond to climate change issued by MARD, MONRE, MOTC and MOC) have harmonized contents of the national strategies and action plans with the mandates and tasks of these Ministries and sectors.

However, policies relating to climate change responses still have some shortcomings. Climate change adaptation measures are often proposed separately for individual fields and regions rather than being integrated in a way that can improve the resilience of the affected areas as mentioned in SDG 13. Although the integration of climate change and natural disaster aspects in development strategies, plans and planning has been formalized through different legal documents, the integration process remains inconsistent and lacks guidelines, especially guidelines for vulnerable groups<sup>86</sup>. The development of climate change and disaster risk management policies and strategies has not been based on gender analyses, preventing the identification of climate change impacts on men, women and vulnerable groups, and development of specific solutions for each group. Finally, capacity building activities, especially organizational and management capacity to respond to climate change, are rarely addressed or only addressed minimally<sup>87</sup>.

## **(2) Major results of SDG 13**

Viet Nam has established the National Committee on Climate Change. Apart from MONRE as the lead agency for climate change, most ministries, related agencies and provinces have already set up specialized agencies and units for climate change. Policies and advocacies on climate change, which have been promulgated synchronously and systematically by the GOVN, are important orientations for climate change responses in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam has developed climate change impact scenarios for different regions and is continuing to update these scenarios. Detailed climate change scenarios for 2016 are based on meteorological and hydrological data and sea level updates up to 2014. The topographical data were updated as late as March 2016. Climate change and sea level rise scenarios are available for provinces, islands and archipelagos of Viet Nam.

The capacity of disaster management staff, disaster warning and forecast equipment and disaster forecasting for Viet Nam have received significant investment. Between 2011 and 2016, 69 new meteorological and hydrological stations, 353 rain gauges, 22 salt water measurement points, and 7 provincial hydro-meteorological centres were upgraded, renovated or built. In the *National Plan of Natural Resources and Environmental Monitoring Network during 2016-2025 with a vision to 2030*, Viet Nam sets the target of developing the most modern natural resources and environmental monitoring system in Southeast Asia by 2030. However, so far, the number of invested automatic meteorological stations is only 119 out of 696, i.e. 17 per-cent of those planned<sup>88</sup>. The number of automatic rain and water level gauges is only 236 out of 461 hydrological stations, or 51 per-cent of those planned. The number of automatic rain gauges is 437 out of 4,304, or 10 per-cent of those planned. The number of weather radar stations is 8 out of 21, or 38 per-cent of those planned. The number of automated monitoring

86 This group should be given special attention in the events where disaster forecast and warning are informed, in response to natural disasters, search and rescue in the areas affected by natural disasters and in relief activities.

87 Especially response capacity from community level, particularly the capacity of groups vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change (i.e., women, children, persons with disability, ethnic minority people).

88 National Hydro Meteorological Service, 2017, Report on the implementation and results of Resolution 24-NQ/TW issued on 3 November 2017.

stations is 19 out of 119, or 16 per-cent of those planned. Thus, despite many investment efforts, the meteorological and hydrological forecast system in Viet Nam has not met practical needs, especially for the very short range forecasts and marine forecasts. In the period up to 2030, in order to achieve the set objectives for the monitoring system, more investments should be made available.

In accordance with the Law on Environmental Protection 2005 (implemented in 2006), climate change has been integrated in most strategies, planning and plans through strategic environmental assessment tools.

Viet Nam has mobilized funding from overseas sources for investing in priority climate change response projects at the local level. So far, as much as VND 4,000 billion has been invested in 26 climate change response projects including sea dykes, river dykes, flood control and saline intrusion upgrading projects. Viet Nam also invests in the research and development of disaster preparedness measures, and several outstanding results have been achieved. Flash flood risk zoning maps have been developed for 14 mountainous provinces in the North at a scale of 1:100,000 (showing key factors of topography, geomorphology, plant coverage etc.) which are divided into 5 levels of risk (Very High, High, Medium, Low and Very Low)<sup>89</sup>. Flash flood risk zoning maps have also been developed for five Central Highland provinces and 14 central provinces from Thanh Hoa to Binh Thuan at a scale of 1:50,000. Landslide maps for 15 northern mountainous provinces have been finalized<sup>90</sup>. Risk warning zone maps have been also completed for four provinces: Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, Lao Cai and Yen Bai.

Viet Nam committed<sup>91</sup> that, "By 2030, through domestic resources, Viet Nam will reduce 8 per-cent of total GHG emissions compared to conventional scenarios, including 20 per-cent reduction of emissions per unit of GDP compared to 2010 and an increased forest coverage of 45 per-cent". The 8 per-cent reduction stated above can be made as much as 25 per-cent if international support is received. For protection and development of natural ecosystems and enhanced GHG absorption capacity, Viet Nam has implemented the NAP on GHG emissions mitigation through REDD+. As of 31 December 2016, the total national forest area is 14,377,682 ha, which means a forest coverage of 41.19 per-cent or an increase of 0.35 per-cent compared to 2015. In 2017 forest coverage reached 41.5 per-cent. Since 2011, the national forest area has increased by 989,607 ha, i.e. an average increase of 160,000 ha annually. Despite the increased forest area, forest quality tends to decrease. The natural forest area is reduced by 62,675 ha during 2011-2017 period, mostly in the Central Highlands, the Southwest and the Red River Delta.

Climate change response in Viet Nam still faces some difficulties and challenges. Climate change is an inter-regional issue, yet the current approach is still based on administrative boundaries, which hinders the formulation and implementation of inter-regional projects. Climate change is also creating opportunities for development, yet it is not easy to take advantage of these opportunities, e.g. access to climate funds, access to technology, innovation of growth paradigms and a lack of progress in the participation of the private sector in climate change response. The breadth of the legal framework for climate change response activities is insufficient. The integration of climate change factors into development strategies and plans is limited. Central budget allocation to climate change related activities is insufficient, meeting only 71 per-cent of total capital needs and preventing fulfilment of some targets.

89 Project "Survey, exploration, zoning and warning of the risk of flash floods in mountainous areas of Viet Nam".

90 Project "Survey, exploration, zoning and warning of the risk of flash floods in mountainous areas of Viet Nam".

91 MONRE, technical report for INDC, 2015.



**Box 13. Viet Nam implemented program on reducing GHG emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+)**

Reducing GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) is a mechanism which is designed to provide financial compensation to forest owners and forest users. Under this mechanism, countries will measure and monitor CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from deforestation and forest degradation within their borders. REDD+ helps to ensure co-benefits between climate change adaptation and mitigation such as preventing soil erosion, reducing forest yield loss due to weather effects and contributing to diversified farming systems and agricultural products.

Recognizing the importance and benefits of REDD+, Viet Nam has made positive progress in its implementation. Viet Nam was one of the first nine countries selected to pilot the UN-REDD Programme and was also one of the first countries with an approved proposal for REDD implementation: REDD Readiness Preparation Idea Note (R-PIN) under the the World Bank's (FCPF) Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. The Government of Viet Nam, the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank collaborated to show readiness for the implementation of REDD. Since 2009, Viet Nam has been involved in REDD+ initiatives with 44 large and small projects which supported awareness raising, capacity building, piloting, modelling and preparedness for REDD+ implementation in Viet Nam.

