

Delivering as One

Annual Results Report 2014



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Preamble

With months remaining to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Viet Nam has already achieved or exceeded most of the agreed targets, including those on poverty reduction and primary education. However, as in many other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the MDG agenda remains unfinished at the sub-national level, while some targets at the national level have still not been reached. Vulnerabilities remain widespread due to chronic deprivation prevalent amongst ethnic minorities and in certain geographic localities. Large parts of the population continue to be engaged in the informal sector and live just above the poverty line, which makes them especially vulnerable to economic or other shocks. At the same time, disasters and extreme climate events risk derailing hard-won development gains.



In order to best help Viet Nam respond to the particular challenges faced by a middle-income country (MIC), the UN continues to transform the nature of its support. Critical areas of UN assistance include upstream policy dialogue and advice to foster more inclusive and green growth, ensure access to quality essential services for all citizens, improve public sector performance and accountability, and expand citizen participation for better governance.

The UN helps address Viet Nam's development challenges by providing evidence-based policy advice and sharing innovation and international best practices. A focus on human rights underpinned the UN's engagement in Viet Nam throughout 2014, with the UN Country Team (UNCT) engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to maximize the alignment of national laws and policies with international human rights conventions. The UN also continued to strengthen national capacity to collect data required to analyze inequalities and vulnerabilities more deeply, as well as to build the UN's own capacity to monitor and analyze UN contributions to development.

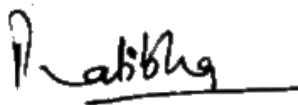
In Viet Nam, the Government of Viet Nam (GoV) has shown exceptional leadership with regards to Delivering as One (DaO) and the tripartite partnership continues to jointly review progress in applying the DaO approach. In response to Viet Nam's DaO Steering Committee as well as global calls for more evidence on whether or not DaO is working, the UN developed a DaO Results Monitoring Framework to – for the first time globally – measure progress on the key expected outcomes of the six DaO pillars (One Plan, One Plan Fund, One Voice, Green One UN House, One Leader and Operating as One). This framework has been used to report on the 2014 DaO results highlighted in Chapter 1.

A comprehensive overview of the development results achieved is provided in Chapter 2. During 2014, the UN has been actively advocating for rights-based development, helping to ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups have equal access to services and opportunities, that their voices are heard and that human rights are ensured in national policy processes. The UN has also used its convening role to bring together different stakeholders and facilitate multi-sectoral processes to inform policies and programmes. This includes support to the GoV to coordinate its response to complex issues, such as low-carbon

and climate-resilient development, social protection, a multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction, HIV, governance and gender equality.

Viet Nam's shift to a MIC has resulted in changes in the way development is financed, notably with a decline in grant-based official development assistance (ODA). Several key donors have either scaled down or are ceasing their ODA-based assistance. The UN, together with donors, has been helping the GoV to analyze future financing scenarios to best leverage resources for development. This analytical work highlights the changing role of the UN as a development partner of the Government and recognizes its value not by the funding it brings, but by the substance it offers. A summary of the analytical work and the efforts in 2014 to bridge the One Plan funding gap is contained in Chapter 3, which also includes an update on the One Plan Fund (OPF).

The UN in Viet Nam is keen to continuously adapt and improve the way results are delivered and measured, working closely with the Government, civil society and other partners. Only by working in partnership with multiple stakeholders and by delivering results cross-sectorally will the UN be able to support the post 2015 development agenda in Viet Nam.



Pratibha Mehta
Resident Coordinator



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Abbreviations & Acronyms

(ART)	Antiretroviral therapy
(CAT)	Convention against Torture
(CBDRM)	Community-based disaster risk management
(CEDAW)	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
(CEMA)	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
(CSOs)	Civil society organizations
(DaO)	Delivering as One
(DRM)	Disaster risk management
(DRR)	Disaster risk reduction
(EENC)	Early essential newborn care
(ESD)	Education for sustainable development
(EU)	European Union
(GBV)	Gender-based violence
(GDP)	Gross domestic product
(GHG)	Greenhouse gas
(GSO)	General Statistics Office
(GOUNH)	Green One UN House
(GoV)	Government of Viet Nam
(HCMC)	Ho Chi Minh City
(JPGs)	Joint Programming Groups
(LEP)	Law on Environmental Protection
(LGBT)	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
(M&E)	Monitoring and evaluation
(MARD)	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
(MDGs)	Millennium Development Goals
(MDP)	Multi-dimensional poverty
(MIC)	Middle-income country
(MoC)	Ministry of Construction
(MoCST)	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
(MoET)	Ministry of Education and Training



(MoH)	Ministry of Health
(MoJ)	Ministry of Justice
(MoLISA)	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
(MoNRE)	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
(MPI)	Ministry of Planning and Investment
(MPS)	Ministry of Public Security
(MSM)	Men who have sex with men
(NA)	National Assembly
(NAMAs)	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
(NGOs)	Non-governmental organizations
(ODA)	Official development assistance
(OPF)	One Plan Fund
(OSS)	One-stop shops
(PAPI)	Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index
(PLHIV)	People living with HIV
(POPs)	Persistent organic pollutants
(PSPMOs)	Political, social, professional and mass organizations
(RBM)	Results-based management
(RIM)	Rapid Impact Monitoring
(SASSP)	Social Assistance Strengthening System Project
(SEDP)	Socio-Economic Development Plan
(SEDS)	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
(SMEs)	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
(SPRCC)	Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change
(TVET)	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
(UNCT)	UN Country Team
(UNFCCC)	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
(UPR)	Universal Periodic Review
(VAAC)	Viet Nam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control
(VDGs)	Viet Nam Development Goals
(VHLSS)	Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey



Viet Nam

Country in Focus

Viet Nam is a lower middle-income country in Southeast Asia, bordered by Cambodia and Laos to the west and China to the north. More than 90 million people from 54 officially recognized ethnic groups inhabit this narrow S-shaped land, defined by more than 3,000 kilometres of coastline and a hilly, mountainous interior of which only one-third is arable land. Viet Nam has 63 provinces with the national capital of Ha Noi in the north and the most populous urban area of Ho Chi Minh City in the south.

Over the past year macroeconomic stability continued to improve, with economic growth showing a modest recovery to 5.9 per cent after slowing to 5.4 per cent in 2013. The foreign-owned export sector was a significant contributor to growth, while the performance of domestic enterprises lagged mainly due to the slow pace of structural reform, namely of state-owned enterprises and the financial sector. Negotiations for joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership and ASEAN Economic Community advanced in 2014,

with potential to improve international economic ties while boosting the national economy.

The adoption of the new Constitution in 2013 resulted in a review of numerous laws in 2014 and legislation is being drafted to implement changes, including strengthening the role of the judiciary as a guarantor of human rights. There are increasing efforts to inform and consult civil society, especially in the process of formulating and revising laws. The National Assembly is increasingly strengthening its oversight role, including on issues of accountability as shown by the second vote of confidence conducted in November 2014.

Although 2014 was a relatively calm year for Viet Nam in terms of incidences of natural disasters, climate extremes are heightening the risk of natural disasters and to people's lives and livelihoods. In response, the Government in 2014 prioritized shifting its attention to implementation of its climate change and green growth commitments.



Chapter 1

Delivering as One Results

For nearly a decade, the UN system in Viet Nam has transformed the way that various UN entities work together to achieve development results, with the aim of making the UN system more relevant, effective and efficient. Beginning in 2005 with the issuance of the Ha Noi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness, Viet Nam has been at the forefront of pushing the UN reform agenda. In 2007, the country became one of eight pilot countries in the first generation of the DaO Initiative. Now well into its results-driven second generation, 44 countries are currently implementing this approach to increase the UN's impact at country level.

In Viet Nam, DaO focuses not only on 'what' UN cooperation achieves through the One Plan 2012-2016 results, but also on process-related changes – or 'how' the UN delivers results – through implementation of six mutually reinforcing DaO pillars: One Plan, One Budget, One Leader, Operating as One, One Voice and the Green One UN House.

A strategy to manage for results

While a robust results monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework was included with the One Plan 2012-2016 to help monitor development results,

monitoring process-related changes was initiated with the adoption of the Results-Based Management Strategy in 2012. The Strategy emphasizes that all DaO pillars reinforce one another and "are instrumental for the achievement of One Plan results". The Strategy identifies the need for a tool to monitor One Plan development results, as well as a results monitoring framework to measure changes stemming from all the DaO pillars. This responds directly to the findings of the Independent Evaluation of the eight DaO pilot countries. The evaluation concluded that although DaO is considered to be improving the way the UN works, it is difficult to demonstrate such improvements conclusively due to the lack of robust M&E frameworks, in particular related to process changes and efficiency gains.

Development of the DaO Results Monitoring Framework

Following the UNCT adoption of the Results-Based Management Strategy in late 2012, work began to develop the DaO Results Monitoring Framework. Several versions were produced, mainly with expected DaO outcomes based around the DaO pillars. However, when revisiting the UNCT's theory of change

for DaO, it was determined that the main outcomes to which all DaO pillars contribute are: (1) Enhanced alignment to national development priorities and international commitments through engaging as a strategic partner, (2) Improved effectiveness in jointly delivering and demonstrating development results and (3) Increased efficiency in the way that inputs are converted into results.

Thus, in 2014 the DaO Results Monitoring Framework was revised to highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of the six DaO pillars and related tools and strategies, which all contribute to the above three results. Each of the 40 selected indicators is linked to one or more DaO pillar(s). This enables a more systematic and rigorous approach to measuring process-related changes emanating from DaO, demonstrating how the pillars contribute to the DaO Initiative’s strategic results. Data on 29 of the indicators is already being collected by different DaO teams. Measurement of the other indicators (11 out of 40) requires input from all UN agencies active in Viet Nam, and is collected by the Results-Based Management Working Group via annual questionnaires.

Working together: A result in its own right

As a DaO milestone for the UN in Viet Nam, the framework was adopted by the UNCT in 2014 and received positive feedback

from the GoV in terms of its importance and utility. Baseline values were collected at the end of 2014, making it possible – for the first time across the whole UN system in Viet Nam – to capture and analyze core facets of DaO and how they relate to the UN effectively and efficiently delivering relevant support in the country. In addition, the baseline information is expected to inform more evidence-based decision-making of the DaO Steering Committee – constituted by the Government, the UN and representatives of the donor community – as it exercises its role in providing oversight and guidance on the directions of UN reform.

The roll-out of the Framework is a significant result for the UN as it pushes the envelope to demonstrate real changes in how it operates as a result of implementing DaO. Going forward, when indicators are measured again at the end of 2015 and subsequent years, it will be possible to provide evidence of these changes by comparing annual indicator values with the 2014 baselines.

This chapter contains an analysis of the information generated via the 2014 baseline collection related to the three expected DaO outcomes: (1) improved alignment, (2) improved effectiveness and (3) improved efficiency.

Aligning to National Development Priorities

The adoption of DaO as a way of working together aims at, first and foremost, strengthening the UN's collective ability to engage as a trusted and strategic partner to Viet Nam. DaO is expected to allow the UN to support the country towards achieving its national development priorities as per the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020, the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2011-2015 and related sectoral and local strategies. It is also expected to help Viet Nam meet its commitments to internationally agreed development goals, such as the MDGs and other commitments from UN conventions and summits to which Viet Nam is a party. The One Plan 2012-2016 represents the programmatic and operational framework through which the UN delivers such support.

In relation to the UN's aligned support to Viet Nam's national development priorities, in 2014 the DaO Results Monitoring Framework was used to measure the extent to which the UN's technical assistance is (a) providing coherent upstream policy advice and advocacy on key development challenges, (b) supporting national capacity to monitor progress towards results and (c) facilitating Viet Nam's participation in international and regional discussions on critical development issues and in relevant knowledge exchanges.

a) Upstream policy advice and advocacy on key development challenges

Providing evidence-based advocacy through "One Voice" is key to enhancing the UN's ability to advise the GoV on complex development challenges in a coherent and comprehensive manner. In 2014, the UN's cross-sectoral expertise was used to conduct analysis, establish

common positions and release advocacy messages on a variety of issues in line with relevant global experience and international standards. Eight UN Joint Programming Groups (JPGs), the equivalent of results groups in the United Nations Development Group's Standard Operating Procedures for DaO, as well as several working groups and task forces, were vehicles to produce analytical work, used as the basis to prepare and submit 29 inter-agency recommendations and policy papers to GoV ministries and departments. Some examples of joint recommendations provided in 2014 are those on resettlement and social protection needs of migrants in climate change affected areas (issued by IOM, UNDP and UNFPA) and comments on the Occupational Safety and Health Law (developed by ILO and WHO).

In middle-income Viet Nam, the UN is increasingly providing this type of upstream and integrated engagement in strategic areas. In 2014, the UN's ability to bring international knowledge and experience was used to supply expert policy guidance, contributing to Viet Nam improving 14 key laws, policies and plans including:

- The revised Enterprise Law, which now establishes a business registration portal that provides real-time, legally valid business registration information, consequently improving transparency and credibility, while reducing the costs of doing business in Viet Nam
- The Marriage and Family Law, removing the provision forbidding same-sex marriage
- The Law on Health Insurance, which has expanded GoV subsidies for the

poor, ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups

- The revised Law on Environmental Protection, which now contains provisions on the rights and roles of local communities, in particular of children
- The Law on Court Organization to stipulate creation of a specialized court for children
- The Law on Civil Status, which now contains provisions to guarantee equality and non-discrimination as well as the rights of children and issues related to registration of births
- The revised Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Law, which now better encourages public-private partnerships as well as industry participation in TVET activities, helping to make them more demand-driven and improve their quality
- The Law on the Organization of the National Assembly, with improved elements on professionalization, gender equality and transparency.

Also in 2014, as a result of the UN's unique role in advocacy and support for the implementation of basic normative standards and following consistent efforts over a number of years, the National Assembly unanimously approved the ratification of two key human rights conventions: the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Following this, the UN provided recommendations to the GoV and hosted a series of workshops on the implications of the ratifications. UN joint advocacy also contributed to the Prime Minister's Decision 535 asking the central and provincial governments to act on the recommendations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Committee. In

addition, visits of Manfred Novak, former Special Rapporteur on Torture, and Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, brought media attention to and raised awareness of various human rights issues, international conventions and special procedures.

b) Stronger national capacity on results monitoring

Strong national capacity in results-based M&E is central to good governance. It provides public management tools that yield information that can be used to better manage policies and demonstrate progress to citizens and in the process, improve accountability. In this respect, strengthening national capacity for results-based management (RBM) is key to improving implementation and enforcement of national policies.

During 2014 through UN-supported M&E training sessions, approximately 2,000 national stakeholders improved their capacities to better understand the effectiveness of policies in improving people's lives and to make more informed decisions based on what works and what does not. The UN provided both sector-specific as well as generic RBM training. Two-thirds of a total of 67 training sessions targeted national stakeholders involved in monitoring of specific policies and plans, while one-third centred on building the overall RBM capacity of relevant staff in ministries and departments.

In addition, national stakeholders' capacity to monitor development results was further strengthened through 27 joint GoV and UN monitoring missions involving various line ministries (mostly the Ministry of Health (MoH)) and other GoV actors. In addition to reducing duplication of efforts and transaction costs for partners, this provides opportunities to learn from the Government's monitoring approaches so that the UN's support can be tailored accordingly.

Finally, having skilled national evaluation experts is one of the building blocks to analyze and report on the efficacy of GoV policies. The UN systematically makes use of and promotes development of national evaluation capacities, and ensures the quality of the UN's own evaluations by taking on board the knowledge, skills and perspectives of national evaluators. Out of 35 evaluations conducted by the UN in Viet Nam in 2014, 30 made use of national evaluation expertise.

MDG monitoring

An area of significant UN support has been the further strengthening of national capacity to monitor the achievement of the MDGs. Viet Nam's SEDS (2011-2020) and SEDP (2011-2015) set the main development objectives for Viet Nam, integrating the MDGs in the nationalized Viet Nam Development Goals (VDGs). The monitoring system for the MDGs/VDGs has been strengthened in recent years, with approval of the Viet Nam Statistics Development Strategy and the 2013 Prime Minister's decision on the principles and mandates for MDG reporting in Viet Nam. However, the country still lacks comprehensive and consistent M&E mechanisms, presenting challenges in collecting, analyzing and using data that is reliable, regular and disaggregated. The UN has thus been providing support in multiple areas, including monitoring of MDG-related results, improved data collection and validation, as well as preparations for final MDG reporting in 2015. Efforts in 2014 included:

- Supporting the further institutionalization of MDG/VDG targets and indicators into annual and five-year SEDPs at national, provincial and sectoral levels and of the MDG/VDG national database into the national data collection system.
- Supporting the collection of baselines and setting of targets for a set of prioritized indicators specifically

addressing the situation of ethnic minorities within the framework of the Plan of Action for Accelerating MDG attainment in ethnic minority areas.

- Helping the General Statistics Office (GSO) and line ministries to ensure consistency in data collected, particularly for health-related goals and to conduct the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which generates data for monitoring progress towards national goals and global commitments, including the MDGs.
- Helping the GoV to develop a paper on Viet Nam's experiences in implementing the MDGs, highlighting good practices and lessons learned.

Participatory monitoring

Lack of accountability has been a major constraint in the implementation of the MDGs across the world, as differentiated responsibilities for fulfilling the commitments have not always been clearly articulated. For this reason, recent discussions around the post-2015 agenda paid particular attention to the need for accountability mechanisms at every level. As an active contributor to the global discussions, Viet Nam was one of 10 countries in 2014 to discuss how to build new forms of accountability through participatory monitoring. Through group discussions and individual feedback, the UN asked representatives from civil society, the private sector and mass organizations to take stock of existing initiatives and tools that demonstrate the value of participatory monitoring of outcomes and providing policy feedback and which ultimately hold service providers to account. Some of these UN-supported initiatives are:

- Building civil society capacity for monitoring Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) compliance, in particular by supporting civil society

with preparation of its Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee.

- Supporting participatory preparation of Viet Nam's 2014 AIDS response progress report, with 21 civil society organizations (CSOs) – including groups of people living with HIV (PLHIV).
- Supporting the national network of PLHIV to generate evidence on the stigma and discrimination they face, with 1,625 people participating in the Stigma Index. The study findings will be used in 2015 to inform the HIV-related policy-making and programming process toward the goal of three zeros, especially zero discrimination, committed to by the Government.
- Undertaking Viet Nam's Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) in 63 provinces and municipalities, the fourth year in which it was conducted nationwide. PAPI collects citizen feedback through face-to-face interviews to provide time-series data on the performance of local governments and State actors in serving their end-users.
- Undertaking the Citizen Report Card and Child Rights-based Social Audits in two provinces, helping provincial authorities to capture citizen feedback in a scientific way and to ensure that key priorities related to children are effectively incorporated in annual and five-year SEDP and sectoral plans for 2016-2020.
- Conducting Rapid Impact Monitoring to support quantitative surveys and administrative data to gather opinions

and experiences that can provide the GoV with a means of monitoring the adequacy of social policies to protect against external shocks, particularly for key risk groups.

The stocktaking exercise showed that the implementation of participatory monitoring tools has faced some challenges, including decision-makers' reluctance to apply them, limited knowledge of these tools amongst civil society and local organizations, scarce human and financial resources to apply them and limited use of technology other than new innovations. The report concludes that the UN, along with interested donors and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), should continue to provide comprehensive and long-term support, awareness raising and capacity building for CSOs and vulnerable groups to effectively participate in policy monitoring. The report also indicates that regular exercises, such as annual surveys and cyclical mechanisms like those linked to international convention reviews, are more effective than one-off consultations or activities. This is because they provide opportunities to improve and expand the quality of monitoring exercises, while opening a window for civil society in Viet Nam to regularly engage in dialogue with the GoV on issues of compliance with international and national commitments.

c) Increased international and regional integration and knowledge exchanges

International integration is one of Viet Nam's top priorities and the country is making efforts to play a more visible leadership role in global institutions. As a multilateral organization, the UN is well-placed to support high-level

international engagement at the level of member states. In 2014, the UN provided technical and financial support to the participation of Vietnamese delegates in 57 key inter-governmental fora, meetings and conferences, 17 of which were regional and 40 global. Examples include support to the GoV delegation to attend key meetings related to the country's international commitments on human rights such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Geneva and the Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol in Vienna. It also included support to Vietnamese delegations to participate in global thematic fora like the 2014 Climate Change Conference in Lima, the second International Conference on Nutrition in Rome and the World Conference on Youth in Sri Lanka to engage youth in decision-making processes around implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The UN also supported representatives from Vietnamese civil society, alongside the GoV, to participate in the Regional Inter-Governmental Forum to review the 20-year implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the 4th World Conference on Women.