In May 2018, the Prime Minister established the State Steering Committee on the Sustainable Forestry Development Target Program in the period of 2016-2020, which will direct, inspect and coordinate activities of ministries, sectors and localities during the implementation of the program. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) established the Office of the State Steering Committee on the Sustainable Forestry Development Target Program in the period of 2016-2020 and led the implementation of REDD+ to assist the Steering Committee in the management, inspection and supervision of the Programme. MARD also approved the Scheme of Viet Nam's REDD+ Fund. So far, some 41 provinces and cities have established Programme Steering Committees (12 provinces having REDD+) and a further 19 provinces and cities have prepared provincial action plans for REDD+ (PRAP) up to 2020/2030.

Many partners have been actively supporting the creation of a realistic REDD+ mechanism for Viet Nam. There have been REDD+ implementation activities with a focus on pilot projects in 14 provinces, including the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme, the REDD+ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) ), the Forest and Deltas Project, the Sustainable Natural Resources Management (SNRM) Project and the Northern Central Region Reduced Carbon Emissions Project, funded by the FCPF/ Carbon Fund Program, which will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by as much as to 24.6 million tonnes during 2018-2025, with a reduction of over 10.3 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> having been ordered by the FCPF (through the WB) for the period of 2019-2024.

In near future, Viet Nam will continue to supplement and finalize the legal framework to facilitate the implementation of REDD+. Viet Nam will also mobilize financial resources for the Program implementation and effectively organize the implementation of REDD+ Program activities.

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development*



## 6.14. SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, the sea and marine resources for sustainable development

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 14**

Viet Nam is one of the countries actively participating in multilateral environmental treaties, including treaties relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and island resources<sup>92</sup>.

In order to effectively implement its commitments in multilateral environmental agreements, Viet Nam has promulgated many policies, advocacies and measures for conserve and sustainable use of marine and island resources. Among them are the Law on Environmental Protection, the Law on the Sea of Viet Nam, the Law on Natural Resources and Environment of Sea and Islands, the Law on Fisheries and a series of documents guiding the detailed implementation of these laws.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee's Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW dated 3 June 2013 on active response to climate change and improved management of natural resources and environmental protection, and other legal documents such as Strategy for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Natural Resources and Protection of Marine Environment, the National Strategy on Biodiversity, the Viet Nam Fisheries Development Strategy until 2020, the Planning of Viet Nam's Marine Protected Area System up to 2020, and the Planning of Systems of Inland Water Conservation Zones up to 2020 set many targets in line with SDG 14 and have contributed to: (i) The development of systems of marine protected areas and inland water conservation zones; (ii) Participatory and community based management models have been scaled up; (iii) Aquatic resources have restored, recovered and developed; (iv) Mechanisms and policies for effective and sustainable management of inland fisheries exploitation and fisheries management have been established.

To tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Viet Nam has codified all the related content in the Law on Fisheries which was passed by the National Assembly on 21 November 2017, and issued the NAP to prevent, mitigate and eliminate IUU until 2025.

However, Viet Nam still lacks specific legal documents that systematically regulate the management and control of marine waste. The management of marine biodiversity in general is subject to overlaps in regulations, and even contradictions in some cases. Fishery management policies and institutions are inadequate; the enforcement of relevant legislation is not effective; limited capacity to control caught production and ineffective certification of fishery product origins. Some SDG targets are not feasible or not yet stipulated in Vietnamese legal documents<sup>93</sup>.

### **(2) Major results of SDG 14**

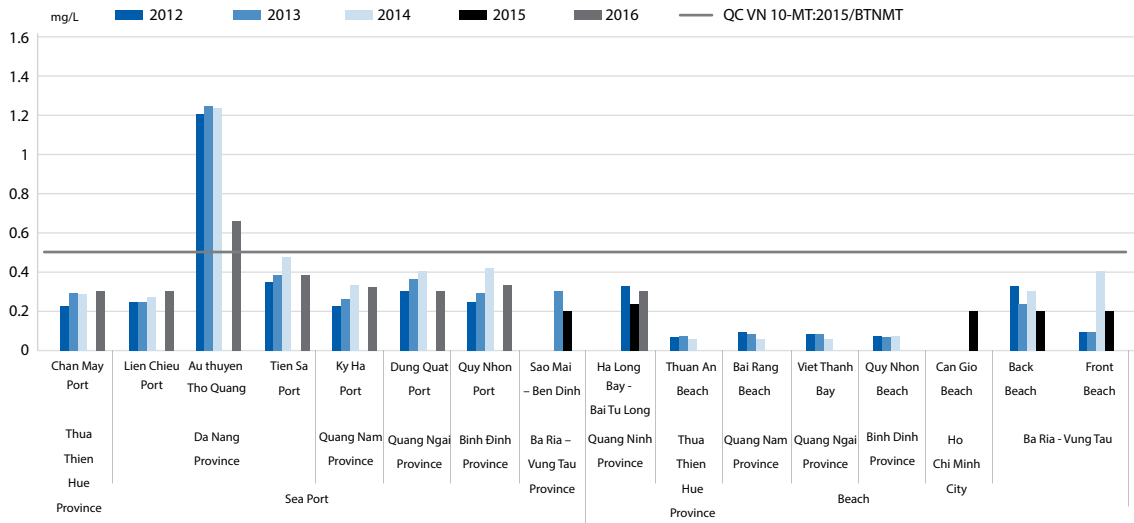
Viet Nam has been conducting marine pollution control, management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, and fisheries exploitation and development in accordance with relevant strategies and policies.

Quality of coastal and ocean seawater is still good (see Figure 20), but there is pollution potential as the estuarine and coastal areas are still receiving waste from domestic uses and production activities.

92 In particular, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, the International Convention on Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) 1973/1978, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992.

93 In particular, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, the International Convention on Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) 1973/1978, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992.

**Figure 20. Variation of oil and grease concentration in coastal water of some urban areas in 2012-2016**



Source: MONRE, National Environment Report 2016 Urban Environment

The investigation, research and assessment of biodiversity in the sea and islands of Viet Nam have received much attention. However, the results show that the seagrass ecosystem is at risk of degradation while as many as 100 marine species are being threatened, and rare marine species that have been included in the Red Book of Viet Nam and the IUCN Red List should be protected through relevant measures (2015).

Mangrove ecosystems are also seriously degraded. This degradation is most evident through the rapid decline in mangrove forest area and quality. Viet Nam has lost up to 67 per-cent of its mangrove area as compared to 1943. Marine ecosystems have been facing serious downturns given the limited available resources. Therefore, it is a big challenge to achieve SDG 14.2 by 2030.

Viet Nam has established 10 marine protected areas (MPA). Their total area is 270,272 ha, accounting for 0.24 per-cent of the total sea area of Viet Nam. However, given the existing establishment and operation of marine protected areas, it is challenging to achieve the planned goals. Particularly, SDG 14.5 which states, "Up to 2030 the coastal and marine protected areas will account for 3-5 per-cent of the natural areas," will be difficult to achieve. The maintenance of already established MPAs and their operation is also a major challenge due to limited funding.

About 70 per-cent of the vessels in Viet Nam are mainly operating in coastal waters, accounting for about 35 per-cent of the total catch. However, the area for fisheries exploitation only occupies 11 per-cent of the exclusive economic zone which used to be the traditional fishing area of Viet Nam. As a result, the area is always overburdened under the increasing catching pressure. The number of vessels and boats is excessive. Freedom of small vessels to catch fish and the inability to control the increase in the number of vessels has resulted in an imbalance between fishing capacity and available resources. As a result, the economic efficiency of catching operations is gradually decreasing. Although the total production of sea catch has increased continuously, i.e. from 2,220 thousand tons (2010) to 3,191 thousand tons (2017), the average productivity (ton/cv/year) has showed a downward trend.

**Box 14. Ha Long-Cat Ba Alliance Initiative: Promoting the participation of local organizations and communities**

Ha Long World Natural Heritage and Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve are two of the most economically and ecologically important sites in Viet Nam, famous for their landscape and biodiversity importance. The Ha Long-Cat Ba Alliance Initiative was launched in 2014 to build the partnership between State agencies, businesses and communities to promote conservation activities and protect Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba archipelago.

The initiative is coordinated and implemented by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to engage stakeholders in biodiversity conservation through the high-level, business-led Alliance Leadership Committee. Members of this committee include representatives of businesses, local and international NGOs, local authorities of Quang Ninh province and Hai Phong city, the GoVN and US Government. Relevant stakeholders in the alliance set the vision and provide guidance on alliance work plans, including increasing public awareness of environmental conditions, advancing a green certification standard for overnight cruise companies, improving water quality in Ha Long and Cat Ba and providing technical advice for World Heritage Site reports submitted to UNESCO.

To date, the alliance has cooperated with nearly 20 cruise companies, local and international businesses as well as NGOs. It has mobilized more than USD 210,000 from private businesses for awareness raising and community development in Hai Phong city and Quang Ninh province. It set up three large-scale clean-up programmes of coastline with more than 300 volunteers, collecting nearly four tonnes of waste along 4km of coastline of islands in Ha Long Bay. With more than 60 per-cent of collected waste polystyrene, the alliance has engaged Ha Long People's Committee to issue a decision on banning this material in Ha Long Bay and worked with Hai Phong People's Committee on alternatives to polystyrene. The alliance has also trained more than 70 tour guides on environmental and biodiversity values of the site and advocated tourism infrastructure projects not to threaten the outstanding universal values of the expanded site.

*Source: Ha Long-Cat Ba Alliance, USAID*

## **6.15. SDG 15: Protect and sustainably develop forests; conserve biodiversity; develop ecosystem services; combat desertification; prevent the degradation of and rehabilitate land resources**

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 15**

Viet Nam has issued numerous policies related to SDG 15. They include the Law on Biodiversity, Law on Environment Protection, Law on Forest Protection and Development, Law on Forestry, Resolution 24-NQ/TW dated 3 June 2013 of the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee on active responses to climate change, improved natural resource management and environmental protection along with such strategies such as the Strategy of Environmental Protection, Strategy of Viet Nam Forestry Development 2006-2020, Strategy of Special-use Forests Management and National Strategy on Biodiversity up to 2020 with a vision to 2030. These legal documents outline plenty of specific objectives related to sustainable forest conservation, development and biodiversity conservation. Regarding to desertification prevention, Viet Nam joined the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and issued a National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in 2006.

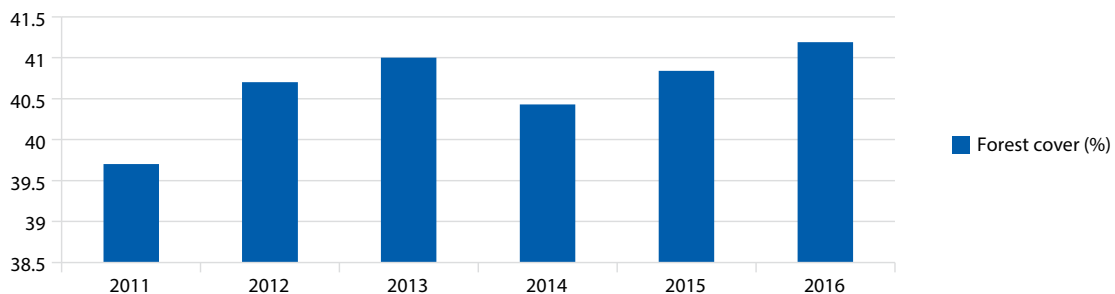
The Law on Biodiversity is a big step to help systematize biodiversity protection issues previously regulated sparsely in other laws. However, distinctions between this law and other relevant laws have not been clearly defined, leading to overlaps and difficulties during enforcement.

## (2) Major results of SDG 15

Viet Nam promulgated the Master Plan for the Biodiversity Conservation up to 2020 and Orientation to 2030. This is the basis for the development and approval of biodiversity conservation plans at provincial level in 18 provinces. Other 13 provinces are currently formulating their plans. Viet Nam successfully developed and nominated eight Ramsar Sites and six ASEAN Heritage Parks. In the future, Viet Nam will establish 10 Ramsar Sites and 10 ASEAN Heritage Parks of international recognition. Viet Nam has established 164 special use forests, including 31 national parks, 57 nature reserves, 45 landscape protected areas and 20 forests for scientific research and experiments on 2.2 million hectares. According to the National Master Plan of Special Use Forest System, the protected area system will be expanded to cover 2.4 million hectares or 176 protected areas. In addition, 16 MPAs and 45 inland water conservation areas (including special-use forests) have been included in the master plan, while some protected areas have been internationally recognized with international standards such as Biosphere Reserves (nine), World Heritage (two), Ramsar Sites (eight) and Asian Heritage (five).

Afforestation has been actively implemented with an average of 225,000ha of forest planted annually, of which 90 per-cent are production forests and forest plantation productivity continues to be improved. The area granted with sustainable forest management certificates amounted to 225,000ha, including 86,000ha of natural forest and 139,000ha of plantation forests. Exploitation of natural forest is managed more closely, closing natural forests nationwide by 2017., which help increase the forested area ratio to 41.5 per-cent in 2017. Thus, by 2020 Viet Nam will be able to achieve the goal of increasing forest coverage to 42 per-cent in accordance with the 12th National Party Congress Resolution. Viet Nam and the European Union (EU) concluded negotiations and entered a Voluntary Partnership Agreement on EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT) in 2017.

**Figure 21. Variation of forest cover**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Viet Nam has successfully implemented the policy of forest environmental services payment, which helps generate income for households participating in forest protection and improves values of forestry products and forest protection efficiency. On average, Viet Nam collects more than VND 1,200 billion and paid for over 5.0 million hectares of forests each year. In 2017, the country earned VND 1,675.581 billion, achieving 101.5 per-cent of the target planned in 2017 and equivalent to 130 per-cent of the same period in 2016.

Viet Nam has established a National Coordination Board for implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2003, while desertification prevention has been integrated into climate change responses and natural disaster mitigation. Pilots have been successfully developed and integrated with global mechanisms in terms of desertification in Viet Nam, especially in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces.

Viet Nam has implemented different activities to conserve endangered, precious and rare species, yet there is still scope for enhancements. Wildlife habitats are reducing due to changes in land use. Many species are endangered and at high risk of extinction. Viet Nam is currently developing a database on genetic resources and traditional knowledge on genetic resources and guidelines for access to genetic resources and benefit sharing.

Viet Nam has made a great deal of efforts to develop policies and finalize governance mechanisms for wildlife trade control. However, the control and prevention of wildlife trade is not as effective as desired as it is highly profitable and attractive. Moreover, the capacity of law enforcement agencies in Viet Nam relating to wildlife protection is limited, which has been a hindrance and big challenge for Viet Nam in implementing SDG 15.5.