In order to promote structural reforms and re-orientation of Viet Nam's economic growth towards a more sustainable and inclusive path, UNDP and its national partners organized an international conference "Economic Reforms for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth: International Experience and Lessons for Viet Nam" in March 2014. The conference brought together leading international economists and academics as well as Vietnamese policy-makers and researchers to examine relevant experiences in institutional reform for equitable growth and "green"

development policies. The event has fed into the formulation of a study to review Viet Nam's economic development experiences after 30 years of 'Doi Moi'. The theme of inclusive growth was chosen for Viet Nam's upcoming National Human Development Report.

Another comparative advantage of the UN, in particular in MIC contexts, is its ability to act as a knowledge broker by sharing international experience and expertise at the technical level. In this area, in 2014 the UN made a significant contribution to building national knowledge and capacity by supporting more than 110 face-to-face knowledge sharing exchanges on critical development issues. This support made it possible for approximately 3,670 Vietnamese and international experts to get in touch, learn from each other and establish networking relationships and collaborative platforms.

While half of the knowledge exchanges were large workshops and conferences allowing for wide experience sharing, the UN also supported 22 study tours and project site missions to gain first-hand knowledge of national systems and local-level programme implementation, and 25 specific training sessions and expert lectures on good practices and how they can be replicated. Of these exchanges, more than half involved Vietnamese participants travelling abroad, exposing them to different country contexts. More than three-fourths of the exchanges took place within Asia-Pacific, contributing to the establishment of networks across countries with common traits and similarities in terms of their national levels of socio-economic development.

Demonstrating Effectiveness

Being able to demonstrate results delivery is critical for the UN. While individual UN agencies have methods for assessing their effectiveness, DaO in Viet Nam has allowed the development and application of tools to measure, analyze and demonstrate the UN's effectiveness across the board. To this end, key M&E provisions were foreseen in the One Plan 2012-2016 and these were further developed in the Results-Based Management Strategy adopted by the UNCT in 2012. The DaO Results Monitoring Framework takes system-wide measurement of progress one step forward. Since 2014 One Plan development results are described in detail in Chapter 2, the purpose of this section is to present baseline information collected through the DaO Results Monitoring Framework on the extent to which DaO allows the UN to demonstrate its effectiveness through (a) joint results monitoring, (b) joint communications about results and (c) system-wide capacity development.

a) Monitoring of One Plan development results

One Plan development results are monitored through the online One Plan Database¹. While all indicator values were updated in 2014 wherever data was available, for the first time a fuller picture of the UN's contribution to One Plan outcomes and outputs is available as a result of significant enhancements made to the database. As of 2014, this publicly available monitoring tool contains a set of new monitoring tables on key annual results, comparing actual results achieved against planned results, and allowing analysis to be conducted on the level of results delivery.

An assessment of the 2014 monitoring tables shows that 87 per cent of the results planned at the beginning of the

year were achieved by its end. Although not every expected and achieved result is equivalent in terms of its programmatic scope and relevance, the figure provided aims to illustrate the extent to which the annual plan per each One Plan Outcome was actually implemented. Greater accountability and learning has also been achieved by ensuring that the UN is more systematically documenting why certain results are not achieved or only partially achieved. In 2014, in almost all cases the reasons for lack of full achievement of results was due to delays in project approval or the UN delaying implementation to ensure alignment of projects to GoV schedules.

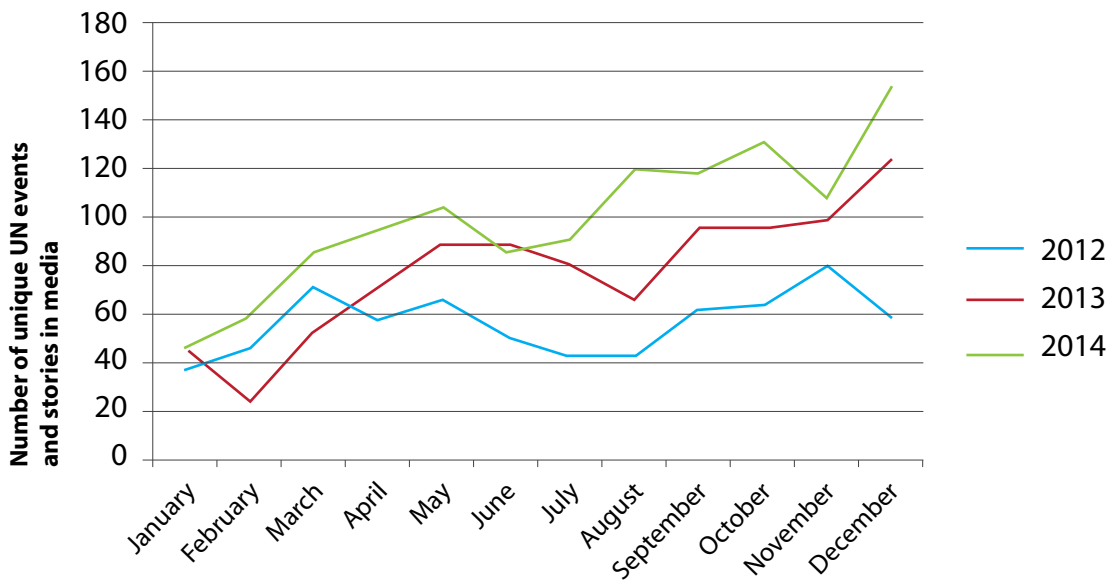
While all results are planned by JPGs, just over half of the results achieved (126) were delivered through direct collaboration between two or more agencies which could bring expertise to a single issue, for example in gender, HIV, social protection and health. Just under half (125) were delivered by a single agency with a unique comparative advantage in a given area, such as climate change and environment (predominantly UNDP) or children's rights (predominantly UNICEF).

b) Communicating about results

Being coherent in the way results are reported and communicated is critical to strategically positioning the UN at the country level. Demonstrating and providing maximum visibility to results achieved, or "communicating about results", is one of the key objectives of the UN Communications Framework 2012-2016, revised in 2014 to guide UN communications in Viet Nam.

In Viet Nam, the unique UN Communications Team – which since 2006 has brought together a team of agency communication specialists – has allowed the UN to speak with "One Voice" by pooling communications resources, sharing information and avoiding duplication.

1 <http://dimonitoring.org/v3/vietnam>, username: OPDuser; password: OPD2012



In 2014, increased visibility of the UN’s positions on national development issues and other topics in which the UN is engaged was achieved through strong external communications and active media and public engagement. As shown in the graph, a total of 1,190 unique UN events or stories appeared in national media reports throughout the year. With the exception of June, each month of the year witnessed greater national media coverage of the UN than in previous years.

The UN in Viet Nam is committed to telling its DaO story, helping to establish and maintain meaningful dialogue with key national and international stakeholders. This was accomplished in 2014 through production of six newsletters on DaO and the UN in Viet Nam.

In making the case for the UN’s contribution to One Plan results and national development priorities, 43 contribution stories were produced in 2014, putting a human face to development with illustrations of how the UN’s work in Viet Nam is making a difference. In addition to these stories and a wide range of issue-based publications and events, information on the UN’s initiatives was also shared through 74 speeches, 85 press releases, 46 publications and three

television documentaries. To reach a bigger audience as possible, the UN also invested in a range of online communication channels to produce 89 web features, 33 videos and more than 1,000 UN posts across six social media networks.

For any organization to be effective, it has to manage its knowledge well. The UN Communications Team supports this through managing the UN-wide intranet, through which it sent out 45 Intranet Insider weekly newsletters to UN staff in Viet Nam in 2014, as well as 243 ‘What’s making news’ updates to share with UN staff information on domestic and international media coverage of the UN in Viet Nam.

c) System-wide capacity development

An important element of effectiveness is linked to an organization’s ability to continuously build the capacity of its staff, as well as to learn from experiences and transform itself accordingly. In 2014 the UN in Viet Nam, for the first time, measured its investment in system-wide learning, experience sharing and knowledge exchange across UN agencies and globally.

Having passed the midpoint of One Plan implementation, 2014 was an important year in terms of understanding what works and how best to learn from these lessons.



To this end, the UN undertook a systematic review of the One Plan 2012-2016, building on existing project and programme level evaluations tracked through the integrated M&E plan. The review assessed the availability of evidence needed to evaluate the UN's efforts to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and made a set of recommendations to help prepare for and design the 2015 evaluation of the One Plan.

Organizational learning and capacity development was also fostered through cross-sectoral events and discussions. In 2014, UN staff had the opportunity to learn from peers and experts (national and visiting) and explored innovative solutions to complex development challenges. Increased capacity to apply core UN approaches (such as culturally appropriate programming or RBM) and greater awareness of key national development issues was achieved through a total of 50 knowledge sharing and capacity development events. While close to half of the events were in the framework of the UN inter-agency Results Groups, showing the importance of these groups as platforms for knowledge exchanges, the rest were either open to all staff across the UN system or to representatives from Government, donors and/or other development partners. The importance of HIV and gender equality issues, which cut across the mandates of a

wide range of UN agencies, explains the fact that half of the events dealt with aspects related to either one of these topics.

Finally, knowledge and experience was not only shared at the national level, but also with the international UN community of practitioners. With Viet Nam being widely seen as a global role model for UN country-level reform, continued analysis and documentation of experiences was developed so that other countries adopting this approach can benefit from the lessons learned. In 2014, the UN in Viet Nam also contributed to global learning by sharing successes and challenges in implementing the DaO approach in global discussions, leading to the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures and related guidance. These guidelines on the One Programme, advisory notes on Joint Resource Mobilization, the Communicating as One Resource Guide, the guidance note on developing the UN Business Operations Strategy, the UNDAF Annual Results Reports template, the M&E Framework on Harmonization of Business Operations at Country Level and the ongoing process to develop an M&E framework to measure UNCT performance in mainstreaming human rights as well as in high-level dialogue on staff capacity for UN reform will ensure the UN is fit for purpose in the post 2015 era.

Measuring Efficiency

Greater efficiency is a central objective of the DaO approach. As part of this, three aspects are considered, namely reducing duplication, reducing transaction costs and generating cost savings. Although improvements in these areas are among the core expected results of DaO, demonstrating efficiency gains has proved to be one of the biggest challenges of UN reform globally. In 2014, the UN in Viet Nam has taken steps to measure key indicators related to these elements and, having collected baselines, will be able to systematically track efficiency gains in the coming years.

In Viet Nam, the Green One UN House (GOUNH) is the most promising element in terms of increasing efficiency in all areas. The GOUNH project is a UNCT-led initiative with three key aspects: the building including design, construction and completion, business and operational reforms, taking advantage of the co-location of agencies and behaviour change so the UN can deliver green and deliver as one.

a) Reduced duplication

Pooling expertise to work jointly on an issue when appropriate is a core element of DaO that guides the UN's work in Viet Nam, ensuring unnecessary duplication and overlaps. Co-location in the GOUNH, and in particular 'functional clustering' with staff sitting in inter-agency teams of common operational or programmatic relevance, is expected to be a key enabler of reduced duplication, as it will be easier than ever for staff from across agencies to work together.

In 2014, the use of the DaO Monitoring Framework has provided a baseline on the magnitude of such collaboration among UN experts. The UN reduced duplication

of programmatic efforts by individual UN agencies, while at the same time improving UN coherence, through the production of 30 interagency deliverables (mainly desk reviews, research reports and evaluations) and the joint organization of 46 events (mainly training sessions, workshops, campaigns, policy dialogues, consultations and media events). The cross-cutting nature and relevance to all agencies of gender equality explains the fact that around one-fourth of these joint deliverables and one-third of the joint events related to aspects of gender equality.

The tendency has been for a limited number of partners to collaborate, with more than two-thirds of the joint deliverables and events involving just two or three agencies. In a few cases, the nature of the topic requires a larger multi-partner engagement. Examples include several reports and position papers produced with inputs from across the UN system in Viet Nam, such as UNCT inputs to the reporting process of the CEDAW.

b) Reduced transaction costs

In Viet Nam, the establishment of UNCT-led task forces that advance processes on behalf of the entire UN system has been one of the most effective ways to reduce transaction costs.

For example, in the area of resource allocation, the One Plan Fund Allocation Management Committee develops criteria to ensure the process to apply for OPFs is fair and transparent. In 2014, the committee supported the allocation of US\$5.4 million. In the area of resource mobilization, a task team on breakthrough proposals composed of three UNCT members helped the UNCT improve fundraising proposals prepared by

technical inter-agency teams by providing substantive comments, ensuring their readiness for fundraising when calls for proposals are issued. In 2014, US\$1.5 million was successfully mobilized for one such proposal and more proposals will be put forth in 2015.

As GOUNH construction has come to a close and the imminent relocation draws nearer, several mechanisms will ensure a smooth transition to the new premises, while reducing transaction costs. The Green One UN House Management Committee prepared the provision of support services in administration, facility management, security and ICT, and designed the governance, service delivery and staffing structures for the integrated One UN Common Services Unit. The Change Management Working Group readied all staff for the move, promoted a green campaign, raised staff awareness of what working in the House will be like and ensured participation of staff in a number of decisions through town hall meetings, road shows and the intranet. The Federation of UN Staff Associations – as an active member of the change management group – ensured that agencies' staff associations were consulted throughout the process. Finally, the Task Force on Functional Clustering developed an options paper to inform UNCT discussions on the concept, practices and potential reporting and accountability structures when agency staff are reorganized into functional clusters in the House.

c) Cost savings

Once 12 out of the 15 UN resident agencies operate from the GOUNH, a step change is expected in terms of cost savings, largely resulting from integrating the common services into a one-stop shop (OSS) servicing all co-located agencies. Unique globally, by building a single management structure for common services, it will become possible to offer the same level of services for administration, IT and security across all agencies in the House.

Once the common services unit is operational, and in line with the recently issued global M&E Framework for Harmonization of Business Operations at Country Level, several indicators will be used to monitor cost savings. This includes annual savings from the use of common financial arrangements or those realized through collaborative procurement, as well as other aspects under the Operating as One pillar.

Cost savings are made possible not only through the UN DaO, but also delivering green. Since 2011 the Green Campaign, an initiative promoted by "Green Champions" of all UN agencies in Viet Nam who volunteer their time to the campaign, has raised awareness of green issues and promoted greener office behaviour. Efforts have been made to collect data on energy consumption and to conduct spot-checks to monitor behaviours such as switching off lights, air conditioners, computers and other electronics during non-working hours, with annual green awards given to those with the best results. While the campaign has until now been run on a voluntary basis, after moving to the GOUNH various elements will be taken on board by the full system, providing greater opportunities to more significantly reduce the UN's carbon footprint, while saving money at the same time.

Another way to save on costs is to ensure rates for goods and services do not exceed a reasonable threshold. Since 2009, the Government, European Union (EU) and UN have made this possible in Viet Nam through establishing common standards in the UN-EU Guidelines for Financing of Local Costs, contributing to more cost-effective and transparent implementation of projects, in keeping with the aid effectiveness agenda. In 2014, such cost norms were updated to ensure they are in line with the latest market rates.



Lessons for the Future

Learning generated by the experience of rolling out the DaO Results Monitoring Framework in 2014 and in implementing the One Plan 2012-2016 for three years will help to guide the UN in Viet Nam as it moves towards its next One Plan cycle and aims to remain 'fit for purpose' in a MIC Viet Nam.

One key lesson is that the prominence of the UN's upstream engagement in policy support and law-making processes requires more robust M&E. Efforts in the coming years will focus on improving such approaches and tools to produce clearer evidence of the impact and effects of the UN's policy advice and advocacy.

In terms of availability of data across the three expected DaO outcomes, it is clear that the largest gaps are in the area of efficiency. It is expected that significant improvements in data availability should be made possible in 2015 with the move to the GOUNH, roll-out of common services, scaling up of the green campaign and development of a business operations strategy.

Appropriate mechanisms to jointly review results are critical elements of the DaO partnership. While the One Plan and DaO Steering Committees have provided strategic guidance and oversight, the lack of a formal programmatic review mechanism at the level of the JPGs remains a challenge. Sectoral partnership groups (such as the Health Partnership Group and Education Sector Group) that include participation of the GoV – as well as donors, civil society and other development partners – illustrate the utility of wider stakeholder participation in such groups. Further discussions in this area are needed.

A UN system that is 'fit for purpose' to deliver on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is one that is coordinated and results-oriented. Continuous investment in strengthening RBM capacity across the

UN system is crucial, particularly among members of inter-agency groups. Experience in 2014 has shown that such support is most useful when based on a learning-by-doing approach and through hands-on support, rather than formal training. Furthermore, a country-level centralized capacity in RBM must be in place to sustain necessary system-wide initiatives such as the use of the DaO Results Monitoring Framework, as well for the diligent planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the One Plan itself.

It must be noted that in some areas DaO has not reduced transaction costs, but rather increased them. This DaO Annual Results Report in its current scope and length is one such example. At the global level it was foreseen that country-level system-wide reports would replace, wherever possible, agency-specific reporting to reduce transaction costs. However, in most cases agencies' headquarters continue to require reports from country offices, doubling the workload for country staff. It was also foreseen globally that DaO results reports would reduce transaction costs by replacing project-specific reporting to OPF donors. However, the sharp decrease in contributions to the OPF in Viet Nam puts the added value of this DaO product at stake in view of the considerable investment the whole system makes to produce it. Given this situation, the UNCT will be exploring pragmatic solutions to reduce the reporting burden.

The analysis of baselines in this chapter has shed light on the nature of the UN's work in Viet Nam in a way that has not been possible before. Moving forward, progress towards time-bound targets will be measured at the end of every year to show any changes over time in the way that DaO is helping the UN achieve its ultimate aim: to be a more relevant, effective and efficient partner to the people and GoV.



Chapter 2

One Plan Results

This chapter contains a consolidated overview of results achieved with support of the 17 UN agencies partnering in the framework of the One Plan 2012-2016. The One Plan is the basis for UN support of the GoV to deliver on commitments to international conventions, including the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, while meeting its domestic development agenda contained in the SEDS 2011-2020 and SEDP 2011-2015.

Following the One Plan agreement in early 2012 and subsequent design and approval of different detailed project outlines between line ministries and UN agencies, 2014 was the second full year of One Plan implementation to demonstrate progress towards higher-level results the UN is working to achieve during the remaining two years.

Building on the 2012 and 2013 reports, we continue to spotlight specific aspects of progress through contribution stories which bring a human face to reporting the UN's work in Viet Nam. These are an opportunity for JPGs to highlight the results they consider most relevant in terms of illustrating the comparative advantages of UN work undertaken jointly or individually by different agencies. In this 2014 report, the stories demonstrate higher-level results, reflecting challenges and mitigation strategies.