The prevention and control of invasive alien species has achieved some certain results, with effective eradication measures and communication to prevent people from producing and releasing harmful aquatic species. There has also been serious inspections of imported plants and animals to prevent invasive alien species, pest risk analysis of eight species which may become invasive alien species, distribution mapping of seven pest species in Viet Nam and bio-security certification of four genetically modified maize events.

The implementation of the SDG 15 encountered some difficulties as, the promulgation of sub-laws for enforcement of the Law on Bio-diversity remains slow and enforcement is challenging. There is a separation in implementation guidelines between the Law on Forest Protection and Development, the Law on Fisheries and Law on the Biodiversity as they all provide for biodiversity conservation. There is a lack of coordination and consensus on assignment of State management responsibility for bio-diversity. Meanwhile, the biodiversity conservation budget is still quite limited and cannot meet State management requirements and bio-diversity objectives. The exploitation, trade and consumption of endangered wildlife (fauna and flora) remain uncontrolled. Wildlife species continue to decline. Many regulations on management of invasive alien organisms have not been developed.

Therefore, it is necessary to revise, amend and supplement laws relating to bio-diversity and strengthen organization and management systems, assignments and decentralization of bio-diversity State management responsibilities. Effectiveness of law enforcement relating to biodiversity must be emphasized.

#### **Box 15. VNGOs provide supports to forest protection and livelihood development of farmers living on forests**

To bring the voices of communities dependent on forests to make valuable contributions to the negotiation and implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT) in Viet Nam and forest management, protection and development, the VNGO-FLEGT network was established in January 2012. It involves the participation of 61 social organizations and Vietnamese NGOs. The VNGO-FLEGT network has conducted a number of community consultations, assessments and field studies to provide comments on VPA/FLEGT content during negotiations:

Conduct community consultations on legal timber in 33 communities in six provinces (Yen Bai, Thai Nguyen, Thanh Hoa, Thua Thien-Hue, Binh Dinh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau).

Assess the potential impact of VPA/FLEGT on forest dependent livelihoods (LIAs) in 10 provinces (Thai Nguyen, Yen Bai, Hoa Binh, Phu Tho, Ha Noi, Thanh Hoa, Thua Thien-Hue, Dak Lak, Lam Dong and Dong Nai).

Assess adaptability of households who plant, exploit, transport and process timber to regulations on legal timbers in eight provinces (Hoa Binh, Nghe An, Binh Dinh, Kon Tum, Quang Ninh, Quang Tri, Quang Nam and Phu Tho).

Consider linkages between FLEGT and REDD+ in Lam Dong province.

The VNGO-FLEGT network has organized activities to gather feedback on development, modification and supplementation of a number of legal documents, policies and programmes on forest management, protection and development as follows:

- Law on Forestry.
- Circular 21 on the main exploitation and utilization of forest products.
- National REDD+ Programme (NRAP).
- Medium-term plan for the implementation of the National REDD+ Programme (NRIP).

*Source: Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)*

## **6.16. SDG 16: Promote a peaceful, fair, just, equitable, and equal society for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels**

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 16**

Viet Nam has ratified seven conventions related to human rights, including five conventions related to the labour-social sectors<sup>94</sup>. Within the framework of ILO, Viet Nam has acceded to 21 conventions<sup>95</sup>.

The guarantee of equity to all citizens is enshrined in the Constitution 2013, with a dedicated chapter on human rights and citizen's rights. Viet Nam has harmonised and revised legislation to best protect and promote the rights of citizens and human rights in accordance with the Constitution 2013, and has diligently fulfilled its international obligations and commitments on ensuring human rights<sup>96</sup>.

The Criminal Code, Law on Prevention of Money Laundering, Law on Civil Status, Law on Citizen Identification, Law on Children, Law on Access to Information, and Law on Management and Use of Weapons, Explosives and Combat Gear play an important role in implementing SDG 16. The Law on Legal Aid and related policies have made a contribution to SDG 16 regarding ensuring access for all people to information and protection of fundamental basic rights and freedoms in compliance with Viet Nam's legislation and the international treaties to which Viet Nam adheres. The GOVN now proposes to add "the Law amending and supplementing some articles of the Law on Promulgation of Legislative Documents" in the law and ordinance making program so as to reach target 16.7 on ensuring that decision-making processes are responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative at all levels.

<sup>94</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>95</sup> Five of the eight conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work, three of the four conventions on labor market governance. Viet Nam has defined a review and study roadmap to ratify three other basic conventions, including Convention 98 regarding collective bargaining, Convention 87 related to freedom of association and Convention 105 concerning abolition of forced labor.

<sup>96</sup> The project, which included human rights content in education program of the national education system and was approved by the Prime Minister on 5 September 2017, is a firm confirmation for the building of the State based on rule-of-law, of the people, by the people and for the people, towards the SDGs.



Viet Nam has ratified some conventions and protocols (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons; ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention against Corruption), and promulgated the Law on Human Trafficking Prevention and Combat and Program for Human Trafficking Prevention and Combat in 2016-2020. Viet Nam has issued the National Strategy for Preventing and Fighting Crime in 2016-2025 and Orientation to 2030, and revised the Law on Anti-Corruption which adds some new articles. The Prime Minister has issued Directive 12 on enhancing the detection and settlement of corruption cases.

The Politburo has issued Decision 217-QD/MT on “the Regulation on monitoring and social commentary of Viet Nam Fatherland Front and political-social organizations”, Inter-ministerial Resolution 403, and documents to strengthen monitoring and social commentary by Viet Nam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations.

## **(2) Major results of SDG 16**

Viet Nam has made great efforts in ensuring equal access to justice. Fulfiller its international commitments on ensuring civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights as well as citizen’s rights under the SDGs in general. Major judicial and legislative reforms (including the Criminal Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Law on Enforcement of Custody and Temporary Detention, Law on Anti-Corruption, Law on Access to Information, Law on Religion and Folk Beliefs) have been implemented to ensure people’s full enjoyment of human rights.

Viet Nam has effectively implemented the work of receiving, protecting and supporting trafficking victims to rehabilitate. In 2016, the GOVN approved 30 July as “Viet Nam’s Day Against Trafficking in Persons”. Between 2011 and 2016, People’s Courts at different levels conducted first-instance trials for 1,193 cases and conducted trials for 1,130 cases of human trafficking. In 2016 and 2017, competent authorities in Viet Nam validated, rescued and received more than 1,500 cases (including 600 cases of trafficking victims); in 100 per-cent of the cases, victims required initial support, psychological consultation, health examination and legal support; many victims were provided with subsidies, vocational training and jobs to stabilize their life in the community.

In May 2017, the “Action Month for Children” was implemented nationwide with the theme “Enforcement of the Law on Children and preventing as well as combating violence against children and child abuse”. In 2017, the Prime Minister decided to formulate the National Committee on Children and national hotline 111 for children. However, violence against children remains, attracting attention and discussion among the community. Violence against children is most commonly seen in the children’s families, schools, child care facilities and community.

Viet Nam has made effort in ensuring access to justice for all children related to legislation. The percentage of under-five children with birth registration has continuously risen<sup>97</sup> and there is no considerable difference of birth registration between girls and boys. However, the percentage of children with birth registration in the Mekong Delta and Central Highlands is lower than other regions. Children in poorer households also have lower rates of birth registration.