Joint Programming Groups	Focus Areas and One Plan Outcomes 2012-2016
Focus Area 1: Inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth	
People-centred Economic Growth and Decent Work	Outcome 1.1: Evidence-based Development Policies in a LMIC Viet Nam Outcome 1.2: Opportunities for Decent Work
Climate Change and Environment	Outcome 1.3: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Outcome 1.4: Natural Resources and Environmental Management
Focus Area 2: Access to quality essential services and social protection	
Social Protection	Outcome 2.1: Social Protection
Health	Outcome 2.2: Health
Education	Outcome 2.3: Education and Training
HIV	Outcome 2.4: Gender Equality and HIV
Gender	Outcome 2.4: Gender Equality and HIV
Focus Area 3: Enhanced governance and participation	
Governance and Rule of Law	Outcome 3.1: Elected Bodies and the Legislative Process Outcome 3.2: Legal and Judicial Reform and Access to Justice Outcome 3.3: Public Administrative Reform Outcome 3.4: Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs)

- The **JPG on Economic Growth and Decent Work** was convened by ILO, co-convened by FAO and supported by IFAD, IOM, ITC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO and UN Women.
- The **JPG on Climate Change and Environment** was convened by UNIDO, co-convened by UNDP with input from FAO, IFAD, IOM, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNODC, UNV, UN Women and WHO.
- The **JPG on Social Protection** was convened by UNICEF, co-convened by ILO and brought together support from FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNODC and UN Women.
- The **JPG on Health** was convened by WHO, co-convened by UNFPA working with FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNODC.
- The **JPG on Education** was convened by UNESCO, co-convened by UNICEF and supported by ILO and UNFPA.
- The **JPG on HIV** was convened by UNAIDS, co-convened by UNODC and supported by ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV, UN Women and WHO.
- The **JPG on Gender** was convened by UN Women, co-convened by UNFPA and encompassed ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, UNV and WHO.
- The **JPG on Governance and Rule of Law** was convened by UNDP, co-convened by UNODC and brought together the work of ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNV and UN Women.

Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Growth



Through the One Plan, the UN is committed to supporting MIC Viet Nam to balance economic goals with social, human and environmental development, while ensuring all citizens benefit and are able to participate in the economic growth process. In line with SEDP priorities, the One Plan helps underpin Viet Nam's efforts to stabilize the macroeconomy, restructure the economy and develop more inclusive and sustainable growth models.

The UN is also a partner to address environmental degradation, scale-up green production and promote energy efficient, sustainable, green business models and economics in alignment with the SEDP goal to protect the environment. Finally, in response to Viet Nam's efforts to prevent natural disasters and effectively respond to climate change, the UN is bolstering disaster risk management (DRM) and reduction with a focus on building resilience to environmental stresses and hazards.

Outcome 1.1: People-centred, green and evidence-based socio-economic development policies

To ensure policy-makers have access to accurate data and evidence in order to develop policy options in line with international good practice, the UN is supporting the Government in three areas of work: strengthening capacities of data producers, providers and users; producing strategic options for people-centred development for consideration by policy makers; enhancing national capacity to formulate and implement sustainable poverty reduction strategies from a multi-dimensional approach.

Context

Viet Nam's economic recovery continued in 2014 with growth reaching 5.9 per cent amid signs of acceleration in the latter part of the year. In general, the country is now looking to move from a resource-extensive growth strategy to one which is based on productivity improvements and is more inclusive and sustainable. Efforts to restructure the economy continued in the areas of public investment, financial sector institutions, State-owned enterprises and the agricultural sector, the promotion of human resources and skills development - particularly in relation to modern industrial practices and innovation, improved market institutions and infrastructure development.

Also worth highlighting is the first Supreme Oversight of National Assembly on Poverty Reduction Support conducted in 2014 and the review process of poverty reduction policies and programmes under Resolution 80 on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (2016-2020). The formulation of multi-dimensional poverty measures, inclusion of commune devolution and development of an Ethnic Minority MDG Action Plan should also be noted.

Finally, the National Assembly rounded off the year with the issuance of two important laws, the amended Enterprise and Investment laws. They will expand simplified business registration procedures to other types of business entities, such as foreign-invested and State-owned enterprises as well as establish a business registration portal to make legally valid business registration information publicly available in real-time to enhance transparency and reduce costs of doing business in Viet Nam.

Results in 2014

For key national institutions to formulate and monitor people-centred, green and evidence-based development policies, the UN focused its support in three main areas:

Firstly, supporting **greater use of statistics**

for evidence-based socio-economic planning and decision-making (output 1.1.1) by assisting the GSO in a wide range of initiatives as in previous years. In 2014, UNICEF worked with the GSO to produce the 5th round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which provides important inputs on the situation of children and women in Viet Nam for final MDG reporting, development of the SEDP 2016-2020 and filling in-country data gaps on disparity and equity. Its key findings report was disseminated by the GoV in September 2014, with the full report available in 2015. The first-ever Inter-Censal Population and Housing Survey was successfully conducted to provide important population indicators for development and evaluation of socio-economic development policies and plans as well as finalization of MDG goals. The UN helped the Government to undertake in-depth analyses of Inter-Censal Population and Housing Survey data and dissemination of key findings to Government organizations, policy-makers and other information users (UNFPA). The first-ever National School to Work Transition Survey and Survey on Labour Demand for Young People in Viet Nam were also conducted, to inform the development and implementation of national policy and programmes on youth employment. The National Child Report was developed to support the development and implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour (2015-2020).

In addition, UN-supported consultation workshops and provision of experts contributed to an improved GSO training plan for 2015-2020 (UNFPA), the formulation and monitoring of policies at national and local levels, such as the introduction of the City Prosperity Index into Viet Nam's Urban Indicator Roster (UN-Habitat) and the improvement of the System of National Accounts, including the gross domestic product (GDP) compilation procedure (UNDP). Through the sharing of international experiences, consultations and a rapid impact assessment, the UN informed the

revision of the draft revised Statistical Law particularly on independence of statistics, and strengthening of data quality and dissemination. In preparation for the law's roll-out in 2015, UNDP also backed the development of a communications, advocacy and education strategy to showcase the importance of statistics. In terms of data and statistical management platforms, the UN helped establish a mechanism for inter-ministerial sharing of statistical information and strengthened Viet Nam's Statistical Development Strategy monitoring system.

Secondly, **ensuring that strategic options for people-centred development are produced and considered by policy-makers** (output 1.1.2) by building on the UN's neutrality and normative mandate. The UN believes new approaches are needed to take the poorest, most vulnerable and hardest to reach people out of poverty. This requires a shift in the way the country conceptualises and measures poverty, with the chronic poor placed at the centre of poverty eradication policies. In this sense, the UN successfully advocated to include 'commune ownership' and 'cultural appropriateness' principles, as reflected in national documents of the National Assembly (Resolution 176) and GoV as a result of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO support to the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA). The shift in poverty reduction programmes, particularly for ethnic minorities, also requires policies grounded in disaggregated data and solid analysis of bottlenecks - such as the UNDP-supported Ethnic Minority Poverty Assessment published in May 2014. The UN also backed policy research and analyses to provide options for more inclusive growth patterns, with background studies for UNDP's 2015 National Human Development Report and ILO-supported studies and dialogues on State-owned enterprise reforms and increased labour productivity



highlighting strategic approaches to deeper economic reforms and policy impacts of reform efforts on labour markets and employment. At a local level, evidence from a UNDP-supported project in eight pilot provinces illustrated the benefits of participatory planning and implementation with income generation joined-up livelihood initiatives that directly benefited 8,000 people from 18 ethnic minority groups. National policy-makers were subsequently informed on lessons learned related to community empowerment and social capital building.

Thirdly, **ensuring poverty reduction analysis and planning by the GoV used a multi-dimensional approach** (output 1.1.3). In 2014, the National Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MDP) Master Plan incorporated findings from UNDP and UNICEF research and surveys on MDP and child poverty, particularly amongst ethnic minority populations. The MDP measures were formulated through a highly participatory process involving GoV officials, researchers, development partners and communities. MDP analytical reports, the Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Urban Poverty Survey report and pilot initiatives in HCMC, Lao Cai, Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh informed the definition of data collection methods. Findings on multi-dimensional ethnic minority and child poverty were discussed by policy-makers and widely communicated. Particularly, the MDP approach has been officially integrated into HCMC's Poverty Reduction Plan for piloting and developing the HCMC Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme 2016-2020. In the area of child MDP, UNICEF

in consultation with the MPI and line ministries, focused on eight provinces and cities (An Giang, Dien Bien, Dong Thap, Gia Lai, HCMC, Kon Tum, Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan) to advocate for the incorporation of disaggregated indicators related to children in the development of 2016-2020 SEDP and its future implementation and M&E.

Contribution story:

Tackling ethnic minority poverty

By any standards, Viet Nam is a poverty reduction success story. Twenty years of economic reform contributed to a reduction in income poverty from about 60 to just 10 per cent. In spite of overall gains, evidence points to widening income gaps, with severe poverty still experienced by large sections of ethnic minorities. The GoV and development organizations have directed significant financial resources to help alleviate poverty, but ethnic minorities remain amongst the most economically and socially vulnerable groups and still experience very high poverty rates. This suggests that poverty reduction policies and programmes should be examined more critically to better understand the different dimensions and dynamics of ethnic minority poverty and respond more effectively to challenges faced by these communities.

In recent years, understanding is growing that policy-making must be inclusive and embrace diversity to ensure continued human development progress. This means moving away from rigid 'one-size-fits-all'



approaches, to more nuanced analysis that puts beneficiaries at the heart of development.

In 2009, the UN introduced the 'anthropological approach to development' to CEMA. This culturally appropriate approach can be integrated throughout the policy cycle, to develop a better understanding of the local context, reinforce respect for diversity, acknowledge the importance of local communities and maximize the use of cultural capital in development programmes.

As part of this initiative, the UN conducted a series of in-depth assessments of ethnic minority poverty, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. Sixty CEMA and National Assembly Ethnic Council staff were trained in the anthropological approach, enabling them to undertake multi-disciplinary and actor-centred analysis of ethnic minority poverty.

FAO, UNDP and UNESCO supported a review of poverty reduction policies in two ethnic minority communes. This included collecting good practices of inclusive development policies and programmes to equip policy-makers with a theoretical framework of the approach and an understanding of how to put it into practice.

A number of policy dialogues were held with officials at different levels to increase understanding of the new approach and, more importantly, meaningfully engage ethnic minority stakeholders in the discussion from an 'actor-centred' perspective.

One positive result was the widespread consensus reached within the National Assembly, GoV agencies, provinces, development partners and ethnic minorities themselves on the need for greater social cohesion and social capital to ensure community development.

Evidence of the impacts of the multi-layered policy dialogues came from the strong and proactive statement of commitment made by senior CEMA officials at the 2013 Viet Nam Development Partners Forum. The anthropology approach was formally introduced into the CEMA system in 2014 as a follow-up action, using training materials developed with support and guidance from national and international anthropologists.

At the end of 2014, the UN welcomed the Government's formulation of the Ethnic Minority MDG Action Plan. It prioritizes actions and resources needed to deliver on the MDGs for ethnic minorities, but also promotes many of the values the UN has long advocated for, including the need for local empowerment that embraces community strengths and diversity.

In the coming year, the UN will sustain this momentum through policy advice for the formulation of more inclusive ethnic minority policies, sharing policy research findings and good practices for integrating culture into development and piloting anthropological/culturally appropriate approaches to ethnic minority development.

UNDP, UNESCO, FAO

Outcome 1.2: New opportunities for decent work, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged

Viet Nam's transition to MIC status, combined with the demographic bonus and migration have increased pressure on the labour market. To improve productivity and enable the most disadvantaged to access decent work and generate income, the UN is working to improve sustainable development policies. By focusing on micro and small enterprises, high standard vocational training and skills development, competitiveness of formal and informal sector businesses will be improved and employment policies that prevent discrimination and exploitation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups strengthened.

Context

Viet Nam's labour market has made significant progress in recent decades, as reflected by higher wages, a steady decrease in agricultural employment as well as stronger labour laws and institutions. The Convention on Employment Policy has underpinned political commitments to develop employment policies and institutions supportive of full and productive employment and decent work for all Vietnamese. This was complemented by the adoption of the revised Labour Code, Trade Union Law, Social Insurance Law and new Employment Law. This revised framework – to the extent implemented - will provide workers with better protection, improved working conditions, higher wages and more effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

Despite this progress, Viet Nam faces major labour market challenges. Low quality agricultural employment, youth unemployment and 60 per cent of workers still in vulnerable and informal jobs remain threats to decent work and adequate social security.

To address these challenges, there has been a greater recent policy focus on developing a dynamic and skilled workforce that meets the needs of businesses, unlocking the potential of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that constitute the backbone of the economy and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Since the private sector and particularly SMEs play a critical role in economic growth and employment generation, reforming administrative procedures, creating a more favourable business environment and nurturing the domestic private sector's development are on the Government's development agenda and were re-emphasized at the Viet Nam Development Partnership Forum in December 2014.

Results in 2014

In supporting Vietnamese institutions to create opportunities for decent work amid the country's current socio-economic transformation, the UN focused on the following four areas:

First of all, making sure **sustainable enterprise development policies are established with a focus on micro and small businesses** - a principle source of job creation for many of the most vulnerable members of society - **and on decent job creation** (output 1.2.1). In 2014, the Enterprise and Investment laws were amended in line with UNIDO's recommendations to ensure most types of enterprises enjoy the same simplified business registration procedures at single point Business Registration Offices nationwide and publicize their registration and operational information through a single web-based national business registration portal. In addition, six case studies on best practices in workplace quality management were developed by ILO to inform the process of formulation and implementation of policy and programmes on SME development. The Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry is able to apply global Women's Empowerment Principles to enterprises' operations and has guided 12 enterprises in Ha Noi and HCMC, having received assistance from UN Women.

At a local level, UNIDO technical assistance guided 77 SMEs in the furniture, leather and textile sectors in Binh Duong province, Ha Noi and HCMC to enhance their design, marketing and production capacities, while FAO and UNIDO support assisted producers from six provinces and municipalities to increase their competitiveness and access to markets, with capacity building for vegetable and coffee producers to meet international standards, establishment of four new value chains as well as improved linkages between farmers, cooperatives, companies, wholesalers and supermarkets. Finally, ILO and UNESCO worked with 200

tourism and handicraft businesses in Quang Nam and Hue to heighten awareness of responsible tourism principles and corporate social responsibility, while 150 businesses were encouraged to employ people with disabilities.

The UN is also promoting **national vocational training policies and programmes that respond to current market demands** (output 1.2.2) to make Viet Nam's workforce more competitive. In 2014, a major milestone was reached with the approval of the revised Law on Vocational Training which, based on inputs from ILO-supported consultations, will make for more demand-driven vocational training. Thousands of secondary school students and parents as well as 200 out-of-school-youth benefited from an ILO-backed career and vocational guidance programme in three pilot provinces (Phu Tho, Quang Nam and Thua Thien-Hue). The programme's success was recognized by Vietnamese partners and is expected to be scaled-up by the MoET. Training covering rural entrepreneurship, job search skills, decent work and labour laws was also delivered to students from five provincial technical and vocational education and training schools to enhance employability. In addition ILO, IOM and UN Women worked to better protect migrants – especially women workers – and promote their rights resulting in 120 trainers from more than 100 recruitment agencies being better able to deliver gender-sensitive trainings to key stakeholders involved in the migration process.

At the same time the UN, in cooperation with partners, is ensuring that **targeted micro and small businesses are more competitive and have greater market shares** (output 1.2.3) in compliance with recognized best practice business standards to improve the country's competitiveness in global markets. In 2014, UNIDO and UNEP-supported multi-stakeholder dialogues, workshops and trainings exposed nearly 1,000 people to the benefits and requirements of ISO 26000, corporate



social responsibility and sustainable consumption and production informed. Two value chain analyses of Viet Nam's existing comparative advantages in catfish and coffee production were supported by UNIDO with ministries accepting the need to apply internationally recognized quality standards. Post-harvest losses in horticulture and vegetable chains in Ha Noi, Nghe An and Phu Tho were reduced as a result of FAO and UNIDO training on post-harvest handling and increased market linkages. In addition, local pharmaceutical manufacturers in Can Tho, Ha Noi and HCMC improved their knowledge on intellectual property rights and generic medicine production as a result of UNIDO and UNCTAD training with the Viet Nam Pharmaceutical Companies Association.

And finally, **supporting stronger employment policies that prevent discrimination and exploitation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and, in particular, internal and external migrant workers** (output 1.2.4). In 2014, policy-makers gained access to an improved evidence-base on migration and gender issues, which included a joint UN policy brief on returning migrants and

a review of the Law on Contract-Based Overseas Workers' implementation. ILO and UN Women also helped assess and improve the Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply and monitor the implementation of a code of conduct involving 47 recruitment agencies.

Contribution story:

Cultivating agricultural competitiveness

Every year in Viet Nam, 16 per cent of grain and 22 per cent of fruit and vegetables are lost post-harvest. This amounts to 6.4 million metric tonnes of paddy rice, 0.8 million metric tonnes of corn and 1.6 million metric tonnes of fruit and vegetables. These losses are high compared to the ASEAN average of 10 per cent.

Post-harvest losses are a major barrier to Viet Nam's agricultural competitiveness. Therefore, improving post-harvest technology is a priority. The volume of processed agricultural products in Viet Nam remains low, with processing technologies often below international standards. This means processed products often attract



lower prices in international markets.

The Government's current aim is that by 2020, the value of agro-forestry and fishery products will have increased by 20 per cent on average, with post-harvest losses of agricultural and fishery products having reduced by 50 per cent compared to current ratios.

In 2014, the UN helped provide solutions for post-harvest technology to increase supply capacity and competitiveness in fruit and vegetable value chains. FAO and UNIDO worked together to support capacity building to introduce improved post-harvest technology. Sixty cooperative leaders and technical experts were trained as trainers. In turn they trained 492 producers in horticulture and vegetable chains in Nghe An and Phu Tho provinces and Ha Noi. As a result, producers were equipped with knowledge and good practice skills in harvesting, handling, storage and consumption for safe vegetables as well as management of vegetable production chains. Covering production techniques, management and value addition, these trainings have helped to improve the quality of vegetables and reduce post-harvest losses.

By providing technical support, a pilot model on post-harvest handling was successfully tested in the field, for example with a banana chain in Phu Tho province, green mustard in Nghe An province and leafy vegetables in Ha Noi suburban areas.

The training has directly helped to increase the incomes of smallholders through the provision of appropriate technologies for conservation and value addition. It has also helped improve the organization and management skills of smallholders.

Value addition and post-harvest losses were key topics for discussion at the International Support Group Plenary meeting organized by the MARD on December 9, 2014, with the GoV calling for support from development partners. The UN, through the expertise of FAO and UNIDO, is committed to help transform the sector, ushering in appropriate technology to reduce post-harvest losses. By doing so, the value of agricultural products will increase as well as income at all stages of the value chain.

FAO, UNIDO

Outcome 1.3: Implementation of Viet Nam's commitments to climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk management

Climate change continues to pose a critical development challenge to Viet Nam. The UN has provided major support in multi-sectoral coordination for preparedness and emergency response among various stakeholders and will continue supporting four main areas: climate proofing formulation of national policies, plans and programmes; enhanced resilience of vulnerable groups to natural hazards, establishment of an effective national system to reduce emissions from deforestation and sustainably manage forests; long-term climate change strategy and green economy.

Context

The year witnessed increased political attention towards climate change globally and in Viet Nam. The International Panel on Climate Change published its Fifth Assessment and parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have been gearing up for the expected global climate agreement in Paris at the end of 2015, which requires formulation of "intended nationally determined contributions", around which Viet Nam began work in 2014. The country also engaged proactively in international climate negotiations at the COP20 in Lima, Peru.

Highlighting the increasing importance of climate change, the GoV established the Viet Nam Panel on Climate Change (VPCC) to advise the National Committee on Climate Change, chaired by the Prime Minister. Climate change adaptation priorities identified in the National Climate Change Action Plan in 2012 have started to be implemented, for example through dialogues and investment planning on adaptation in the Mekong Delta and progress with coastal protection infrastructure under the Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change (SPRCC). Climate proofing of infrastructure, tourist resorts, industrial zones and city expansion projects has started on a small scale. Climate smart agriculture is being pursued in pilots, to improve food security by increasing resilience of livelihoods to climate shocks, introducing drought and flood tolerant crop varieties, applied research, water conservation and other interventions.

The GoV has made clear commitments to pursue a low carbon development pathway by investing in green growth and is shifting its focus from policy to implementation. The National Green Growth Action Plan was adopted in 2014 and sectoral and provincial green growth action plans are under development. Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), which outline specific commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, are being prepared for key sectors. For example in the industrial sector, more efficient energy management

Disaster risk management

Viet Nam experienced no major disasters in 2014. A new GoV structure for DRM, outlined in the Disaster Risk Management Law, took shape and a new Department of Disaster Prevention and Control was established. Systems were strengthened in line with the law's multi-hazard approach that placed increased emphasis on disaster preparedness and recovery in addition to responses. Viet Nam contributed to the review of the Hyogo Framework through consultation meetings in conjunction with civil society and in support of a new global agreement on disaster risk reduction (DRR) to be finalized in 2015. Ministries increased their participation in DRM increased during 2014, with mainstreamed and improved risk communication in sectors as well as a greater focus on remote mountainous areas. The national programme on community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) was aggressively rolled out in 2014 reaching 1,000 communes nationwide. Commune-level Committees for Flood and Storm Control were also directed to develop disaster preparedness plans.

systems relating to the use of compressed air and steam are being implemented, contributing to reduced GHG emissions. Ten companies received ISO 50001 certification on energy management standards for the first time, allowing them to compete globally. The energy sector is visibly changing as indirect subsidies to coal reduce, the Renewable Energy Strategy is under development and a feed-in tariff was set in 2014 for power from municipal solid waste. Viet Nam is also making solid progress with implementation of the National Action Programme on REDD+ ².

The National Assembly approved the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP) in June 2014, which included a new climate change and green growth chapter. A resolution on oversight of climate change progress in 2013 was also passed as was another on oversight of climate change actions in the Mekong Delta in December 2014.

International financing of climate change shows rich potential, with more than US\$10 billion in pledges to the Green Climate Fund and US\$4.43 billion to the Global Environment Facility for its 6th programme cycle 2014-2018, of which Viet Nam was allocated US\$26.5 million. Other bilateral and multilateral grants and loans are expected, especially through the SPRCC mechanism and a focus on green growth, for which Viet Nam continues to develop policy and implementation experience and put in place financial management systems.

2 REDD+: Reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.



Results in 2014

The UN is providing continuous policy advice and technical assistance to national and sub-national institutions in the following four main areas:

Mainstreaming and integrating climate change action into national policies, plans and programmes

and associated planning and investment processes (output 1.3.1). In 2014, the revised LEP was approved, incorporating UN advice on climate change, the role of civil society and the principle to respect the best interests of children and other vulnerable groups in climate change actions. National authorities are aware of climate change vulnerability mapping approaches as a key step in the identification of priority actions to protect rural infrastructure in Viet Nam's 15 mountainous provinces. A roadmap on fossil fuel fiscal policy reform was launched providing evidence-based and feasible policy options to support green and inclusive growth. This policy analysis is informing the revision of the national Power Development Plan and formulation of the Renewable Energy Strategy, which are expected to be issued in 2015. While the final draft of the UNDP-supported Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review was published in 2014 and will be launched in 2015, it has already influenced the development of new climate finance management systems and practices in Viet Nam.

Another important area of UN work has been to support **vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to better withstand**

disasters (output 1.3.2). In 2014, UNDP continued to work with more than 40 researchers from numerous national institutes to develop the Viet Nam Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. This report reflects the state of knowledge of extremes and climate-related disasters in Viet Nam. UNDP also supported capacity assessment and development plans to improve the capacity of central and provincial committees for disaster prevention and response. As the UN backed the implementation of the Law on Disaster Risk Prevention and Control effective from May 2014, UNDP continued its research on the natural disaster risk index, helped identify target groups and community risk profiles as well as reviewed DRR financial mechanisms. This work contributed to the adoption of regulations in key areas including risk levels, DRR information management and funding.

The CBDRM's further nationwide implementation was achieved with UN engagement in 2014, while more than 1,300 sub-national officers trained and 54 communes helped to conduct disaster risk assessments and develop subsequent DRM plans with inputs from more than 8,700 local people by MARD in partnership with UNDP. All 63 provinces have used the simple, user-friendly and cost effective processes of CBDRM and Community Based Disaster Risk Assessment (CBDRA) materials at commune level, developed by MARD and UNDP. On average, the Government-led CBDRM process in communes costs about US\$5,000, at least half that of other one-off

activities. The materials are the result of the Australian Aid-funded MARD-UNDP project in close cooperation with Viet Nam Red Cross, Viet Nam Women's Union and Oxfam, which have been widely utilized by other World Bank and JICA-funded CBDRM activities in their projects. In education, flagship programmes under the MoET's National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management were implemented and provincial action plans were developed with UNICEF assistance. MARD's National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation developed a draft national framework on water, sanitation and hygiene as well as six provincial action plans were approved by provincial people's committees.

A focus on vulnerable children, including child protection in emergencies, was integrated into community-based child protection systems through UNICEF-supported advocacy, training and capacity building for the MoLISA. The Women's Union is now an active participant in DRR actions, including development of commune-level disaster prevention plans, due to UNDP and UN Women capacity strengthening of 548 members of the Women's Union and various line departments on gender and DRR.

A third area of UN work is the **development of NAMAs** with a focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy production, taking into account the energy needs of the poor, **as well as the establishment of an effective national platform and mechanisms to reduce emissions from deforestation and sustainably managed forests** (output 1.3.3). In 2014, UNDP continued backing research and formulation of NAMAs in the fertilizer and steel sub-sectors by helping the MoIT to develop marginal cost curves to assess potential for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions based on policy options. In the area of energy efficiency, UNEP co-developed guidelines for phasing out incandescent lamps, a circular on the collection and disposal of discarded products and guidelines on use of compact fluorescent lights. Under the UN-REDD Programme, institutional capacity

strengthening activities helped develop and implement provincial action plans and Lam Dong province used the National Forest Monitoring Inventory and System to conduct a land use survey. UNIDO trainings for industrial enterprise technicians and national experts resulted in 34 new enterprises adopting energy management standards in 2014 and 127 new enterprises began implementing system optimization projects, with annual energy savings of 2,233,299 GJ (52,750 TOE) and GHG reductions of 196,693 tonnes of CO₂.

Also, four coffee and four rice enterprises improved their energy efficiency, material and water consumption as well as waste management with an overall economic benefit of US\$63,688 and electricity savings of 900,945kWh as a result of UNIDO training.

Regarding a **long-term climate change strategy and green economy** (output 1.3.4), the UN guided the finalization of the National Green Growth Action Plan, which provides clear responsibilities for ministries and provinces to achieve national GHG emission targets. More than 100 provincial officials were trained to analyze policy impacts to reduce GHG emissions. Funding models for sustainable industrial production were proposed to financial sector and service providers based on UNDP research and assessments. The UN also contributed to capacity building for Viet Nam's climate change negotiation team at the COP20. Seventy negotiators from Viet Nam and other ASEAN countries benefited from UNDP training and policy briefings before COP20.

Contribution story:

Disaster risk management – a climate for change

Viet Nam is a natural disaster prone country. On average it suffered 392 fatalities annually during 1994-2013 and gross domestic product losses of more



than 1 per cent due to climatic disasters³. Advice and advocacy over a number of years has helped the GoV create a strong national policy platform to address DRR and climate change adaptation. Since 2009, the UN has worked closely with the GoV on the CBDRM programme. This is key to addressing climate change impacts and disaster risks exacerbated by Viet Nam's rapid socio-economic development and urbanization as well as biodiversity and ecosystem losses.

The Law on Disaster Risk Prevention and Control came into effect 1 May 2014 and is paving the way for DRR at national and community levels, with a strong emphasis on Government and civil society partnerships to promote inclusive and participatory approaches.

The UN is helping the GoV ensure legal and policy commitments are translated into community-level action. This is critical to strengthen the resilience of systems and people, especially women and children. In 2014, the UN helped deliver CBDRM training to more than 50 communes carrying out community-based disaster risk assessments and supported formulation of natural disaster prevention and control plans in 20 of the most disaster prone provinces.

Following a participatory capacity and needs assessment of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control conducted with UN support, a programme to build

capacity in line with the new law is already underway. More than 100 provincial disaster team leaders and staff were trained in 2014 on the use of bio-engineering in coastal defence construction and strengthening systems for non-flood related disasters. The UN also provided inputs into decrees supporting the Disaster Law implementation, including financing of DRM interventions.

The Women's Union has played an important role in this process. As a result of collective UN advocacy, the Disaster Law and CBDRM championed the principle of gender equality and the Women's Union as a member of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control and such provincial committees. To support the Women's Union in this new role, the UN built its gender and DRR capacity in eight disaster prone districts in Quang Binh and Thua Thien-Hue provinces as well as mobilized and built capacity of Women Unions as one of the key CBDRM champions in all the provinces. This has also helped raise community awareness of the importance of addressing gender equality in DRR activities.

Viet Nam's CBDRM model directs communities to maintain a minimum number of female representatives in committees. However, challenges still exist in involving women as active members and ensuring gender issues are reflected in planning for disasters.

Meanwhile, the UN also helped the MoET develop a strong education component for CBDRM. The MoET approved a framework in 2014 incorporating DRR and climate change into the school curriculum, setting

3 S. Kreft, D. Eckstein, L. Junghans, C. Kerestan and U. Hagen (2014). Global Climate Risk Index 2015 Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2013 and 1994 to 2013. Germanwatch, Bonn. www.germanwatch.org



out learning competencies for each stage of the formal education system. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn about and assess different types of hazards and risks, to respond to early warning systems and practice drill evacuations. At the same time, it promotes the active participation of children, as resilient learners and change agents who model safe and climate smart behaviours, crucial to building the country's adaptive capacity.

As a result of UN advocacy and technical assistance, the GoV is integrating DRR and climate change into provincial socio-economic development and related sector plans evolving for 2016-2020. This is creating an opportunity for disaster and climate change to be addressed sustainably

through formal GoV planning and budgeting processes.

Despite the strong commitment and partnership between the UN and Government, CBDRM faces challenges, including inadequate budget disbursement. The UN will continue to advocate for funding to allow provinces to focus on CBDRM activities and work with the GoV on emerging priorities, including migration and resettlement and other climate change adaptation actions. Continued investment at community level is the key to realize not only Viet Nam's CBDRM strategy, but also green growth and other sustainable development goals.

UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women

Case study – Education for Sustainable Development

Throughout 2014 the UN and MoET, with private sector support, introduced new community-based approaches as a result of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiative. It links students, parents, community members, local authorities and media with climate change mitigation and adaptation, DRR and biodiversity conservation as a long-term solution. Schools, parents, communities and authorities work together to identify the main issues and solutions through school preparedness and community action plans. Teachers, students and parents develop projects to support their community, while the community and authorities develop and implement plans that include its schools and the media spreads the message more widely to society.

A series of trainings reached 129 participants on the use of satellite imagery as tools for awareness raising and decision-making, 25 local media professionals on sustainable development reporting and 105 participants raised their awareness on ESD, leading to the development of five pilot school preparedness plans addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation. The ESD initiative also included the development of community action plans for five communes through seven working sessions reaching 62 community members and DRM trainings for 20 managers and technical staff at three World Heritage sites, among other activities.

Outcome 1.4: More efficient use of natural resources and environmental management

Environment is one of the three pillars of sustainable development emphasized in the 2011-2015 SEDP. Despite Viet Nam's continuous commitment to shifting to a more effective and green development pathway and advancing the Government's Green Growth Strategy, it is not yet on track to meet MDG 7 as stated in the 2013 National MDG Report. The UN is helping Viet Nam to address these challenges in four areas of work: green economic development, natural resources and cleaner production; strengthened management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation, improved policies, plans for hazardous chemicals and pollutants management and enhanced land use planning and management.

Context

The year 2014 was an important time in the development of a legal framework related to environmental and natural resources management. Viet Nam ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety and the Nagoya Protocol on genetic resources, which brings it in line with international standards and safeguards against unwanted trade in biological materials. A strategy for management of special-use forest, marine and inland water protected areas until 2020, with a vision to 2030, was approved by the Prime Minister in early 2014, important for a more harmonized and effective approach to protected areas. Interest has increased in ecological/environmental accounting to improve valuation of natural assets, expected to lead to greater awareness and better conservation of natural resources.

The revised LEP was adopted in June, with inclusion of climate change and green growth issues, stronger enforcement measures to address local level environmental concerns and recognition of CSOs and local communities in environmental protection activities. Since Viet Nam became a signatory to the Minamata Convention on Mercury in October 2013, preparatory work for ratification and implementation started in 2014. Viet Nam is updating its national implementation plan for Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. New regulations and standards for dioxin and pesticide treatment were adopted in 2014.

Viet Nam recognized challenges in law enforcement, including the implementation of 2008 Law on Biodiversity and the Mineral Law. Critical issues such as effective collaboration among ministries and the effective protection of biodiversity at risk were discussed at National Assembly and at public events. According to case reports, wildlife trafficking in Viet Nam has increased, a reason why legal conditions on environmental crimes were reviewed and adjustments to the Penal Code, to be revised in 2015, were proposed.

Results in 2014

To help Viet Nam meet its commitments under international conventions, the UN is providing policy and technical advice as well as strengthening key stakeholders' capacities in the following four areas:

The areas of **green economic development, natural resources management and cleaner production** (output 1.4.1) are important areas of UN work and critical elements to achieve rapid economic growth in an environmentally friendly manner. In 2014, the UN engaged in the revision or formulation of important legal frameworks, such as the amended LEP approved in June 2014, which now includes a new chapter on green growth and climate change and new provisions pertaining to children's rights and gender equality. The UN also supported drafting of the Law on Environmental Protection of Seas and Islands, submitted to the National Assembly in October 2014, that addresses the integrated management of sea and islands and natural resources. A study was undertaken to assist in the revision of articles in the Penal Code related to environmental crimes.

UNDP initiated the consultative process in 2014 to develop a provincial evidence-based "Environment Performance Index" to measure and rank environmental quality and performance amongst provinces and trigger policy interventions at national and provincial levels. Likewise, the "Green City Performance Index", supported by UN-Habitat, was identified in the framework of the Ministry of Construction (MoC)-led Viet Nam Urban Forum as an important policy tool to be mainstreamed into city development strategies. Also at local level, local authorities' capacity was enhanced to combat illegal trans-boundary trafficking of waste and chemicals through UNEP's support. UN-Habitat and UNIDO engagement in the sharing of green growth best practices and participating in five peer review meetings of the Southeast

Asia Eco-city Network, authorities in Da Nang city and popular neighbouring tourism destination Hoi An town can now better ensure climate resilience and sustainable development.

The UN also provided support in the area of **improved management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation** (output 1.4.2). UNDP worked with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) to develop and submit an updated Report on Biodiversity Conservation to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which for the first time included progress towards the Aichi targets for biodiversity protection. Financial mechanisms for protected areas at national and local levels were reviewed with UNDP support, providing evidence and options for improved sustainability. As a result, a joint circular on regular allocations from the State budget between the Ministry of Finance and MoNRE was drafted. At provincial level, biodiversity conservation was mainstreamed into land use plans of Lang Son and Son La provinces with UNDP's technical support. In addition, staff from 97 protected area management boards are better able effectively manage their sites through UNDP training now institutionalized by MARD.

Managing hazardous chemicals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) (output 1.4.3) remains a huge challenge for Viet Nam. In 2014, the first National Action Plan for Sound Chemical Management was drafted under MoIT leadership with UNDP technical support and facilitation of public consultations. The dioxin status at Bien Hoa airbase was assessed and interim measures were taken to contain and isolate 122,400m³ of dioxin-contaminated soil to negate health risks for 120,000 people as part of a UNDP-GEF project. In addition, UNDP supported collection of 560 metric tonnes of POP pesticide contaminated soil from seven sites in Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces and transported to Holcim treatment facility, of which 420 metric tonnes were treated.



Another important area of UN work is **land use planning and management** (output 1.4.4). A number of background analyses on land use rights and urban spatial planning were supported by UN-Habitat in 2014, which facilitated discussions and provided recommendations on intervention mechanisms to ensure community rights to adequate housing.

Contribution story:

Bringing community voices to the environmental debate

Viet Nam has demonstrated strong political commitment and determination to protect its natural resources and environment, developing a strong legal framework on sustainable development and green growth.

However, key challenges remain as the country is unlikely to fully achieve all targets under MDG7 on environmental sustainability. The 2014 Global Environmental Performance Index ranked Viet Nam 136th out of 178 countries across 20 indicators looking at ecosystems and human health, with declining trends in fisheries, forests, and air quality⁴. Meanwhile, industrial pollution and non-strategic exploitation of mineral

resources have blighted the lives and livelihoods of people and sparked public concern about environmental damage. This environmental pollution and degradation, compounded by climate change and natural hazards, present numerous challenges and have negatively impacted on vulnerable members of society, especially women and children.

The situation has been further exacerbated by weak enforcement of environmental regulation and the need to strengthen public participation in environmental dialogues and socialization of environmental protection activities. In addition, emerging issues such as climate change and green growth require integration into environmental protection management.

To address these pressing needs, work on amending the LEP to meet the realities of a rapidly developing Viet Nam accelerated in 2014 with the UN advocating to include the voices from diverse members of society in the amended law. Aside from technical inputs and consultation support, a number of policy papers and reports articulated UN views and evidenced-based suggestions to improve the draft law, shared with the MoNRE and National Assembly. The UN actively advocated for inclusion of critical elements to enhance the law's future enforcement, including the legal status and roles of local communities and civil society, environmental protection in the context

4 <http://epi.yale.edu/the-metric/improving-environmental-data-and-performance-viet-nam>



of climate change and green growth as well as gender equality and the rights of women and children. Seven thematic reports on key issues were published based on participatory and evidence-based policy reviews and analysis by a team of international legal and national experts engaged by the UN. In addition, a UN-supported publication “Legalizing a Greener Future”⁵ documented in-depth discussions between a diverse range of stakeholders, including National Assembly, GoV and community representatives, on the law’s amendment and approval.

This policy discussion was further enhanced by UN policy and international experts sharing insights on a number of critical and emerging issues.

A key feature of the UN-initiated participatory approach to the law-making process was extensive consultations with children on climate change issues to build their resilience capacity and inform the law’s amendment. More than 300 children, rural and urban communities, ethnic minorities and migrants in Dien Bien and Ninh Thuan provinces and HCMC were consulted and motivated to

share their perceptions and experiences of climate challenges and their views on policy responses to these challenges. Direct consultations with children were undertaken by young UN-trained facilitators. Through this participatory process, children were empowered to become effective partners and agents of change in addressing climate change issues with the findings welcomed by authorities and resulted in their commitment to foster the implementation of climate change plans in each province. Importantly, the findings were also shared with National Assembly members and informed the review and adoption of the new law.

The law’s adoption in 2014, incorporating key UN recommendations, is testament to the effectiveness of its participatory and evidenced-based approach with direct dialogue with Government.

The law recognizes the roles and rights of communities and CSOs in environmental protection and also assures children’s rights and gender equality as underlying principles of environmental protection action.

A chapter on responding to climate change is another notable enhancement of the law, which strengthens the national climate policy and green growth strategy, consistent with the UNFCCC.

UNDP, UNICEF

5 http://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/library/environment_climate/legalizing_a_greener_future/ Publication: Legalizing a greener future is available @ http://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/library/environment_climate/legalizing_a_greener_future

Access to Quality Essential Services and Social Protection



In the current context of rapid socio-economic and demographic change, it is more important than ever that Viet Nam addresses persistent forms of poverty alongside remaining and emerging vulnerabilities and disparities. Policy choices and ineffective allocation of public resources and investment also impacts on the delivery of public services, particularly affecting the poor and vulnerable.

In social protection, the UN is supporting the GoV to adopt a universal approach to replace Viet Nam's current fragmented, overlapping, complex, inefficient and low-coverage system of social protection programmes. Education and health display significant disparities between urban and rural areas, between the majority Kinh and ethnic minority groups as well as other disadvantaged citizens. In particular,

gains in health-related outcomes require cross-sector coordination, planning and M&E to ensure ongoing effectiveness. Many remaining challenges are rooted in socio-economic disparities and addressing them involves making strong linkages between health and socio-economic plans. Within this focus area, the UN is helping address key development challenges with a multi-sector response supporting the development and implementation of laws, policies and national programmes that promote inclusion and equity, gender equality and women's empowerment as well as create a sustainable response to HIV, reducing stigma and discrimination.