<sup>97</sup> The percentage of under-five children with birth registration rose from 87.6 per-cent in 2006 to 94.6 per-cent in 2011 and 96.1 per-cent in 2014 (MICS).



Regarding legal aid, between July 2011 and March 2015, lawyers participated in prosecution for more than 87,604 cases, including 42,342 criminal cases. In 2016, lawyers participated in prosecution for more than 23,670 cases. For the poor, ethnic minority people living in disadvantaged areas and some other people who could not hire lawyers, legal aid organizations of the GOVN supported the defence for 51,721 cases in 2007-2016. In particular, as required by proceeding-conducting agencies, 100 per-cent of criminal cases had lawyers and legal aid-providers.

Media outlets have dramatically developed and become a forum for social organizations and people, a tool to protect people's rights, benefits society, and support the enforcement of legislation and policy. As of December 2017, Viet Nam had 849 press agencies, and 20 foreign press agencies had their permanent reporters in Viet Nam. The rapid development of the internet is helping people access information, supporting social, economic and cultural development, and assisting administration reform. Currently Viet Nam has about 58 million facebook accounts.

Administrative reform has been emphasized and implemented by the GOVN with a range of synchronous and effective measures, resulting in a vigorous change in the administrative structure from Central to grassroots level. The administration has positively transformed toward service, professionalism, modernity, dynamicity, responsibility and responsiveness to the demands of people and society and to national socio-economic development. The results of administrative reform have made a contribution to the socio-economic development and international integration of the nation.

Indexes to measure the satisfaction of people and society with public services have been launched in Viet Nam, for example, PCI, PAR INDEX and PAPI (Box 16). Every year, these indexes partly reflect the performance of administrative agencies and, thereby, assist such agencies to develop and supply more quality services and adjust their targets and tasks in order to meet the expectations of people, society and national development.

However, there remain a number of problems to be solved in building a rule-of-law state and legislative reform. The legal framework on human rights has not been completely synchronous. Therefore, a huge amount of work will be done to review, amend and issue legal documents in accordance with the Constitution. This work must be done in a thorough, transparent and participatory manner, and needs policy tools, including related infrastructure, resulting in high pressures on human resource, time and finance.

#### **Box 16. PCI, PAR INDEX and PAPI in Viet Nam**

PCI (applied since 2005) was developed by VCCI to evaluate the business environment, economic management quality and efforts in administrative reform of provincial and city authorities in Viet Nam, and thereby promote the private sector. The original indicators show a considerable improvement of economic management quality by time. In 2017, the PCI score of median province was 60.2, the highest score ever achieved since PCI project started. Out of the 63 provinces/cities, only one province did not record an improved score. PCI 2017 also showed a considerable reduction on three indices related to corruption and such finding is consistent with the assessment by foreign enterprises in Viet Nam in the PCI-FDI survey and the 2017 PAPI survey.

PAPI (applied since 2009) is the biggest sociological survey in Viet Nam, focusing on capturing the provincial performance in governance, policy implementation and public service delivery in Viet Nam, based on people's assessment and experience and with annually collected data. To date, PAPI has collected and reflected the experiences of 103,059 people. The statistical analysis in 2017 PAPI shows a positive trend. Improvement is seen in 5 out of 6 dimensions, including "Transparency", "Vertical Accountability", "Control of Corruption in the Public Sector", "Public Administrative Procedures" and "Public Service Delivery" although the improvement level varies among such dimensions. The data analysis also reveals that the gender gap in having names on the land use right certificates has reduced and the percentage of people having health insurance has increased as compared to 2016. In addition, 2017 PAPI data also shows that 96 per-cent of respondents felt safe when travelling alone during the day; 80 per-cent felt satisfied with authentication services; 72 per-cent (37.5 per-cent men and 34.5 per-cent women) of people who made a contribution to public work projects at grassroots level said they had participated in decision-making around the building and rehabilitation work.

PAR INDEX (applied since 2013) is developed to monitor and evaluate in an objective and equal manner the annual administration reform results achieved by ministries, related agencies and provincial-level People's Committees during the implementation of the master program on administration reform in 2011-2020. This index shows strengths and weaknesses in administrative reform and, thereby, helps ministries, related agencies and provinces to fine-tune their objectives, content and measures for annual reforms. This helps improve efficiency of administrative reform, and build a clean, strong, effective and efficient administration. PAR INDEX 2017 shows that ministries, related agencies and provinces continued to record positive results. The average PAR INDEX of ministries and related agencies was 79.92 per-cent. No ministries got under 70 per-cent. The comparison between PAR INDEX 2017 and PAR INDEX 2016 reveals that 9 ministries and related agencies got higher scores in 2017. PAR INDEX 2017 of provinces/cities was 77.72 per-cent, 3.08 per-cent higher than 2016 (only 74.64 per-cent in 2016), of which 32 provinces/cities scored higher than the median and 60 got more than 70 per-cent. Notably, in 2017, only three provinces/cities scored under 70 per-cent (15 provinces/cities in 2016). This proves that the administration reform of provinces/cities in 2017 was more positive and uniform than in 2016.

*Source: Consolidated from PCI, PAPI, PAR INDEX 2017 reports*

## **6.17. SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

### **(1) Review of policies related to SDG 17**

Viet Nam has issued the Law on Investment, Overall Strategy for International Integration to 2020 with a Vision toward 2030, and Export-Import Strategy 2011-2020 with a Vision to 2030. These laws and policies form an important basis for developing policies on cooperation, partnership and global trade development. Viet Nam commits to promote a bilateral trade system for all and comply with WTO regulations, including approval of the results of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations. Viet Nam has benefited from foreign trade, participated in the global value chain and competed with the new world economies through taking advantage of opportunities offered by multi-lateral and bilateral free trade agreements like CPTPP, FTA.

MOIT is formulating the Strategy for Domestic Trade Development to 2025 with a Vision to 2035<sup>98</sup>, with structural shifts in four areas: (i) institutional reform from a planned economy to a market economy; (ii) transformation from agriculture to processing and services; (iii) solving problems related to migration from rural to urban areas; and (iv) shifting from an export-based economy to an economy with in-depth integration<sup>99</sup>.

Viet Nam has initiated the development of institutions and legal frameworks to facilitate PPP since 1992, starting from BOT and the Law on Investment 1992, followed by three revisions. In 2010, the regulation on pilot investment in the PPP form was issued but this does not have a consistence in BOT and PPP. In 2015, the GOVN issued Decree 15 on Investment in the form of PPP and this clarifies BOT and BTO to motivate foreign investment in infrastructure. The Decree also creates a framework to make PPP mechanisms more compatible with international practices. In May 2018, the GOVN issued Decree 63 to deal with the shortcoming of Decree 15 regarding regulations on PPP projects, especially the regulations on the intention of investment in PPP projects; financial resources for preparing projects and State participation in PPP projects; and the capacity of lead agencies and staff involved in PPP project implementation.

## **(2) Major results of SDG 17**

The GOVN has achieved progress in international economic integration through full implementation of its bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation commitments, development and implementation of strategies to join free trade areas with important economic and trade partners, and signing and effective implementation of new-generation FTAs with proper roadmaps to ensure national benefits.

Viet Nam has established diplomatic relations with 187 nations, including 26 strategic and comprehensive partners; has established economic and trade relations with most nations and territories; and has become a member of many regional and global organizations and fora. Viet Nam has become a hub to link the regional economy to its FTA network with 59 partners, including five members of the UN Security Council and 15 members of G20, creating interwoven benefits and broad as well as deep cooperation with key partners.

As at the end of 2016, Viet Nam had signed, implemented and was negotiating 16 FTAs. Among these 16 FTAs, 10 FTAs are being implemented (including six FTAs Viet Nam is implementing as a member of ASEAN, and 4 FTAs with Chile, Japan, South Korea and EEC); two FTAs have finished negotiation (CPTPP and EVFTA); four FTAs are under negotiation (RCEP, ASEAN-Hong Kong FTA, FTA with Israel, and FTA with EFTA). On 8 March 2018, Viet Nam was among 11 countries that officially signed the CPTPP.

Tax liberalization in Viet Nam has achieved optimistic results, through FTAs and international economic cooperation frameworks. With the implementation of the Government's Resolution 19 on improving business environment and competitiveness, Viet Nam has achieved considerable reforms in import clearance at international border gates. The time for customs procedures has been greatly shortened as 100 per-cent of the procedures have been automated nationwide through an electronic clearance system; and electronic payment of import and export taxes is also available. However, Viet Nam needs to continue effective measures in order to promote exports within the framework of FTAs.

98 Document 311/VPCP-TH issued on 9 February 2017 by the Government Office on work plan of the GOVN.

99 Vietnam 2035 Report.

Viet Nam has successfully organized the UN High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which made an effective contribution to the common interests of the region and the world in enhancement of trade facilitation and sustainable development.

Viet Nam has strengthened the mobilization of finance from other sources, including private sector through PPP. To the end of 2016, three PPP projects were completed, worth USD 667 million<sup>100</sup>.

The National Assembly, as a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), has been actively participating in activities related to promoting the 2030 Agenda in all fora of IPU<sup>101</sup>. Through such fora, the National Assembly has also participated in implementation of SDG 17 on strengthening means of implementation and promoting global partnerships for sustainable development. At the same time, the National Assembly has also taken into consideration implementation of the recommendations made for IPU members in a way that fits the political, social and economic conditions and legislation of Viet Nam.

The GOVN has been creating an enabling environment and encouraging all social organizations and citizens to make contribution to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

In the near future, Viet Nam needs to (i) strengthen administration reform, particularly international trade clearances; actively discuss the technical barriers at regional and international fora; (ii) effectively implement the communication about and introduction of FTAs and international cooperation frameworks, and promote the provision of information about market/export commodities; and (iii) build effective and transparent resource administration mechanisms to enhance the GOVN's prestige and attract investment.

#### **Box 17. Viet Nam in its role as the host of APEC 2017**

As the host of APEC 2017 and with the theme "Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future", Viet Nam has developed and implemented four significant priorities related to SDGs, namely: promotion of sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth; deepening of regional economic integration; improvement of competitiveness and creativity of MSMEs; and enhancement of food security and climate-smart, sustainable agriculture. In the leadup to APEC 2017, Viet Nam also proposed numerous initiatives and intensified the APEC contribution to SDGs. APEC made a declaration on advancing free and open trade and investment, and supporting the multilateral trade system. Viet Nam and other members of APEC have launched initiatives to create practical benefits for the people and businesses, and ensure inclusive development (closely related to SDG 8 and SDG 10 on decent work and economic growth). APEC has, for the first time, approved an action plan for inclusive economic, financial and social development, with a vision to build an inclusive, accessible, sustainable, healthy and resilient APEC community by 2030.

*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

<sup>100</sup> National Highway 20, Phu My Bridge, and Ha Noi-Hai Phong Expressway.

<sup>101</sup> In May, 2017, within the framework of the Asia-Pacific IPU Symposium on "Response to Climate Change –Action of Lawmakers to Implement Sustainable Development Goals" organized in Viet Nam, the self-assessment toolkit for the implementation of SDGs for Parliaments was announced by the IPU and UNDP. In October 2017 and in March 2018, within the IPU-137 and IPU-138, the National Assembly sent its representatives to the Debate on Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy. Moreover, the National Assembly also participated in relevant topics at regional parliamentary forums such as the ASEAN-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF), the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) ...

## 7. LINKAGES IN SDGs IMPLEMENTATION IN VIET NAM

The 17 SDGs are interactive, as implementation of one SDG will influence another. With the theme “Transformation toward a resilient and sustainable society”, in-depth SDGs (6, 7, 11, 12, 15) in HLPF 2018 are especially interactive.

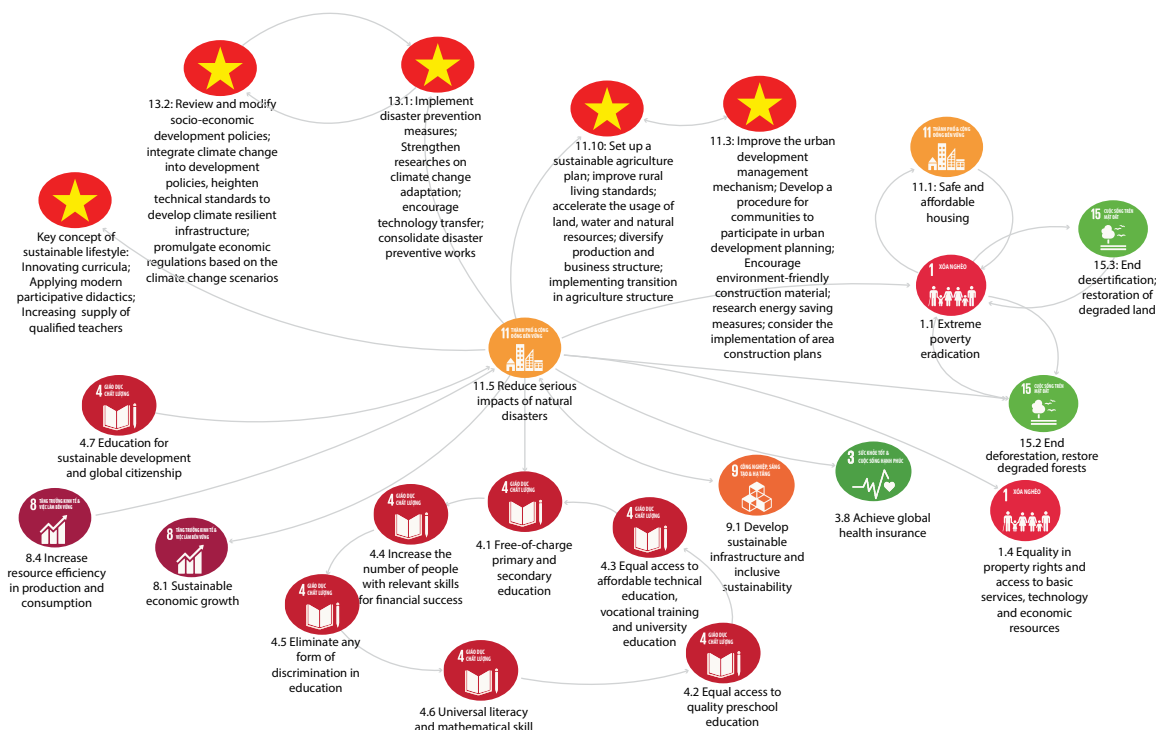
The achievement of SDG target 6.1 (achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable water for all) and SDG target 6.2 (ensure access to adequate and equitable sanitation facilities and hygiene for all) will contribute to promoting SDG 1 (End poverty), SDG 2 (End hunger, ensure food security), SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 10 (Social equality). Furthermore, SDG 6 will also facilitate implementation of SDG 12 and vice versa.