Outcome 2.1: A more effective social protection system

As Viet Nam settles into middle-income status and confronts many of the associated risks and vulnerabilities social protection it is potentially an engine of growth for Viet Nam's socio-economic development and therefore a Government priority. UN Analytical work and the Joint Country Analysis helped the Government identify social protection as a key area in the 2011-2020 National Social Protection Strategy. To ensure better social protection services for the most vulnerable groups and to address implementation challenges, the UN focuses its efforts on four key areas: generating better data and evidence for policy-makers, ensuring coherence between different pillars and with other relevant policy frameworks, alternative legal, policy, targeting and financing options; and strengthening institutional and human resource capacity.

Context

Viet Nam's social protection system (spanning social insurance, social assistance and related social services) faces a number of challenges, including limited coverage, major gaps in provision and imbalances in funding and benefit levels. Combined with fragmentation and delivery inefficiencies, these make for a difficult reform agenda. Underpinning these pressures is Viet Nam's rapid growth and emergence as a MIC and the failure of policies and programmes to keep pace with major socio-economic changes. Post 'Doi Moi' reforms have tended to be *ad hoc* and contingent, with an emphasized provision for formal sector workers and veterans. Viet Nam's specific context, notably its rapid transition and past history of conflict, has shaped the system and pattern of provision. The GoV is examining and undertaking a number of reforms with support from UN agencies, but the challenges remain significant.

The system is operationally divided between contributory and non-contributory social assistance and characterized has having two linked coverage gaps. The first is distributional and the current approach provides coverage for the poorest (via basic targeted social assistance) and for formal and State sector workers (mainly at the upper end of income distribution, via social insurance). This has led to the emergence of a 'missing middle', largely made up of informal sector workers and those with poorly paid formal sector jobs. Here, incomes are insecure and people lack effective coverage against risks, with the near-poor (those ineligible for social assistance support) particularly vulnerable to personal and systemic income shocks.

Secondly, from a standard life cycle perspective, significant gaps are apparent for major life stages where little or no provision exists. Crucially, Viet Nam lacks a 'catch-all' programme for working age adults and there is no national scheme to support children and pregnant women, a critical area with major welfare and developmental



benefits. There are major connections between these two sets of gaps – with formal sector social insurance life cycle benefits being considerably stronger than social assistance provision.

This is further reflected in basic budgetary imbalances between programmes. A wide definition of social protection spending can be adopted, incorporating social insurance spending, social assistance and poverty programmes. While overall spending approximates to more than 5 per cent of GDP, State resources for social assistance only amount to 1.7 per cent of GDP and regular social assistance transfers for the poor, a mere 0.3 per cent of GDP. The most significant items are subsidies to the Social Insurance Fund and employer social insurance contributions (jointly amounting to 2.3 per cent of GDP)⁶.

It is also important to recognize delivery weaknesses that plague the two systems, most acute for social assistance. Such weaknesses include overlaps in provision and identification failures that drive inclusion errors (making payments to ineligible recipients) and a high level of targeting and restrictive coverage that drive exclusion

errors (not identifying or underpaying those eligible).

Social assistance, in particular, is highly fragmented with a larger number of *ad hoc* programmes and entitlements. Although data is hard to come by, administration costs are high relative to the transfer values. In turn, payment and recording mechanisms and hence internal checks for both schemes are weak. Delivery systems are outdated and unreliable, complaints procedures inadequate and there is a basic lack of M&E.

These failures drive the sector's core problems. Social insurance covers only 20 per cent of the total labour force (around 11 million contributors) and voluntary social insurance introduced to offer an alternative for informal workers, has attracted only 140,000 new participants. Men greatly outnumber women in the social insurance scheme and women tend to receive lower value pensions because their retirement age is five years lower than men's and there is limited provision for maternity absences. Women are also structurally disadvantaged as they are less represented in the formal sector. Viet Nam is ageing faster than social insurance coverage is expanding and the social insurance fund is under severe pressure and actuarial valuations suggest its reserves will be depleted by 2034, unless remedial action is taken.

6 Staff estimates based on data provided for the National Human Development Report 2015 (forthcoming, UNDP/VASS).

Basic limitations in provision of social assistance mean the system fails to provide an effective floor safety net. Even the most substantive programme - the elderly allowance - reaches only 78 per cent of the eligible population for people aged above 80 years (in spite of being universal) and 42 per cent of people between aged 60-79 who are poor and without family support. The standard level of transfer is very low and represents 45 per cent of the rural and 36 per cent of urban poverty lines. Moreover, the cash value of transfers has remained constant since 2010, ensuring the real level of support has fallen by a third since 2010. Unsurprisingly, initial independent analysis based on Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) suggests that social assistance has little impact on poverty or resilience⁷.

Government Response

The GoV is aware of the need for action, but is hemmed in by the lack of overall fiscal space for expansion and reform efforts. The overall tight budgetary position is unlikely improve for some years and is underpinned by current high levels of public debt and the failure of national revenues to respond to economic growth. The Social Insurance Fund is also under pressure as contributions growth slows, while benefits paid to retirees grow at above inflation rates. Actuarial valuations suggest major changes are required if the fund is to remain viable.

Regardless of these constraints, the GoV has moved forward with a positive policy reform agenda in social insurance and assistance with support from UN agencies. There is also scope to finance changes in provision by reallocations within existing social protection budgets.

The 2014 Social Insurance Law adopted a series of UN-supported recommendations to balance the fund by reducing the benefits package and raising the effective retirement age. The law also established

mechanisms for widening participation, notably for voluntary contributors. Viet Nam Social Security continues to examine how this might be facilitated and incentivized through matching contributions. It has also directly worked towards greater equity between women and men by extending maternity leave to six months and providing, for the first time, a short period of paternity leave.

Equally, under MoLISA's leadership, the Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform was initiated in 2014 to provide a medium-term strategic direction for social assistance and to rollout Decree 136 and Party Resolution 15. These call for an extension of coverage to more disadvantaged and vulnerable people, modernization of service delivery and reduced fragmentation. The process is due to conclude mid 2015 and is being supported by UN technical assistance.

In tandem, piloting of operational social assistance delivery reforms are underway in 49 districts in four provinces to improve service delivery, address fragmentation and improve targeting through the MoLISA-led Strengthening Viet Nam Social Assistance Strengthening System Project (SASSP). This UN and World Bank-supported intervention backs efforts to modernize and consolidate programmes, processes and widen coverage by providing grants for all poor families with children aged up to 15 years.

Results in 2014

UN programming focused on increased coverage, improved quality and more equitable access to social protection. Efforts have targeted greater inclusion and concentrated in the following four key areas:

Generation of **better data and evidence for policy-makers** (output 2.1.1) is designed to ensure more informed and better fitted decisions are made on resourcing, the shape of the system and its functionality. A focus has been the medium term and the need to ensure social protection's contribution to inclusive growth and that wider socio-economic development is fully

⁷ Analysis provided to UNDP by Dr Stephen Kidd/ Development Pathways.

recognized. This is particularly relevant to Viet Nam as it confronts changes associated with MIC transition, including new patterns of poverty, emerging inequalities and growing vulnerabilities. UN-supported evidence gathering included studies on poverty and vulnerabilities of ethnic minority children in accessing basic social services, the Child Labour Survey which informed the development of a draft Action Plan on Child Labour, an impact assessment of contributory and non-contributory pensions, and *ad hoc* research, such as mapping barriers to social assistance for older persons. Support was also given to improved M&E of social protection, such as completion of the Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) report and its institutionalization under the forthcoming MPSAR, and formulation of an M&E framework for the SASSP pilots.

Policy and technical advice to **address issues of coherence and overlaps between different policies** (output 2.1.2) and strengthen linkages between social protection framework pillars resulted in enhanced policy advocacy work. This was achieved through bringing world-class experts to analyze Viet Nam's current performance and provide strategic advice to the MPSAR drafting team, supporting a policy dialogue on the Ethnic Minority Human Resource Development Master Plan. A series of policy briefs and situation analyses on income protection, social insurance, income security and public employment policy, technical assistance to inform child sensitive social protection amendments to the Law on Child Protection, Care and Education were undertaken, including establishment of a children's ombudsman and a series innovations delivered via the SASSP pilot.

Provision of alternative **legal, policy, targeting and financing options** to enable progressive expansion and improvement of social assistance, insurance and welfare protection systems (output 2.1.3) saw a series of dialogues organized between GoV and development partners to share results of research on principles and policy directions

for MPSAR and a diagnostic review of current systems performance was prepared. UN technical assistance enabled Viet Nam and China to reach an agreement on combating human trafficking, offered a legal review of the social work function and subsequent development of circulars on job codes, salary scales and professional standards. Equally, the adoption of the Social Insurance Law, reflecting UN advice on expanding coverage, improving adequacy and sustainability was enabled through an ongoing programme of UN technical support to Viet Nam Social Security.

Development of necessary human resources (output 2.1.4). Here UN support included drafting of guidelines, conducting training workshops and a series of capacity building initiatives. Specifically, this included training of 320 MoLISA managers on social work management and administration, 26 university teachers and mental health practitioners trained as trainers, 80 key ministry and social protection centre staff trained on service provision for people with mental illnesses, 80 social protection centre professionals in 11 provinces received training on finding families for children with disabilities and 50 senior GoV offices from across relevant ministries and agencies attended a five-day residential summer school course on social assistance.

Contribution story:

Monitoring the real impact of social policies

Poverty reduction in Viet Nam has been remarkable since the 'Doi Moi' reforms three decades ago. However, in recent years and especially since the global financial crisis, the threat of falling into poverty and a series of other vulnerabilities have become major concerns for ordinary people. Workers in the informal sector (which provides 60-70 per cent of employment in Viet Nam) are exposed and have been forced to find a series of coping strategies as better paying jobs have dried up and living costs have



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increased. Such basic insecurities have many sources, and their emergence was somewhat hidden during the country's rapid growth in early part of the decade. But, the level of risk has been compounded by the failure of social protection measures to keep pace with socio-economic change, and heightened risks driven by climate change and globalization.

To provide GoV with real time insights into the challenges faced by vulnerable workers, the UN supported several rounds of the RIM survey, which offers a rapid field-based assessment. Ongoing technical assistance has enabled the transfer and application of these tools by the Institute of Labour, Science and Social Affairs - a leading GoV research body within MoLISA. The RIM's results for 2014 chart the experiences of three key sets of workers – in agriculture, construction and retail sectors. RIM offered important practical recommendations on management of the social insurance scheme, delivery of social assistance and anti-poverty programmes that will make a real difference to vulnerable people's lives.

First initiated in 2009, RIM complements quantitative surveys and administrative data by using qualitative methods to assess and improve policy effectiveness. Resolution 15 on social policies for 2012-2020, offers

an opportunity for the GoV to re-think its approaches to livelihood risks and underlines the need for real time, relevant data on the plight of disadvantaged populations. Traditional quantitative-only sources of data tend to not look at why changes are taking place and are weaker at tracking rapid trends. Existing surveys are also typically designed to be representative at national level and community and marginalized perspectives are often overlooked.

As a relatively inexpensive instrument with an ability to cover a wide range of issues, RIM is well respected by officials, enterprises and communities. Importantly, it has already gained traction with the National Assembly and some of its initial findings were reflected in Resolution 11, which provided economic policy changes to accelerate the recovery. After gaining significant experience with the methodology, Viet Nam has now reached a critical point where decision-makers will consider fully nationalizing the RIM process within the country's social policy monitoring framework. UN agencies will work with GoV on a new round of RIM in 2015 and aid its institutionalization.

UNDP, UNICEF

Focus Area 2

Annual Results Report 2014: Delivering as One



Outcome 2.2: Better functioning health system and care for the vulnerable and disadvantaged

Over the past two decades, significant progress has been achieved in Viet Nam's health sector, resulting in better health outcomes for the population. However, achievements have been less impressive in rural and remote areas compared to urban and wealthier provinces, and significant disparities remain across geographic and socio-economic groups. Access to some health care services is limited to some groups of the population, such as ethnic minorities and young people. There are also significant challenges to combat communicable diseases and the increasing non-communicable diseases and injuries. To help Viet Nam build a comprehensive and equitable health system, the UN is helping the Government achieve results in five key areas: stronger building blocks of the health system, effective prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and conditions; prevention and control of communicable diseases; improvement of sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health and nutrition; and sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Context

In 2014, the health sector in Viet Nam continued to be characterized by epidemiologic, demographic and economic shifts. In terms of epidemiology, impacts continued to change from communicable to non-communicable diseases - estimated to have accounted for 73 per cent of total deaths. Non-communicable diseases impose a growing burden on the country in terms of health and economics. Between 2000 and 2012, the number of premature mortality (before the age of 70) among males increased from 80,000 to more than 110,000 per year. With the increased consumption of tobacco, alcohol, fast and unhealthy food, a more sedentary way of life and a rapidly aging population, these figures will continue to worsen in Viet Nam. The threat of emerging diseases continues, such as Influenza A (H5N1, H7N9), MERS-CoV and Ebola. HIV/AIDS posed the sixth largest cause of disease burden in 2010 in Viet Nam (the highest among communicable diseases), while Viet Nam remains one of 22 countries with high tuberculosis (TB) rates. The emergence of a rtemisinin-resistant malaria in several provinces threatens to reverse the malaria elimination programme.

The demographic shift also continued with the aging population increasing to 7.1 per cent and the aging index to 44.6 per cent⁸, which increases the risk of non-communicable diseases and demand for health care. Finally, the urbanization rate - which in 2014 increased to 33.1 per cent, contributing to changing lifestyles and behaviours - has created new pockets of poverty, health risks and hazards that increase demands for health care. Viet Nam continues to face challenges of health inequalities among the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, and aims to modernize its health care system.

In terms of the national legal framework, key milestones in 2014 included:

⁸ Intercensal Population and Housing Survey, 1 April 2014, presented by UNFPA on 17 December 2014.

- Revision of the Health Insurance Law, paving the way for full coverage for poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged populations
- Approval of the National Pharmaceutical Strategy, to help improve access to essential medicines
- Prime Minister's issuance of Resolution to Accelerate the MDGs and development of various circulars and decisions to provide support to ethnic minority women and improve access to health services to the disadvantaged.

National core indicators for health were developed and the joint annual health review was conducted. The 2014 Intercensal Population and Housing Survey was carried out and national health accounts developed.

In September 2014, Viet Nam hosted the ASEAN Health Ministers' meeting, during which the ASEAN community forged its 2015 health agenda.

Results in 2014

To help Viet Nam build a comprehensive, resilient and responsive health system that ensures equitable access to health services, the UN champions equity-focused actions that are mutually reinforcing.

Strong health systems (output 2.2.1) require sustainable financing, access to essential medicines, competent and adequately trained human resources and robust information systems. These components will strengthen the delivery of health services for sexual reproductive maternal and child health, communicable and non-communicable diseases, improve access to clean water, sanitation services and the country's capacity for emergency responses. In 2014, the UN worked on various policies, strategies and plans and developed approaches to strengthen the health system. In particular it:

- Advanced development of policies that increase equitable access to health services, such as the revised Health Insurance Law, National Pharmaceutical Strategy and the Prime Minister's Resolution on MDG acceleration
- Co-developed programmes to address the needs of vulnerable populations and those living in remote areas, especially women in ethnic minority areas, training and deployment of ethnic minority midwives and implementation of essential early newborn care to reduce infant mortality
- Co-reviewed and revised medical and paramedical training systems to strengthen health workers' skills, developed national core health indicators and reformed the grassroots health network.

The **effective prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and conditions** (output 2.2.2) such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and mental health disorders is a key area of UN work in Viet Nam. In 2014, the UN supported the development of a multi-sector strategy on non-communicable disease prevention and control for 2015-2025, for approval in 2015. It also backed the revised Excise Tax Law, with a roadmap for tax increases on tobacco and alcohol, among other products, to 2019. In addition, the UN provided technical advice on organizational structure and operational mechanisms of the Tobacco Control Fund, which started operation in July 2014 to strengthen the Government's tobacco control capacity.

A significant area of work is the **prevention and control of communicable diseases** (output 2.2.3) that remain an ongoing cause of morbidity and mortality. Emerging and re-emerging diseases threaten national security as well as socio-economic development and addressing them is a strategic priority for Viet Nam. The

communicable disease sub-group achieved the following joint results on the prevention and control of communicable diseases in humans and animals:

a. Advocacy and communications:

The communicable disease sub-group supported the development of complimentary MoH and MARD Influenza A H7N9 contingency plans, the development of a national risk communication plan and information materials on Influenza A (HPAI H5N1 and H7N9) and rabies, trained high-level MoH officials on communication skills and crafted communication strategies on immunization and emerging infectious diseases.

b. Sustainable capacity and system development:

The communicable disease sub-group supported the GoV to strengthen its capacities to prevent, detect and respond to emerging infectious diseases. This resulted in Viet Nam meeting the core requirements of the International Health Regulations in 2014. WHO and FAO supported the human and animal health sectors to work closely together on information sharing and a joint response, guided by Circular 16, through:

- Supporting MoH and MARD National Steering Committees
- Building joint MoH and MARD risk assessment capacities
- Implementing and maintaining a Field Epidemiology Training Programme and an Advanced Epidemiology Training Programme for Veterinarians (AVET)
- Supporting the National Integrated Operational Programme on Avian Influenza, Pandemic Preparedness and Emerging Infectious Diseases for 2011-2015.

The large-scale measles and rubella campaign, targeting 23 million children, was also supported, with 10.3 million children vaccinated as of December 2014.

In addition, the sub-group supported the MoH in banning the production distribution of artemisinin monotherapies, managing TB drug shortages and increasing domestic funding for TB control. The sub-group also supported MoH to assess the current preventive medicine system to inform its restructuring. The establishment of an Emergency Operation Centre was supported, together with partners, which serves as MoH's command centre for coordinating the emergency response to public health threats.

c. Surveillance, operational research and monitoring and evaluation:

The sub-group supported the implementation of national event-based surveillance, severe acute respiratory infection surveillance and a national livestock disease surveillance programme (at farms and markets), and strengthening of public health and animal laboratories, including biosafety capacity and quality assurance systems. The sub-group also supported operational research on high-impact HIV interventions, catalyzing innovation in testing, antiretroviral use and service delivery.

d. Multi-sectoral collaboration and One Health:

Comprehensive advice was provided to enhance the close collaboration between the public health and animal sectors, including establishment of a national One Health platform and partnership, and on-going One Health advocacy, communication and outreach activities were supported. The development of Standard Operating Procedures on collecting and sharing information, conducting surveillance and outbreak investigations and the overall emerging zoonotic disease response is currently on-going.

e. Support to strategies, policies, directives, guidelines and other legislation:

The sub-group provided support to the development of the national plan on responding to public health emergency events, the



national strategy for avian influenza and contingency plans for H7N9 and other influenzas. A National Strategic Plan for TB control was developed and endorsed in line with the National Health Plan and the new global “End TB Strategy”, advocating for innovative approaches beyond the health sector. A detailed work plan for the national malaria strategy was developed and costed, incorporating artemisinin resistance containment, and drafting of an action plan on elimination of P Falciparum malaria was initiated. Finally, the Health JPG supported the MoH in developing clinical guidelines and a national action plan for viral hepatitis.

The improvement of **sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health and nutrition** (output 2.2.4) is a major challenge due to significant disparities between regions, particularly among ethnic groups. This is partly due to a severe shortage of health providers, especially obstetric and paediatric specialists due to remoteness, limited transport and low salaries. In 2014, the UN generated substantial evidence from well-designed quantitative and qualitative surveys and other initiatives to highlighted key emerging disparities and inequities in access and utilization of services. This evidence will help the GoV address disparities in health outcomes and provide appropriate investment to ensure

achievement of Health MDG targets in all regions by 2015. Some laws and policies developed include:

- National guidelines on skilled birth attendance competencies
- National guidelines on intensive care in emergency obstetric care
- National guidelines on immunization
- National guidelines on core requirements to ensure quality of midwifery training
- Circular on classification of contraceptives.

To ensure effective implementation of national policies and programmes at sub-national level and better respond to needs of vulnerable populations, the UN facilitated capacity building for providers and managers in selected provinces through training of trainers, monitoring and technical backstopping. Moreover, numerous culturally sensitive interventions, including behaviour change communication for vulnerable populations, were conducted. This helped local communities communicate lessons learned and best practices to national decision-makers to better meet communities’ needs towards universal access to quality services.

Another UN priority area under this



outcome is **sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation** (output 2.2.5) in line with MDG 7. Although Viet Nam has made significant progress to improve water and sanitation coverage, there is a high-level of disparity within ethnic groups and people residing in remote areas. In response, the UN supported the GoV to strengthen the Water Safety Plan programme and improve institutional capacity of the Health Environmental Management Agency and administration of technical infrastructure to setup a national waste safety programme in urban areas. The UN worked with the MoH to introduce community approaches to total sanitation, that facilitates community mobilization and supports pro-poor sanitation marketing. The UN further worked closely with the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme to support poverty and sanitation mapping to assist selected provinces to address prevailing inequity in sanitation.

With technical assistance from the UN, several focus provinces demonstrated the use of community mobilization and application of sanitation marketing techniques to convince communities to stop open defecation. The provincial Centre for Preventive Medicines - with assistance of commune leaders, Women's Union and

local artisans - made this possible. The Viet Nam Bank of Social Policy provided lending support to poor households to build latrines.

New guidelines for the verification and certification of open defecation free communities were used by UNICEF across three focus provinces to encourage communes and leaders to acknowledge 50 villages and their leaders had achieved open defecation free status. Several more villages are in the process of receiving this certification. The GoV made an international commitment at the global Water and Sanitation for All Partnership Forum to eliminate open defecation by 2025. The UN's strategic partnership with the World Bank has helped leverage US\$300 million for the GoV to support Scale up Sanitation in 19 poorly performing provinces, where the majority of ethnic minorities reside.

Contribution story:

Delivering improved newborn care

Reducing newborn deaths is critical to effectively tackling under-five child mortality in Viet Nam and achieving MDG 4. Strikingly, newborn deaths represent 52 per cent of all under-five child deaths in



the country, with 75 per cent of newborn deaths occurring in the first three days of life and often within the first 24 hours. For this reason early essential newborn care (EENC) interventions, a low-cost package of interventions, are delivered to mother and baby between delivery and the first three days after birth to prevent newborn deaths from the most common causes.

To guide health managers and planners to address early neonatal mortality in Viet Nam, the UN and MoH developed a framework “Ending Preventable Early Neonatal Deaths Through Universal Access to Quality Early Essential Newborn, Labour, Delivery and Postpartum Care”. Based on this framework, the UN helped design a National Action Plan on scaling-up EENC for 2014-2020.

The action plan’s key objectives are to increase access to skilled maternal and newborn care services and quality EENC for deliveries nationwide. Activities include establishment of three EENC centres of excellence for training health staff in delivery and newborn care, roll-out of EENC training programmes, strengthen health facilities supporting EENC, integrate EENC into existing training curricula and evaluate EENC intervention impacts.

The UN guided the MoH to develop the national guidelines on EENC “First Embrace” to encourage all birthing facilities to apply EENC practices. UN expertise was called upon to train 24 facilitators and 444 health staff from three centres of excellence on EENC practices, while the MoH provided training of trainers courses for greater provincial-level coverage with 126 provincial health staff trained as EENC facilitators. A video clip on “First Embrace” was also developed by the National Obstetrics Gynaecology Hospital as a training aid to support coaching courses nationwide.

Da Nang Paediatric Gynaecology Hospital, in central Viet Nam, is a champion of the EENC movement, with the EENC “First Embrace” practices applied to all normal deliveries and C-section cases at this hospital.

Under the National Action Plan, by 2020 at least 80 per cent of birth facilities will implement EENC and at least 80 per cent of skilled birth attendants will practice EENC during all deliveries.

UNICEF, WHO

Outcome 2.3: Expanding the quality and reach of education

Both the SEDS and SEDP recognize the need for fundamental changes in the education and training sector over the next decade to improve the quality of education and training at all levels. In addition, the Government of Viet Nam is strongly committed to achieving the EFA objectives and has made significant progress during the last decade. With Viet Nam's entry to the WTO, a large number of private and foreign education institutions are entering Viet Nam which brings more opportunities of higher quality education. However, there are growing concerns about the difference in quality of education between regions, the mismatch between theory and practice in the curriculum and the need of effective quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms. In order to address the issues of access, equity and quality at all levels of education, the UN is working on three areas: use of the evidence and knowledge to strengthen education laws and policies, more capable education institutions for improved learning outcomes, and an evidence-based management system for improved quality of teaching and learning.

Context

Curriculum renovation is increasingly important for Viet Nam, as it shapes students' present and future development and their contribution to the country's sustainable development. It also lies at the centre of enabling learners to become successful achievers at school and responsible global citizens, effective workers, caring community members and life-long learners. A quality workforce is key to a level of national development required to match the country's socio-economic development strategy and prepare young people for a modern market economy in the context of regional integration.

In this sense, the Education Renovation Agenda, adopted November 2013 through the Communist Party's Resolution 29, aims to advance the education system to meet regional and international standards by 2030. The agenda provides a strategic opportunity for policy and institutional development to address disparities and inequities in education, particularly for disadvantaged children and to foster learners' comprehensive competences, such as innovation, creativity and critical thinking. While curriculum reform is an obvious priority for the Education Renovation Agenda, other major aspects such as capacity development of teachers and education management will be addressed. The Government's Resolution 44 further defines specific responsibilities and tasks by various stakeholders. At the 2014 Global Partnership for Education 2nd Replenishment Conference, Viet Nam committed to maintain allocating 20 per cent of the State budget for education, including the enhancement of education quality, ensuring gender equality, increasing education financing in emergency situations and improving the information system. The ongoing revision of the Child Law provided a unique opportunity to influence legal provisions for children's education as part of overall childhood development.



Results in 2014

The UN has been instrumental in bringing equity and quality to the attention of education sector policy-makers, influencing the direction of national and provincial education sector plans and highlighting gaps in policy implementation. To achieve equitable and quality education in a sustainable manner, the UN is working towards three specific results:

The first result is the ***use of evidence and knowledge to strengthen the implementation of education laws and policies*** (output 2.3.1) to realize equal access to quality education at all levels, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In 2014, the Viet Nam National Education for All review was conducted

in preparation for the World Education Forum in South Korea in May 2015, with the review of achievements towards the six Education for All goals. UNESCO, joined by UNICEF, provided technical support to the development of review guidelines as well as comments on the Asia-Pacific regional synthesis report. The UN also supported knowledge generation around disparities in education for policy advocacy to accelerate disadvantaged children's access to education. UNICEF technical inputs shaped the design, implementation and dissemination of the School Readiness for Children with Disabilities, Annual Learning Outcome Assessments as part of Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education and Out of School Children studies.



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Viet Nam's Out of School Children Study

This MoET-led study is linked to a global initiative and regional study where UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics provided guidance on innovative approaches to analyze equity in education.

This involved data mining, analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, and identifying policy options to remove barriers. The study marks the first time in Viet Nam that census data was utilized in an education study and generated solid evidence on disparities, particularly through the provincial level analysis.

The out-of-school rate is highest among children with disabilities, ethnic minority children and migrant children aged 5-14 years.

- According to the study, the rate of children with disabilities who had never attended school or who dropped out (out-of-school children) was more than 80 per cent at all school age groups. The rate was 91.4 per cent for children with disabilities aged 11-14 years.
- The percentage of children who have never attended school was especially high among some ethnic minority groups. Almost one-quarter of all school-aged Mong children had never

attended any form of schooling.

- The study also showed that migrant groups consistently performed worse than non-migrant groups and the difference also increased with age. Migrant families have a higher rate of out-of-school children than non-migrant families, specifically 1.3 times at the age of 5, 1.8 times at primary school age and 2.4 times at lower secondary age.

The study generated a greater understanding of the barriers and bottlenecks that keep children out of school as well as triggered policy dialogues and sector planning to identify targeted measures to strengthen the tracking of out-of-school children and provide better access to education.

The UN also worked to address data-related gaps that constrain monitoring of inclusive education. UNICEF helped the MoET introduce a new set of indicators for the 2013-2014 Education Statistical Year Book, with landmark data on sex, ethnicity, student-teacher and student-class ratios as well as ethnicity distributions across educational levels disaggregated by region and province.

For example:

- While the nationwide primary school drop-out rate was 0.21 per cent, it

was high in some provinces such as 1.077 per cent (Dong Thap) and 1.188 per cent (An Giang), indicating significant gaps in quality education for some provinces in the Mekong Delta (academic year 2012-2013).

- A teacher-class ratio of 1.39 nationwide at primary level and 1.49 in Dien Bien, 1.14 in Son La and 1.25 in Dong Thap, indicates shortages of teachers in some provinces, especially for full day schooling (academic year 2013-2014).
- The national level primary completion rate is 92.25 per cent - while it is 76.07 per cent in Soc Trang, 76.71 per cent in Ha Giang and 78.74 per cent for Gia Lai provinces - indicating disparities in quality education and learning outcomes (academic year 2012-2013).

Emerging issues in education equity and quality, such as curriculum renovation and teacher development, generated significant debate during 2014. The Education for All Global Action Week 2014, led by MoET and supported by UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and UNDP, was a forum for such discussions which focused on the theme 'Persons with disabilities have the right to a quality, friendly and equal education'. This initiative also looked at ways to ensure quality inclusive education and enable people with disabilities to overcome barriers and realize their rights to education.

The Education Joint Sector Forum, including UNESCO, ILO and UNICEF, was an opportunity to expand dialogue among education stakeholders on education reform and curriculum revision as well as discuss initiatives to support the implementation of the Education Development Strategic Plan.

Considerable UN efforts were made in contribution to the second and third results, namely **more capable education institutions for improved learning outcomes** (output 2.3.2) and **improving institutions' and managers' capacities to develop, implement and monitor policies and programmes for improved quality of education for all** (output 2.3.3).

New tools and guidelines helped strengthen the capacities of education managers and teachers in understanding and implementing learner-friendly and child-centred methodologies. 'Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Advocacy Guide' provides guidelines to advocate inclusive education in the local context. This initiative was led by MoET together with the Ha Noi National University of Education, the Viet Nam National Institute of Educational Sciences and UNESCO. The translated Guide contains six booklets and aims to change the mindsets of education policy-makers, administrators, teacher educators, teachers and other stakeholders in providing more support to disadvantaged groups including girls, ethnic minority children and children with disabilities to attain equitable access to good quality education.

Guidelines for integrating intangible cultural heritage into the curriculum have supported teachers in using a participatory methodology in school activities to strengthen students' understanding of local cultures. UNESCO worked with MoET to develop the teacher guidelines with five sample lesson plans on integrating Intangible cultural heritage into secondary school curriculum. Participants included 20 curriculum developers from Ha Noi and Hoa Binh province and 20 teachers from three pilot schools. National dissemination has reached 600 curriculum developers via the MoET publication system with 3,000 hard copies delivered to 63 provinces and municipalities, as well as through the portal at www.giaoducphothong.edu.vn

Finally, the UN provided extensive technical assistance to strengthen the education sector preparedness and response to DRR and climate change at national and sub-national levels. The MoET-led coordination was supported through



situation assessment and monitoring and a mechanism was developed for a coordinated response to emergencies. With the support of UNESCO and UNICEF, an approved curriculum framework for DRR and Climate Change Education is available as the foundation for detailed national curriculum that is being developed. Through UNESCO and UNICEF technical support, such as leveraging resources for education sector plans and through the development of e-learning teacher training courses for primary school teachers nationwide on Education for Sustainable Development, MoET's capacity has been strengthened to implement provincial action plans and curriculum frameworks for DRR, climate change education and biodiversity conservation.

Contribution story:

Inclusive education for children with disabilities

Viet Nam has 6.7 million people living with disabilities, of which 1.3 million are children. Despite a strong legal framework ensuring access to inclusive education, particularly in mainstream schools guided by the Law for Persons with Disabilities

and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, challenges remain with persistent gaps in equitable access to inclusive quality education. Children with disabilities constitute a large proportion of out of school children, at 83.1 per cent compared to those with no disabilities (11.8 per cent).

However, significant momentum was generated in 2014 by the UN to improve education opportunities for children with disabilities. In May, the Education for All Global Action Week was launched in Viet Nam with the theme 'Persons with disabilities have the right to a quality, friendly and equal education'. Coordinated by the UN with support from 20 organizations, including local/international NGOs and networks for people with disabilities, the event created a strong resonance for the implementation of policies, programmes and measures to support equal rights and opportunities in education and life for all.

To allow all children to attend and learn in school, the UN worked closely with the MoET and other partners to advocate for the realization of the rights of children with disabilities to education. This advocacy is not only to influence



the formulation of policy, but also ensure its effective enforcement. This ability to make meaningful contributions to policy is illustrated by the UN's technical assistance and facilitation of consultations with people with disabilities and policy monitoring to develop Circular 42/2013 stipulating specific supportive education policies for persons with disabilities. After coming into effect in March 2014, the UN monitored the translation of this policy into practice in selected provinces, through teacher training in inclusive education, community awareness-raising for stigma reduction and monitoring and documentation for national dissemination. Key changes observed through policy monitoring included more systematic tracking of children with disabilities, timely certification of disabilities required for enrolment into mainstream schools, more positive parental attitudes and trained teachers demonstrating improved skills in working with children with learning difficulties. All of this significantly contributed to enhancing the mainstreaming of children with disabilities in schools.

In addition, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific regional publication Promoting Inclusive

Teacher Education: Advocacy Guide was translated into Vietnamese and adapted to the local context. It is also a tool for policy-makers, teachers and the community in advocacy for inclusive education.

On a broader level, the UN is working with education partners to integrate disability awareness into emergency preparedness, DRR and climate change education to improve data disaggregation concerning disabilities. This will strengthen situational monitoring and incorporate issues concerning children with disabilities into education sector planning to leverage funds for inclusive education.

Inclusion is about practical changes to enable all children, especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities, to attend and succeed in school. These changes will not merely benefit children often singled out as having disabilities, but all children and their parents, teachers and communities.

UNESCO, UNICEF

Outcome 2.4 (I): Responding to HIV

Gender and HIV have been identified as important areas by the Government of Viet Nam, as well as by the UN and development partners in the Joint Country Analysis and UN analytical work, and in the SEDP. Addressing persistent forms of inequality, in particular gender inequality, together with stigma and discrimination, are essential to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth. In recent years, the Government of Viet Nam has achieved good progress in the areas of coordination, up-stream policy advice and national capacity building on gender and HIV. Achievements have been less impressive at sub-national level and in reaching rural and remote areas compared to urban and wealthier provinces, and significant disparities remain across socio-economic groups. To address the significant remaining challenges, the UN is assisting Government agencies in four key areas: stronger legal and policy frameworks for evidence-informed HIV responses, greater participation of people living with HIV in decisions that affect their lives, legal and policy changes that strengthen action against gender discrimination and violence and national and local coordination mechanisms to respond to gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Context

The response to HIV in Viet Nam reached a crossroads in 2014. Over the past 25 years, significant progress was made in prevention of new infections and reduced AIDS-related deaths. The number of new infections reported to the MoH decreased rapidly between 2007 and 2009, and has stabilized at around 14,000 annually since 2010. There has been a significant decline in HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs and sex workers due in large part to targeted harm-reduction interventions. Progress has also been made in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Finally, AIDS-related morbidity and mortality have reduced through the scale-up of testing, treatment and care services for PLHIV, which brought antiretroviral treatment coverage to 67.6 per cent of those eligible in 2013.

However, AIDS is still a significant cause of premature death, while stigma and discrimination against PLHIV remains stubbornly high. In 2011, a national household survey found that 29 per cent of adult women in Viet Nam reported they would treat a PLHIV the same as someone who did not have HIV. The same survey was conducted again in 2014 with almost the same result, despite the Government's significant public awareness-raising on HIV over the past three years. Donor funding is shrinking and domestic finances have not been allocated to fill the gap. In response bold decisions are needed, otherwise Viet Nam will face a resurgence in HIV infections and AIDS deaths.

Despite these challenges, the GoV in 2014 not only reaffirmed its commitment to achieve existing national targets in line with the MDGs and the UN General Assembly's 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, it also became the first country in Asia to adopt ambitious new "90-90-90" HIV testing and treatment targets.

These targets mean that by 2020, 90 per cent of all PLHIV will know their HIV status;



90 per cent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy; and 90 per cent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have durable viral suppression.

However, a particular challenge emerged in the area of human rights and the enabling environment for the HIV response. Following intense pressure from provinces struggling with growing drug addiction and drug-related crime, the National Assembly agreed in November to allow local authorities to temporarily hold people believed to be dependent on illicit drugs and without a stable place of residence, in special “social centres” (potentially within compulsory “06” treatment centres) while their cases were prepared and heard by a judge. This is viewed internationally as a step backwards on due process and human rights.

Results in 2014

In 2014, considerable joint UN efforts were made to assist the Go V to ensure **stronger legal and policy frameworks for evidence-informed HIV responses** (output 2.4.1) and **greater participation of people living with HIV in decisions that affect their lives** (output 2.4.2). In light of Viet

Nam’s ambitious goals for its HIV response and the serious challenges remaining, the MoH’s Viet Nam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control (VAAC) developed an HIV investment case in consultation with development partners and other stakeholders. It identified priority actions to make the HIV response more effective, efficient and sustainable, towards the global goal of ending AIDS by 2030. The process was closely supported by UNAIDS and WHO, who periodically briefed and sought other UN agencies’ inputs. UNAIDS also facilitated the Government’s decision to adopt the new “90-90-90” global treatment targets.

Implementation of several pillars of the investment case was supported by the UN in 2014. Since a major sustainability challenge is controlling the costs of treatment for a growing number of PLHIV in need, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO assisted the MoH to further integrate HIV into other services, such as sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health and tuberculosis services. Decentralization of HIV testing and treatment to commune-level primary health care facilities was expanded through the WHO- and UNAIDS-supported Treatment 2.0 initiative. The investment case was also a



key part of a health sector HIV programme review and Viet Nam's concept note for Global Fund financial support. The Global Fund approved the proposal in November and detailed negotiations are underway for Viet Nam's HIV and tuberculosis responses to receive a total of US\$107 million in 2014-2017.

UN-supported demonstration pilots and research studies generated evidence used by national and provincial policy-makers and programme managers to make the national HIV response more effective and efficient. Evidence on sex workers' working conditions was generated with support from ILO and UNAIDS, while WHO backed studies on expanded HIV testing and early antiretroviral therapy (ART) among key populations. The establishment of a community-based drug treatment model as an alternative to "06 centres" was supported by UNODC and WHO through national and provincial workshops and trainings as well as development of policies and guidelines. Guidelines for prison-based methadone maintenance treatment were developed and expected to be finalized in 2015. The UN also facilitated

the harmonization of HIV service unit costs, generation of estimates for needed financial resources and the future impact achieved through several HIV response scale-up scenarios. Efforts were also made to improve the quality of data from HIV sentinel surveillance, to generate new HIV estimates and projections, compile programme data for GoV reporting on its international commitments and develop and pilot an electronic system for monitoring the cascade of HIV testing, care and treatment services.