Similarly, SDG target 7.2 on “substantially increase the share of renewable energies in the total domestic consumption of primary energies” will contribute to implementation of SDG 13 “Respond in a timely and effective manner to climate change and natural disasters”. The implementation of SDGs target 7.2 on “increase the share of renewable energies” and SDG target 7.3 on “improvement in energy efficiency and reduce power consumption” will help SDG target 12.2 on “moderate exploitation and economical and sustainable use of mineral resources” and SDG target 12.5 on “reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions”.

SDG 11 on ensuring safe living environments is one of the criteria for multi-dimensional poverty and much related to SDG 1 (End poverty). In addition, SDG 11 is also closely related to SDGs 8 and 9. SDG target 11.6 (reducing adverse environmental impacts on people in urban areas) is closely related and has the same purpose as SDG 12 on ensuring sustainable production and consumption. SDG target 11.8 (equivalent to international SDG target 11.a) on supporting positive economic, social and environmental links in master plans is closely related to SDG target 13.2 on integrating climate change measures into national development policies, strategies, planning schemes, and plans. Similarly, SDG target 11.5 on reducing the number of deaths, people affected and direct economic losses caused by natural and other disasters is reliant on SDG 13 on effective responses to climate change and natural disasters. Good implementation of SDG target 11.2 will make significant contributions to the success of SDG 3, with a halving of road traffic accidents in 2020 compared to 2011. The development of high volume public transport services will help people access and use different sources of energy in a sustainable manner (SDG 7).

SDG target 12.2 regarding sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources and SDG target 12.3 on reduction of food losses both contribute to SDG target 2.4 on sustainable food production. SDG target 12.4 related to lifecycle management of chemicals and waste supports SDG target 3.8 (equivalent to international SDG target 3.9) on reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals.

Conservation of biodiversity as per SDG 15 will help protect people’s health, promote food production and reduce poverty. Therefore, SDG 15 is closely related to others, especially SDGs 1, 2, 3, 13 and 14.

**Figure 22. Relation between SDG 11 and other SDGs in Viet Nam**

Source: MPI/UN Viet Nam/UNESCAP's exercise, 2018

Successful achievement of SDGs in Viet Nam will heavily rely on the cooperation of ministries, agencies and all other stakeholders in designing and implementing multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral solutions.

GOVN is fully aware of the SDGs' integrated nature, evidently thought the SDG National Action Plan's emphasis on the importance of multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder cooperation and participation. In addition, the National Action Plan provides a number of actions for strengthening stakeholder cooperation and mobilizing the participation and contribution of non-governmental stakeholders including the private sector, professional, political, social and mass organization, and international partners. GOVN has been coordinating with the UN in Viet Nam and UNESCAP to carry out initial capacity-strengthening activities for improving SDG interlinkages and stakeholder engagement in Viet Nam's SDG implementation.

## 8. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### 8.1. Financial resources

The budget for implementing the SDGs in Viet Nam includes:

#### a. State budget

Most estimated funding from the Medium-term Public Investment Plan (2016-2020) is devoted to the SDGs<sup>102</sup> and totals VND 2,000,000 billion, including: (a) central budget of VND 1,120,000 (VND 300,000 billion in foreign funding and VND 820,000 in domestic funding) and (b) local budget of VND 880,000

<sup>102</sup> Resolution 26/2016/QH14 issued on 10 November 2016.



billion. However, the fall in budget revenues, excluding grant aid/GDP, from more than 26 per-cent in 2006-2008 and 27.6 per-cent in 2010 to 22-23 per-cent in 2012-2015<sup>103</sup> remains a significant challenge.

#### b. ODA

Inward ODA has steeply declined, especially since Viet Nam became a lower middle-income country in 2010. Grant aid, which made up a small percentage (1 per-cent) of total ODA but played an important role in technical support, capacity building and policy consulting, has sharply reduced since 2012<sup>104</sup>. In contrast, the proportion of Other Official Finance (OOF) per GDP in Viet Nam has risen and exceeded other ASEAN countries recently. As donors have shifted focus to global issues, such as climate change and green growth, Viet Nam has received significant funding from international climate change funds which was about USD 5.2 billion in the period of 2010-2014, the biggest amount regionally, including a small percentage of grant aid and largely favourable loans.

#### c. Resources from private sector and others

Regarding financial resources from the international private sector, total FDI in Viet Nam has sharply increased especially since Viet Nam became a full WTO member. FDI in processing and manufacturing sectors makes up nearly 70 per-cent of FDI in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is one of the top 10 countries remittance-receiving countries globally, accounting for 2.5 per-cent of total world remittances in 2017. Remittances to Viet Nam made up 6-8 per-cent of GDP during 2006-2017 annually, much higher than other developing countries (1-2 per-cent of GDP on average) and made large contributions to national economic development, foreign currency reserves and balanced current account.

Domestic finance from the private sector has continuously increased since 2000, a four-fold increase to USD 24.2 billion in 2015. However, private investment per capita in Viet Nam is USD 301, lower than half of the ASEAN average level (USD 659), and tended to grow during 2011-2016 by 10.3 per-cent annually, while growth in public investment and FDI reduced.

A huge amount of finance is required for SDG implementation. To achieve success in 17 SDGs, Viet Nam must enhance mobilization of all resources, especially from the private sector, promote public finance through improving effectiveness of the tax system and policies, reform management of public finance and debt, mobilize FDI, FII and formulate a plan to shift to "ODA graduation" stage, including improved use and management of ODA and mobilization of resources from new sources for climate change and green growth.

Besides mobilizing resources, it is important to ensure they are effectively used. Viet Nam must address ballooning public spending, increase efficiency and effectiveness of public investment and enhance linkages between resources (increasing capacity of public investment for "crowding in" private investment, promoting connections between FDI and domestic enterprises as well as private investment). Such efforts will require participation and cooperation from all stakeholders in an Integrated National Financing Framework through SEDPs, Medium-term Investment Programmes and three-year financial plans.

103 The reduction mainly results from sharp reduction of budget revenue from crude oil (from 30 per-cent of total budget, excluding grant aid, in 2005 to 12 per-cent in 2010 and 6.84 per-cent in 2015) and revenue from export-import (from 23.64 per-cent, excluding grant aid, in 2009 to 14.2 per-cent in 2012, 15.83 per-cent in 2013 and 17.16 per-cent in 2015).

104 The UN and GOVN approved a strategic plan for 2017-2021 to support the GOVN's development priorities, including SDG implementation. Funding for implementing new economic models is USD 35.7 million, including USD 14.2 million available. Funding for labour market development is USD 19.5 million, including USD 10.9 million available. In the Country Partnership Framework for 2018-2020, WB plans to lend Vietnam USD 504.2 million, for activities related to SDG 8, from 2 sources namely (IDA) and the Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) Fund.



## 8.2. Statistical capacity

Viet Nam is developing the Roadmap and Indicator System for SDG M&E and will issue these in 2018. Viet Nam has also established a Statistical Working Group for SDG M&E, comprised of representatives from ministries and agencies, and led by GSO.

Viet Nam has studied and trialled some indicators by collecting new information, such as administrative, big and new data from various sources, such as tax registration data to calculate some indicators related to enterprises and labour.