There were successes and challenges regarding efforts to increase the participation of civil society in the response to reduce stigma and discrimination and establish a more enabling environment for delivery of HIV services to PLHIV and key populations at higher risk of HIV infection. The UN led urgent and high-level joint advocacy as the National Assembly and senior GoV officials considered changes to compulsory detention and treatment of people dependent on illegal drugs. UNAIDS, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNODC built the capacities of rights-holders to advocate for their

rights and participate in decision-making through evidence generation, trainings targeting duty-bearers, rights-holders and community service providers, awareness-raising initiatives and dialogue on ways to improve multi-sectoral collaboration. UNFPA, UNAIDS and ILO worked closely with MoLISA, CSOs and the national network of sex workers to build stronger collaboration and partnerships among social workers, police, health providers and sex workers to deliver harm reduction interventions, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV services. UNFPA backed a harm reduction intervention model in Hai Phong, while ILO and UNAIDS built the capacity of sex worker CSOs to advocate for better working conditions for people working in entertainment establishments where transactional sex may occur. UNAIDS supported the Viet Nam Network of PLHIV (VNP+) to conduct a “Stigma Index” study for network use in 2015 to advocate for greater measures to protect the rights of PLHIV and key populations at higher risk of HIV infection, while UN Women supported members of the network to learn about how the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women could benefit advocacy efforts for non-discrimination and protection of rights.

In April 2014, a youth exhibition on healthy sexuality “As we grow up”, supported by UNESCO in collaboration with MoET and other UN agencies, concluded after six months’ display. As the first exhibition of its type in Viet Nam, its youth participatory approach provided young people with significant exposure to sexuality issues in an engaging and effective manner with 36 per cent of the 68,000 local visitors aged between 11-24. A frequently asked questions and answers on healthy sexuality booklet was further developed in 2014 to sustain and upscale the impact of the exhibition with active participation of young people. The MoET will distribute this booklet in schools and community learning centres in 2015.

Contribution story:

Making strategic investments in HIV and human rights

Although significant progress has been made in preventing new HIV infections, reducing AIDS-related deaths and gradually scaling up harm reduction interventions and treatment and care in high-burden provinces, Viet Nam faces formidable challenges in sustaining the national response to HIV.

International donor contributions are shrinking, while domestic resources remain limited. The accumulated number of HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths continues to increase. Instead of continuing to make progress against the epidemic, hard-fought gains may be lost if Viet Nam fails to increase domestic investment for HIV significantly in the coming years.

In 2014 the MoH⁹ developed a comprehensive investment case for the HIV response. UNAIDS spearheaded the UN’s strategic advice to the process, including guidance on an “investment approach” that promotes targeted investment and better priority-setting based on a nuanced understanding of epidemics, combined with interventions that have been proven to work. UNAIDS and WHO provided comprehensive technical support, with a particular focus on the development of an AIDS Epidemic Model that estimates the cost and impact of policy options and programme coverage levels. The investment case ultimately identified six priority actions to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the national response to HIV and put the country on course to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Since the investment case was finalized in August 2014, the GoV has taken a number of concrete steps forward. During UNAIDS

9 (Viet Nam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control, or VAAC)



Executive Director Michel Sidibe's visit to Ha Noi in October, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam committed the Government to ending AIDS by 2030, with Viet Nam becoming the first country in the region to adopt the ambitious new "90-90-90" HIV testing and treatment targets. The investment case was also a key part of a proposal submitted to the Global Fund approved in November.

Despite such progress, critical challenges remain. A major sustainability challenge will be controlling the costs of treatment for a growing number of PLHIV in need. UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO supported the MoH to further integrate HIV, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health and tuberculosis services. In addition, ongoing stigma and discrimination related to HIV remain barriers to service uptake. There is growing evidence that late initiation of

antiretroviral treatment results in greater HIV transmission and higher mortality.

WHO and UNAIDS supported VAAC to implement a pilot in four provinces that aims to achieve earlier initiation of HIV treatment for key populations and their partners through decentralized HIV service delivery and greater mobilization of key affected communities. The pilot includes a feasibility study in Dien Bien and Can Tho on couples HIV testing and counselling and immediate ART initiation for serodiscordant couples. Preliminary results show the majority of patients were retained in care and a high rate of viral suppression was achieved.

A related study is underway in Thai Nguyen and Thanh Hoa provinces on periodic HIV testing and immediate initiation of ART among people who inject drugs and their partners. By October 2014, 175 people had been enrolled in the study and results



are expected in 2015. This pilot will inform policy changes to maximize the preventive and treatment benefits of ART to shape national policy and guidelines for prevention, care and treatment.

HIV transmission among people who inject drugs remains a key challenge and the GoV has struggled with the rising use of heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants and other illicit drugs. The development of effective methods of drug dependence treatment has proven challenging for the GoV and the UN has expressed particular concern regarding compulsory detention of drug users in “06 centres”.

In 2014, UNODC held a series of provincial consultation workshops on community-based drug dependence treatment, bringing together line ministries and provincial authorities from 19 provinces and CSOs. Comprehensive guidance for community-based treatment

and care services for people affected by drug use and dependence was produced, and UNODC and WHO conducted a comprehensive assessment of services for drug users in selected provinces to help design a community-based treatment pilot project at provincial level.

Going forward, helping develop transparent, evidence-based and voluntary alternatives to compulsory detention remains front and centre in the UN’s overall support to the GoV to improve healthcare, labour conditions and access to justice for PLHIV and other vulnerable populations.

UNAIDS, WHO, UNODC, UNFPA and UNICEF

Focus Area 2

Outcome 2.4 (II): Promoting gender equality

Gender and HIV have been identified as important areas by the Government of Viet Nam, as well as by the UN and development partners in the Joint Country Analysis and UN analytical work, and in the SEDP. Addressing persistent forms of inequality, in particular gender inequality, together with stigma and discrimination, are essential to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth. In recent years, the Government of Viet Nam has achieved good progress in the areas of coordination, up-stream policy advice and national capacity building on gender and HIV. Achievements have been less impressive at sub-national level and in reaching rural and remote areas compared to urban and wealthier provinces, and significant disparities remain across socio-economic groups. To address the significant remaining challenges, the UN is assisting Government agencies in four key areas: stronger legal and policy frameworks for evidence-informed HIV responses, greater participation of people living with HIV in decisions that affect their lives, legal and policy changes that strengthen action against gender discrimination and violence and national and local coordination mechanisms to respond to gender discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV).

Context

Viet Nam has made significant progress on MDG 3. Gender inequality in primary education has been eliminated. In 2012, female labour accounted for 48.7 per cent of the national labour force and women took up 48 per cent of newly created jobs. The country boasts one of the highest rates of female representation in parliament in Asia and the proportion of women elected for the term 2011-2016 of the National Assembly is 24.4 per cent.

However, gender inequality persists in access to advanced education and decent work. GSO data showed that women earned 13 per cent less than men in 2011 and in 2012, a national survey revealed that women's salaries were only 70-80 per cent of their male colleagues. The sex ratio at birth continues to worsen.

GBV remains a critical problem, with women accounting for more than 85 per cent of victims. The high prevalence of domestic violence was brought into sharp focus in 2010, when a national survey found that 58 per cent of ever married women had experienced some form of domestic violence. In 2014 a study conducted by Action Aid International Viet Nam and the Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development in Ha Noi and HCMC revealed that 87 per cent of surveyed women and girl had experienced some form of sexual harassment in public places. In another study by Plan International Viet Nam in Ha Noi, only 13 per cent of girls and 8 per cent boys thought that girls were always safe in public places. The Government, with UN support, is making efforts to address the issue. In February 2014, the Prime Minister approved the National Action Plan on Domestic Violence through 2020, proposed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MoCST) which is leading a national domestic violence prevention and response network. In addition, the GoV planned to develop a national thematic programme on GBV



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prevention and responses for 2016-2020 to address GBV beyond domestic violence.

The State budget for implementation of the National Programme on Gender Equality - having already been cut by 20 per cent in 2013 - was cut by a further 50 per cent in 2014, which created more challenges for ministries and provinces to achieve national targets under the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2015.

Ahead of the 2016 elections, positive steps are being taken to improve the representation of women in leadership roles, including high-level discussions at provincial level to encourage women's representation and leadership. Also, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women submitted a draft decree to the Prime Minister on strengthening women's roles in party organizations beyond implementation of 2007's Party Resolution No.11.

The revised Marriage and Family Law was approved in June 2014. It highlights equality among family members and women's legitimate rights and made some progress by removing the prohibition on same sex marriage. The law also recognized family care as income generating work in the context of separation of property.

However, it does not fully comply with international norms of women's human rights, nor is it compatible with other domestic legislation. The retirement age of women – a key UN advocacy issue since 2012 – remained unchanged at 55 years of age, whereas it is 60 for men, despite being extensively discussed during revision of the Social Insurance Law.

Civil society gender-focused activities expanded in 2014, notably through preparation for contributions to the CEDAW reporting processes and participation in the National Review of the Beijing Platform for Action, building towards the global review (Beijing+20) in 2015. In addition, evidence-based civil society advocacy for safer cities for women and girls attracted greater levels of authorities' attention in 2014. In HCMC, in response to a civil society group survey on sexual harassment of women in public spaces, the Department of Transportation launched safe and clean public bathrooms, while in Ha Noi the department proposed separate buses for women and girls. More visible LGBT communities and a larger number of more open discussions on issues they face are promising developments.

Results in 2014

An effective national response to gender inequality requires stronger gender-related legal and policy frameworks and practices as well as evidence-based planning, monitoring and budgeting through multi-sectoral coordination.

In 2014, the UN made good progress in **strengthening the legal and policy frameworks, programmes and practices to address gender inequality, gender discrimination and gender-based violence** (output 2.4.3) through support to GoV and stakeholders. With UN support, MoLISA developed standard tools for tracking gender mainstreaming in three selected areas of the National Strategy on Gender Equality. In addition, the ministry started consultations to identify GBV-related concerns to be addressed in the first national proposal on GBV prevention and responses for 2016-2020 beyond domestic violence. 105 staff from relevant ministries and departments were trained in using these tools. While knowledge and capacities of selected ministries were strengthened through trainings and policy dialogues to improve health support to victims of trafficking, address the sex ratio at birth imbalance and promote gender equality in higher education, others were supported through development of new tools such as domestic violence response checklist (Ministry of Public Security (MPS)), and gender sensitive indicators in media. In terms of the pilot minimum intervention package for domestic violence, one of the success indicators for the output, key package components such as a hotline number and primary prevention, healthcare for victims and legal aid are available in three target provinces. Regarding sexual harassment, prohibited since 2013 under the revised Labour Code, further progress was made as UN facilitated the MoLISA and partners to agree on a roadmap towards a tripartite code of practice against sexual harassment at the workplace. To create an enabling environment and address the rigid gender

norms and practices that are the root cause of inequality, a month-long national advocacy campaign strengthening the roles of men and boys in ending violence against women commemorated 16 Days of Activism against GBV with UN support for a second year. The campaign mobilized the direct participation of more than 20,000 young people with more than 40 activities, while its messages were widely disseminated through extensive media coverage via 230 TV broadcasts and nearly 600 news articles.

Progress was also **made strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms** (output 2.4.4) for improved responses to gender discrimination and GBV. The UN again supported the Gender Action Partnership, which in 2014 contributed to the Government's review report on 20 years' implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition, more than 200 representatives from line ministries, research institutions and 25 local CSOs working on gender equality and women's empowerment contributed to the report through an unprecedented participatory approach. The report provided information and analysis on comprehensive ways to address the 12 key areas of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as identify GoV priorities in gender equality for the next five years. The MoCST-led domestic violence network is now fully functional through its six monthly meetings allowing the GoV to better coordinate and engage key CSOs and development partners.

In 2014, as a result of six completed UN studies, policy-makers and programme planners have access to an expanded evidence base to more effectively address GBV. Such studies included research on policing and prosecution of sexual violence against women with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), which is informing the revision of the Penal Code and Penal Procedural Code, an assessment of a community-based reintegration model for returned victims of trafficking reflected in the MoLISA training manual to support providers and a joint



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UN discussion paper on GBV to support development of the National Programme on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response. In addition, the UN helped with the development and application of standardized guidance for national and provincial staff to use national gender statistics to report on the National Strategy on Gender Equality. Ninety GoV staff from different provincial departments were trained to gain a common understanding of target users' comprehension of the strategy and will assist provinces to consolidate meaningful data for improved monitoring and reporting.

Contribution story:

Fighting back against gender-based violence

GBV continues to leave a mark on Vietnamese society, with 58 per cent of ever-married Vietnamese women having experienced at least one form of physical, sexual and emotional violence from their partners at some point in their lives. Crucially, 87 per cent did not seek help from public services due to their unavailability and out of fear of stigma and discrimination. Although the GoV has actively responded to GBV in the

recent past, it is still a serious problem that pervades society.

To further examine GBV and identify gaps in the country's response, the UN in 2014 commissioned research to build an evidence base to help policy-makers address the issue. Six policy briefs were developed based on recent studies and surveys on GBV, domestic violence, sex-ratio-at-birth imbalance, human trafficking and women in justice. This evidence can now be drawn on by the UN, GoV and relevant partners for advocacy at different policy dialogues, workshops and meetings to move the GBV response from data to concrete action.

Besides support for policy development, the UN helped the GoV pilot a minimum intervention package for GBV survivors in selected provinces, encompassing health, legal and referral services, which could be scaled up to nationwide availability in 2016.

Given that GBV is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon which requires interventions from various sectors, in 2014 the UN enhanced the capacity of GoV partners working on GBV, such as ministries, Farmers' and Women's unions, to better coordinate their response. The UN not only introduced tools and training

Master Chef

December 2, 2014 in Hanoi



manuals, but also provided technical support to build capacity of more than 620 GoV officers in different areas, such as how to work with men and boys as well as perpetrators of GBV, health care services, legal aid and quick response teams of police officers to intervene in GBV cases.

On the policy front, UN-identified gaps within the legal framework to protect women from GBV were shared through a capacity building workshop with drafting members of the Penal and Penal Procedure Codes from relevant ministries, researchers and judiciary. In the presence of civil society members and service providers, drafters were reminded of various scenarios faced by women and actively discussed ways to improve legal protection

provided to GBV survivors as well as strengthening punitive responses. The UN advocated for ensuring domestic violence victims can access support services, as identified in the National Programme of Action on Domestic Violence Prevention and Response, approved in February 2014.

With the concerted efforts of UN agencies, campaigns and other communication activities in 2014, GoV partners increasingly realized the importance of engaging men and boys in the prevention of violence against women and girls, with this new approach translating into communication programmes for GBV prevention. For example, the Farmers' Union developed a national programme to engage men and boys in domestic violence prevention and



submitted a US\$2.4 million proposal to the GoV for approval.

Furthermore, the UN's technical and financial assistance has broadened the capacity of GoV partners to better coordinate a national response to GBV. The annual joint communications campaign to end violence against women and girls reflects the Government's improved capacity in coordination, partnership and communication. In comparison with the previous year, 2014's campaign doubled its media coverage with more than 42 events participated in by more than 22 organizations, including the UN. The campaign also attracted direct participation by more than 20,000 young people, mainly men and boys, with

national coverage from more than 230 media channels with 564 stories carried by newspapers, radio and TV.

UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC, IOM, UNV

Enhanced Governance and Participation



Governance reform is urgently needed to respond and manage the complex challenges Viet Nam will face during the next five to 10 years. The SEDS 2011-2020 states the need to “enhance capacity and establish mechanisms for the people to exercise their rights” to ensure more effective, accountable and transparent governance to allow all Vietnamese people to have a voice in decisions which affect them.

Access to justice, efficient law enforcement and judicial support for all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, is a vital pillar to strengthen the rule of law. Better means of enabling people to share their opinions and feedback on decisions that affect them are still needed, as well as effective mechanisms to enhance oversight of work

by the State, in particular socio-economic policies and plans. Party-affiliated social organizations also play an important oversight role. More robust regulations are needed on the accountability of State agencies to the people, as well as on providing transparency on public administration performance and efficient use of public resources. Multi-sectoral responses are required to address factors that impede people’s access to justice and protection of rights. Progress on further integration into international human rights norms is needed, with effective strategies to implement international standard law and practices in line with treaties and conventions to which Viet Nam is a party. To meet these needs, the UN is creating opportunities for wider participation in decision-making on policy priorities and spending.

The year witnessed Viet Nam's second UPR at the Human Rights Council as well as a number of legal developments following the adoption of the new Constitution in 2013. In recent years and particularly since the country's membership to the UN Human Rights Council (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/CurrentMembers.aspx>) in 2013, the National Assembly has become more actively engaged in following up human rights-related recommendations with the GoV and joining it in being more actively focused on human rights domestically. In fact, a Politburo Resolution in 2013¹⁰ on inclusive international integration placed particular emphasis on fulfilling UN convention obligations Viet Nam had ratified. This resolution provided the political backing for the GoV to translate these commitments into concrete actions in 2014. The Party's internal guidance is viewed as an encouraging signal for the UN to further its human rights advocacy work and support the GoV in line with the UN's human rights mandate.

The second UPR marked another significant step by Viet Nam to increase its integration into international human rights mechanisms. Reports from Government, civil society and the UN were reviewed and 106 UN member states made 227 recommendations to the GoV on how the country could improve human rights promotion and protection. The delegation also acknowledged positive steps regarding human rights progress in Viet Nam, including advancement of socio-economic rights and steps made to reduce poverty (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/VNSession18.aspx>).

In line with its core mandate of protecting and promoting human rights, the UN supported the GoV throughout the UPR process and accompanied the delegation to Geneva. The UN also

facilitated regular dialogues between Government, civil society, academia and the international community as well as organized a debriefing with stakeholders in April 2014 to discuss the national report and recommendations received. To make the UPR process more inclusive, the UN supported the production and dissemination of a Vietnamese translation of the UPR report.

In June 2014, the GoV accepted 182 of these recommendations (83 per cent), similar to the country's first review in May 2009 (96 out of 123). During the second cycle, the international community acknowledged positive steps, including acceptance of recommendations related to granting legal status to more NGOs and civil society groups, and allowing more room for non-State media. To access the review reports and compiled recommendations please visit the Viet Nam page on the UPR website.

The UN in Viet Nam is fully committed to supporting national efforts to ensure, protect and promote human rights through its One Plan 2012-2016 and implementation of UPR recommendations. Some important developments took place in 2014, following recommendations from both UPR reviews:

- **Ratification of International Human Rights Conventions:** A notable milestone in late 2014 was the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, both strongly advocated for by the UN.
- **Right to life:** The use of the death penalty continues to concern the international community, including NGOs. During the two UPR reviews, 37 recommendations were made by countries for a moratorium or significant decline in death penalty

¹⁰ Resolution 22-NQ/TW, 10 April 2013.

use. Viet Nam's public commitment under the UPR to reduce the number of death penalty-eligible crimes appears to be supported by high-level policy-makers, though a reduction in death penalty sentences will be the only true measure of progress. Notably, the MoJ has formally recommended the Penal Code revision in 2015 include a narrower use of the death penalty. On administrative detention of persons who use illegal drugs, public pressure to require mandatory detention of drug users to reduce street crimes hampered the National Assembly's capacity to enact legal reforms to improve the rights of detainees. The slow implementation of the Law on Administrative Violations has constrained the justice system's capacity to address administrative violations in accordance with international conventions and protection of human rights, particularly in relation to children in conflict with the law and drug users.

- **Freedom of religion and belief:** The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief was invited by the GoV to conduct a country visit in July 2014. His formal report is to be presented to the 28th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2015.
- **Right to silence:** Following a series of UN-sponsored conferences on international fair trial standards, the Convention Against Torture and UPR recommendations, dynamic National Assembly dialogues took place in 2014 on the right of arrested persons to remain silent during interrogation.
- **Access to fair trial and legal assistance:** The Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code were reviewed in 2014 and will be debated by the National Assembly in 2015. Both important laws provide opportunities for Viet Nam to better

align its justice system to international standards and commitments through ratification of Convention against Torture and accepted UPR recommendations. The Law on Court Organization established Viet Nam's first specialized children's court, as repeatedly called for by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In addition, recommendations to amend the Criminal Procedure Code will increase the right to counsel at earlier stages of criminal proceedings and allow defendants to present independent evidence at trials.

- **Right to participate in public and political life:** CSOs are becoming increasingly active - and play a more important role - in law-making processes, creating new spaces for their views to be reflected in decision-making processes. This is paralleled by the National Assembly's increased openness to listen to civil society voices. Discussions on the Law on Associations, under review by the National Assembly in 2015-2016, focus on the potential to provide the legal basis for freedom of association. Examples of civil society participation included:
 - Input to drafting the laws on Land, Civil Status, Social Insurance and Family and Marriage.
 - Preparation of Viet Nam's civil society UPR report as well as travel of one representative from a Vietnamese NGO to Geneva to participate in the review.
 - Engagement in the preparations for the 2015 Beijing+20 conferences at the request of MoLISA, which acknowledge how information from civil society can improve the Government's engagement with the international community.