The feasibility review of 232 global SDG statistical indicators, conducted by the General Statistics Office (GSO) with support from the UN Statistics Division and the UN in Viet Nam in 2017, showed that: (i) the collection, consolidation and compilation of these indicators are related to 21 ministries and agencies, (ii) 33 indicators are regulated in the national statistical indicator list in the Law on Statistics (2015) (iii) 123 indicators are feasible, including 89 indicators with data (13 indicators are available in the National Statistical Yearbook and 76 indicators need compiling), (iv) 109 indicators are difficult to apply in Viet Nam and (v) available statistics can now meet 60 per-cent of data for global SDG M&E purposes, focussed mainly on education, health and poverty.

The nationalization process of SDG indicators showed that many SDG indicators did not have metadata and must be freshly collected, with complicated calculation methods and data from non-conventional sources. Therefore, it is a big challenge for Viet Nam to monitor and evaluate implementation of the 17 SDGs.

As Viet Nam's current statistical system and capacity have not yet met SDG statistical requirements, the country needs to take a number of steps to achieve this objective, including strengthening the capacity of statistical staff (especially in the local level), mobilizing financial and technical resources to meet demand for regular and long-term data collection for SDGs and build a mechanism/modality to effectively use statistics produced by non-governmental domestic and international agencies.

## 8.3. Science and technology

Science and technology are foundation and motivations for national sustainable development and considered as prerequisite to successfully implement the SDGs, especially in the context of Industry 4.0. They have made contributions to improving people's quality of life, labour productivity, green growth, education and people's health as well as mitigated damage and impacts from natural disasters. As evaluated by WIPO in 2017<sup>105</sup>, Viet Nam's GII ranked 47<sup>th</sup> among 127 nations, climbing 12 places compared to 2016 (59<sup>th</sup>).

For Viet Nam, Industry 4.0 is a challenge and a great opportunity. Viet Nam must transform from quantity-based growth (capital and labour) to quality-based growth (productivity), from assembly capacity to added valued creation capacity. Measures to reach such transformations, include an institutional environment which enhances competitiveness of enterprises and helps the economy overcome the middle-income trap.

Viet Nam is now actively changing its management method towards a government of innovation and action, with modern information tools to create an enabling environment for implementing new ideas, promoting creativity of people and enterprises.

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105 WIPO. 2017. Gopal Innovation Index 2017 Innovation Feeding the World.

In order to successfully implement the SDGs, it is essential that exchanges, cooperation, experience sharing and technology transfers from countries with more advanced science and technology be achieved.

## 9. LESSONS LEARNT

### *Lesson 1: Strong commitment from the GOVN for sustainable development*

The most important lesson in implementing the SDGs is the political determination of the GOVN and consensus between the National Assembly and GOVN in their thinking and actions. The strong commitment of the GOVN, from central to local levels, in the SDG nationalization and integration in national strategies, plans, projections and development programmes. This commitment was an essential part of Viet Nam's successful achievement of many MDGs, as recognized by the international community.

### *Lesson 2: Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing SDGs*

Involvement of stakeholders in implementing the SDGs will have a significant bearing on sustainable development in Viet Nam.

The system of diversified social organizations and the business community in Viet Nam will play important roles in the sustainable development process. The combination of "bottom up" and "top down" approaches has motivated communities to participate in designing and formulating development programmes, policies and projects. Such combinations, at the same time, have oriented development programmes towards global sustainable development trends.

### *Lesson 3: Combined promotion of domestic resources and international cooperation*

After more than 30 years' renovation and sustainable development, Viet Nam has become adept at maximizing the potential of domestic and external assets and momentum through international integration and cooperation to develop the country. Viet Nam has utilized opportunities and advantages, overcome difficulties and challenges to obtain great achievements, become a lower middle-income country, continue to sustain and strengthen a peaceful environment, achieve stability and create more enabling conditions for further development towards sustainability.

## 10. DIFFICULTIES, CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

### **Difficulties and challenges**

- Viet Nam is one of the countries most affected by climate change and sudden natural disasters, which will affect the SDG implementation process in the country.
- As a result of intensive and extensive integration into the global economy, Viet Nam will be prone to impacts from world economic fluctuations. The country is also facing many social, environmental as well as other interconnected and emerging challenges.
- SDG implementation demands huge financial inputs, while the State budget remains limited and ODA is contracting as Viet Nam has become a lower middle-income country.
- Due to the inter-sectoral nature of SDGs in terms of policies and ministries as well as agencies, it is challenging to implement the SDGs. In addition, most current plans and strategies of Viet Nam only set targets to 2020 and visions to 2030, but do not set specific targets for evaluation purposes.

- Many SDG indicators did not have metadata and must be freshly collected, with complicated calculation methods and data from non-conventional sources. Therefore, it is a big challenge for Viet Nam to monitor and evaluate implementation of the 17 SDGs.

### **Next steps**

Next steps to continue the 2030 Agenda include:

- Continue to improve relevant policies to address policy gaps and facilitate SDG implementation in Viet Nam.
- Raise society's awareness and actions towards sustainable development and SDGs of Viet Nam.
- Involve the whole political system, ministries, agencies, provinces, business community, mass organizations, communities and development partners to implement SDGs.
- Strengthen coordination among stakeholders, especially the GOVN, enterprises, socio-political and socio-professional organizations as well as the international community in implementing the SDGs. Maintain and implement coordination mechanisms among stakeholders to regularly monitor and evaluate results of the NAP, define solutions and share initiatives as well as good practices to fulfil the SDGs to which Viet Nam has committed to.
- Develop and issue a system of SDG statistical indicators, enhance the data collection for M&E of SDG achievements in Viet Nam. Enhance capacity to collect, analyze and use information as well as data for different levels during M&E and planning of socio-economic development policies.
- Promote the mobilization of domestic and foreign financial resources, especially from the private sector, for SDG implementation.
- Integrate SDGs into development of annual SEDPs, strategies, policies and master plans of ministries, agencies and provinces. Integrate SDG indicators and targets into regular national statistical survey programmes.
- Enhance international cooperation to promote financial and technical support as well as knowledge transfers for SDG implementation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Viet Nam is strongly committed to implement sustainable development through issuance of the Oriented Strategy for Sustainable Development in Viet Nam (2004), Strategy on Sustainable Development in 2011-2020 and SDG NAP.

Viet Nam has nationalized the global 2030 Agenda in the SDG NAP with 17 SDGs and 115 specific targets which fit national conditions and development priorities.

This VNR of Viet Nam aims to share the initial achievements of the 2030 Agenda with the international community as well as the difficulties, challenges and initial lessons learnt during implementation of SDGs and sustainable development policies in Viet Nam. The VNR preparation process was an opportunity to raise awareness and involvement of all stakeholders, including the National Assembly, GOVN, socio-political organizations, socio-professional organizations, local and international NGOs, business community, UN agencies in Viet Nam, development partners, research institutes and experts.

It will serve as a firm foundation for SDG monitoring and evaluation in the future and mobilization of all social resources for SDG implementation in Viet Nam.

With a high level of political commitment and determination, Viet Nam is confident that it will succeed in implementing the 2030 Agenda for a safer and better life for current and future generations of Viet Nam and for humankind. In our enduring commitment as a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam will continue to contribute positively to global efforts aimed at leaving no one and no country behind.

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SUSTAINABLE  
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