However, it is important to note that CSOs will likely to continue to operate



in a very constrained environment, with cumbersome GoV approval required to operate at the local level, interruptions of service delivery to constituents and with regular interference towards those that work on freedom of expression or other sensitive issues.

The adoption of the new Constitution in 2013 incentivized other important legislative developments in 2014, in particular the review of 'organic laws' that stipulate the organization of core State bodies, the National Assembly, GoV ministries and Courts. The formulation of the Law on Government places greater emphasis on designation of powers of institutions, enhancing separation - or checks and balances - of powers. Legislative reforms are providing greater opportunities to improve public sector accountability. For instance, the National Assembly's supreme oversight role over the GoV budget is becoming stronger,

contributing to enhanced governmental accountability. Likewise the Communist Party is becoming increasingly involved in the anti-corruption process, with a growing oversight function of Party committees. The GoV took robust measures to advance the public reform agenda on all sides and increase compliance with the UN Convention against Corruption, but not all sectors are progressing with the same speed.

Moving forward, in preparation for the Party Congress which will take place early 2016, ministries have been asked to develop their 'vision for 2030' for their respective sectors, providing a potential focus area for support from the UN on longer-term strategic planning.

Outcome 3.1: More responsive elected bodies

To ensure elected bodies are capable of preparing laws and tracking State agency actions to address the pressing concerns of women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the UN is supporting two areas of work: **high-quality research and data to guide legislative duties** and **increased contact with voters**.

Results in 2014

The first area is related to the generation and access to **high-quality research and data to guide legislative duties** (output 3.1.1). In 2014, the UN supported with research and data the drafting processes of the following laws:

Laws	UN-supported research and data	Status of the Law
Population Law (draft)	FAQ booklet on population issues, reproductive rights and women's rights completed and disseminated to elected officials during debates on draft Population Law.	Under development
Law on Environmental Protection	Children's issues and concerns related to climate change collected through participatory methods and documented/submitted to NA Committee on Science, Technology and Environment (appraisal committee)	Approved with incorporation of the best interests of the child principle
Law on Local Governance	Key issues identified through active consultations with community and local government officials. Local government models identified through research submitted to NA Committee on Law (appraisal committee)	Approved
State Budget Law	Research and a UN Joint position paper on transparency, accountability, participation, child rights issues and equity and gender equality concerns submitted to NA Committee on Finance and Budgetary Affairs (appraisal committee)	Approved
Law on Election	Information on international standards and good practice regarding the right to self-nomination, representation of woman deputies/candidates, National Elections Council independence shared with drafting committee and NA Committee on Law (appraisal committee)	Approved with incorporation of a gender quota for candidates
Civil Code and Civil Status, Family and Marriage Law	Consultations/policy dialogues on gender mainstreaming and two discussion papers submitted to law drafting committees and NA Social Affairs Committee (appraisal committee)	Approved: removal of prohibition of same sex marriage and addition of new provisions to protect the rights of women
Law on Occupational Safety and Health	Technical inputs on international labour standards and best practices, joint ILO-WHO memorandum and technical consultations submitted and shared with MoLISA, partners and Social Affairs Committee	Approved

The second area of work generates **greater capacity of elected officials and bodies to consult with voters** (output 3.1.2). In 2014 the UN facilitated disadvantaged groups' participation in consultations on the Law on Family and Marriage as well as CSOs' inputs into the draft State Budget Law. The UN also initiated discussions and produced a report with recommendations to overcome obstacles preventing CSOs' participation in the law-making process, for the review of the Law on Laws. An analysis of child participation was also completed, with the findings extensively used to formulate a new chapter on children's participation in decision-making process as part of the ongoing child law amendment.

Contribution story:

Reinforcing the National Assembly to protect and promote human rights

Viet Nam is increasingly prioritizing human rights. The country was elected to the UN Human Rights Council in November 2013 and later that month the National Assembly approved the 2013 Constitution, featuring a number of new and progressive provisions on human rights. In a further sign of commitment, Viet Nam participated in the 2nd cycle of the UPR in February 2014 and received 227 recommendations to further promote human rights.

The UN has played a key role supporting Viet Nam to take these meaningful steps. Further ground was covered in 2014 with the first ever legal review of new provisions in the 2013 Constitution and seven international conventions on human rights Viet Nam is a party to, to strengthen the National Assembly's role to protect, ensure and promote human rights.

This review conducted by the National Assembly Committee for Foreign Affairs and bolstered by UN agencies' inputs, aimed to provide legislative members with

a first ever comprehensive picture of these conventions and their ratification as well as gaps to be filled to further improve laws concerning human and citizens' rights.

Another feature of the UN-supported review was the National Assembly's role in the UPR process and its capacity to make and implement periodical review reports to hold the GoV accountable to its commitments based on Parliament's legislative, representative and oversight functions. While the UN works with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare for UPR national reports, the National Assembly's role is not always highlighted. The review also underscored the need for the National Assembly to join the GoV in developing an action plan that outlines how accepted UPR recommendations are implemented. The National Assembly will be a key partner to oversee and follow through the implementation of accepted recommendations as well as further promote human rights in Viet Nam.

In December 2014 the UN and National Assembly used Human Rights Day with the year's slogan of "Human Rights 365" embracing the idea that every day is Human Rights Day and each individual, everywhere, at all times is entitled to the full range of human rights to discuss the role of the National Assembly in protecting human rights in conformity with the 2013 Constitution and international conventions on human rights. At a meeting in Ha Noi, participants discussed the finding of the review and suggested the necessity to have national human rights institutions and highlighted the need for the National Assembly to follow through on the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations and other human rights commitments. The meeting also shed light on the processes by which other parliaments engage in the protection of human rights through the UPR process.

UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women

Outcome 3.2: Legal and justice system reform

Increasing access to justice and protection of rights is of critical importance to ensure all Vietnamese people realize their capacities and aspirations. For this purpose, the UN is working on mutually reinforcing elements, including a rights-based legal framework, stronger duty bearers (both law enforcement, and judicial institutions and personnel) and greater rights holders' awareness of their rights.

Results in 2014

The UN is building on its mandate to support Viet Nam's achievement of international obligations by helping develop a **stronger policy, legal and regulatory framework** (output 3.2.1). In 2014, work continued to assess progress on human rights-related commitments in the framework of the 2nd cycle of the UPR. The UN played a key convening role by ensuring dialogue after Viet Nam's review at the Human Rights Council. A multi-stakeholder dialogue between Government, CSOs, diplomatic missions and UN agencies was supported. A Government UPR follow up action plan was discussed and its development will be supported by the UN in 2015. Regarding other international conventions, the UN facilitated several policy dialogues and training workshops in preparation for ratification of the Convention against Torture (CAT) and Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities, later ratified in 2014.

Convention against Torture:

Enforcing CAT is challenging for most countries as it requires the full engagement of all stakeholders, such as public security and prosecutorial agencies, as well as an independent judiciary capable of enforcing meaningful sanctions against officials who violate tenets of the CAT and implementing legislation. With Viet Nam acceding to the CAT on 28 November 2014, ensuring that duty bearers and rights holders understand the Convention's obligations is critical. Through a UN-led capacity building and awareness raising process, more than 250 participants from different ministries and key actors from the judiciary, including representatives of academia and civil society, learned about best practices for implementing CAT and measures taken to harmonize national legal systems to meet international standards.



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The UN also supported the revision and development of various legal frameworks with the objective of promoting compliance with the 2013 Constitution and human rights commitments. The UN advocated against discrimination of disadvantaged groups including children, women, LGBT people, PLHIV and key populations at risk of HIV. In 2014 the support provided to the revision of the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code focused on improving national compliance with international standards. Official recommendations of the Supreme People's Procuracy to amend the Criminal Procedure Code in 2015 contain important advancements towards aligning the criminal justice system to international standards.

Regarding **reform within law enforcement structures and the court system** (output 3.2.2), in 2014 the UN continued supporting the introduction of child-friendly and gender sensitive investigation and prosecution. While UNICEF and UNDP supported the

amendment of the Law on Court Organization to establish a specialized children's court, UNODC and UNV helped develop and test a data collection system for police responses to domestic violence and piloted the domestic violence rapid response team in Ben Tre province.

Another need to be met is **legal education to allow law enforcement and judicial personnel to carry out their obligations** under Viet Nam's Constitution and laws, as well as international conventions (output 3.2.3). In 2014, the UN supported a number of trainings.

Training Focus	Training participants	UN Agency	Result
Responding to GBV	180 law enforcement officers	UNODC, UNFPA	Law enforcement officers' improved understanding of GBV and gender equality
Money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism	200 law enforcement officers	UNODC	Law enforcement officers' improved understanding of recent changes to international standards, cash smuggling and amendments to Vietnamese anti-money laundering laws
Identification of smuggling cases and counter-smuggling procedures	250 law enforcement officers	IOM, UNODC	Law enforcement officers' improved understanding of international standards and laws on anti-human smuggling as well as improved skills to identify and investigate people smuggling
Court ordinance on Law on Handling Administrative Violations and juvenile justice	Development of materials to train judges Administrative Police	UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNODC	Improvements in due process for drug users and children in conflict with the law
Human rights and CEDAW	250 MPs and GoV officers	UN Women	Awareness among MPs and GoV on CEDAW and other human rights treaties broadened, such as draft revisions of numerous laws in line with international standards
Legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and GBV	70 key legal aid providers (32 women)	UNODC, UNFPA	Improved knowledge and skills to provide legal assistance
Adversarial criminal skills (training of trainers)	Law school students	UNDP	Institutionalization of the issue in law school through replication of trainer trainings



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Lastly, a key element of legal and justice system reform is empowerment of claim holders, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, through **awareness-raising, legal assistance and other support services** (output 3.2.4). In 2014, the UN focused its efforts in reaching key populations such as:

- Men and boys as partners in the prevention of GBV through a range of culturally appropriate communication activities as part of a national campaign.
- Juveniles in conflict with the law in HCMC and Dong Thap through pilot community-based support interventions.
- People with disabilities who have received legal advice thanks to a legal clinic (supported by the UN) that provides support through various channels (in person, telephone, email, VOV radio) reaching more than 2,000 persons with disabilities. In addition, 100 people with disabilities in Quang Tri and Hue have received face-to-face legal advice. Finally 40 representatives of organizations of persons with disability have improved advocacy skills through four trainings and several national policy dialogues and a TV talks show (<http://youtu.be/qm1uWeIMT0o->) organized by the UN.
- PLHIV (18 in total) in Can Tho, Dien Bien, Hai Phong, Ha Noi and HCMC who have received legal aid through two legal aid centres. In general, national capacity to address this type of cases is more sustainable through knowledge transfer from the two centres to 20 legal aid service providers in five provinces.
- LGBT people through policy-oriented research and CSOs and in particular, community-based organizations through training on leadership and advocacy and to the wider community through research.



Contribution story:

Legal aid to protect all of society

Bringing legal aid to vulnerable populations in Viet Nam was an important UN multi-agency task in 2014.

This tangible progress was in response to the country's recently revised Constitution that protects the rights of individuals and a UN General Assembly rallying call in 2012 for member states to ensure legal aid results in equality before the law, and the right to a fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal.

In 2014, the UN helped increase legal aid coverage to include some of the most at risk members of society, such as survivors of domestic violence, PLHIV, children and people living with disabilities.

Legal aid for survivors of domestic and GBV was enhanced by UNODC with training courses for 69 legal aid officers and pro-bono lawyers from across the nation. An analysis of pre- and post-training exercises demonstrated the courses' effectiveness with an increase in attendees' legal aid knowledge related to domestic violence.

In addition, leaflets with addresses of legal aid providers for GBV survivors were

distributed to the Women's Union, health workers, police, prosecutors' offices, courts and communities nationwide for work supporting GBV survivors. "Frontline" GoV staff also used the leaflets to refer suspected GBV cases to legal aid providers.

To support PLHIV, UNAIDS provided legal aid in collaboration with the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the Viet Nam Network of People Living with HIV (VNP+), Bridges Across Borders Southeast Asia's Community Legal Education programme and two local NGOs. Potential violations of Viet Nam's Law on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control were reported by 18 PLHIV during nine "Learn About Your Rights" trainings in 2014. These cases - mainly related to violations of PLHIV rights to social protection entitlements, employment, education and property inheritance - were referred to legal aid providers. Importantly, 16 cases were resolved in favour of the PLHIV. To help sustain legal aid for PLHIV, the lawyers supporting these cases shared their experiences at a November training workshop for 20 legal aid providers from five provinces, including provincial State legal aid and Viet Nam Lawyer's Association-supported legal consulting centres.



Expanding legal aid services to children was another key area of UNICEF support, with the signing of a three-year cooperation agreement with the Viet Nam Lawyer's Association and roll-out of a plan and training on child-friendly legal aid in 2014.

People with disabilities have significant unmet needs for legal aid, with just 63 legal aid centres for this segment of society who make-up 15.3 per cent of Viet Nam's population. A joint UN initiative on disability rights supported the establishment of a specialized legal aid clinic with collaboration from a non-governmental legal aid provider, based in Ha Noi. With just one lawyer and collaboration with Ha Noi Law University who offered to train clinic staff and provide interns, the clinic provided legal advice to 2,000 people with disabilities. Common concerns related to access to social benefits, with frequent questions about access to employment, education and marriage. Importantly, no questions were raised by participants about how the criminal laws can protect people living with disabilities more effectively or how the criminal justice system can accommodate the uniqueness. UN-supported research

will be completed in 2015 on access to justice for people with disabilities.

Additional efforts were made in Hue and Quang Tri provinces to respond to increasing demand for legal clinic networks, with more than 100 people attending public sessions on legal aid.

Despite this progress the awareness of rights among vulnerable populations, cultural and linguistic barriers among ethnic minorities, lack of trust and capacity as well as availability of free or affordable legal aid remain key challenges. Policy changes and national investment are essential for sustainable change. Towards the end of 2014, the UN provided inputs to a draft inter-ministerial circular that will instruct healthcare workers to refer PLHIV to State-run legal aid providers if they are told about specific rights violations, while the UN is supporting a review of the Government's National Legal Aid Strategy to increase women and children's access to justice. The review will be finalized in 2015, as GoV agencies review the Law on Legal Aid, expected to be debated by the National Assembly in 2016.

UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC

Outcome 3.3: Better performing public sector institutions

As part of the 'Doi Moi' renovation process, Viet Nam has engaged in the modernization of its policy-making processes and public sector institutions to reduce disparities in access to services and enhance public service delivery accountability and transparency.

Results in 2014

The development of **participatory, evidence-based and cross-sectoral public service delivery** (output 3.3.1) is taking shape through UN work to ensure efficient coordination between GoV agencies as well as capacity building for effective functioning public service institutions, especially at a decentralized level. In 2014, the UN supported the MPI at national level as well as in eight provinces to incorporate results and rights-based approaches, particularly children's rights, in planning, implementation and monitoring the public services delivery. The UN also worked closely with the MoC, among other partners, to incorporate rights-based, participatory and inclusive approaches in city sustainable development planning and in the Housing Law revision process. Key provincial and city leaders have better knowledge of municipal management and governance, and policy-making thanks to UN training.

As Viet Nam moves towards a higher level of human development, it is imperative to **enhance human resource management systems**, a customer-oriented approach to interface with the public and strengthened mechanisms for accountability and transparency (output 3.3.2). In 2014, the UN developed training curricula for key civil servant positions in Bac Giang, Can Tho, Da Nang and Ha Tinh to be piloted and become compulsory in these localities. In these provinces, provision of public administrative services to citizens and enterprises were strengthened through refinement of internal work-flow procedures and development of software applications for OSSs. A UN-developed training module on child-sensitive RBM was rolled out by the National Academy for Public Administration. In the area of gender equality, the UN worked with the Ho Chi Minh Academy to mainstream gender into its leadership curriculum and incorporate gender issues in the key training of senior government and Party



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officials. More than 280 senior GoV and Party leaders benefited from this revised curriculum in 2014. Training on leadership skills and other capacity-building initiatives reached 1,720 female officers in the public sector. The UN also developed a manual for mentoring programme coordinators, providing a capacity-building approach for women leaders. Some 920 staff from 10 agencies received the manual and more than 100 women officials received mentoring training. In Da Nang, public human resource management and users' feedback mechanisms on public services quality were strengthened by new tools supported by the UN, such as a staff performance appraisal system and an online survey to collect users' feedback.

Capacity building for national institutions to implement and monitor national policies on anti-corruption and the UN Convention against Corruption, ratified by Viet Nam in 2009, is also necessary to achieve the expected result (output 3.3.3). The UN supported capacity building and awareness rising regarding international anti-corruption standards of key stakeholders including:

- Teams drafting key legal frameworks such as the Penal Code drafting team and the Central Committee for Internal Affairs, through providing analysis and recommendations on how to address gaps in prevention, investigation and prosecution of corruption cases that have been incorporated into the second draft of the Penal Code.
- Criminal justice agencies, such as the Supreme People's Court and Government Inspectorate, through the introduction of UN Guidebook on Strengthening Judicial Capacity and Integrity and Viet Nam's first law enforcement integrity dialogue.
- 140 customs officers and 60 public security police officers who have improved capacity in responding to cash smuggling, cross-border controls and investigation skills through UN trainings.
- Key staff of General Inspectorate, Prosecutor's Office and a CSO Towards Transparency have improved understanding and skills to participate in UNCAC review process.

Finally, a key further element is the need to strengthen local level participatory monitoring and **feedback mechanisms from citizens on the quality of public services** as well as the impact of these services on citizens' development needs (output 3.3.4). In 2014, the UN continued its support to two key initiatives, PAPI survey, conducted in all 63 provinces with follow-up policy dialogues in 26 provinces and policy responses received from 16 provinces (<http://papi.vn>). In addition, the Citizen Report Card and Child Rights-based Social Audits were undertaken in Kon Tum and Dien Bien with key findings and recommendations soon to be disseminated.

Contribution story:

Improved public services performance to reduce poverty and inequality

The percentage of poorest households benefiting from assistance, policy and projects achieved target levels in 2011 and has remained steady (2012 VHLSS). At the same time, the quality of public services provided to citizens is considered one of the two Government priorities in Public Administration Reform for 2011-2020. However, this is still an area that needs more systematic improvement.

Recognizing the importance of improving public services by local administrative agencies, the UN extended its support in strengthening the public services' infrastructure and citizen feedback mechanism. More specifically, provincial people's committees of Bac Giang, Can Tho and Ha Tinh developed software applications for operation of OSSs and inter-agency OSSs at commune, district and provincial levels. As a result, internal work-flow and operation of OSSs in these three localities were carried out in a more efficient and transparent manner. This helped citizens monitor the status of their applications.

In addition, in Da Nang an online users' feedback mechanism was developed with support from the UN to collect approximately 30,000 responses from public administrative services' users. This direct, simple and cost-effective mechanism provided useful information for local authorities to review and improve their public administrative services qualities. At the same time a social audit tool, the Citizen Report Card, was conducted in An Giang and Kon Tum provinces to capture the feedback of more than 600 service users, especially disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities and the poor, across commune and district maternal and child health services respectively. The findings and



recommendations of these surveys will inform the health sector to remove bottlenecks for delivery of better health outcomes to disadvantaged women and children.

In the related area of anti-corruption, national institutions that implement and monitor national policies on anti-corruption and UNDP Convention against Corruption were technically supported to enhance capacity and strengthen the legal framework. Specifically, two key policy dialogues and policy papers convened by UNDP and the Communist Party Central Commission for Internal Affairs and research papers provided inputs for the draft amendment to the Penal Code. This enabled important discussions on the criminalization of corruption practices, illicit enrichment and independence of anti-corruption agencies. Also, the UNDP-MoJ project convened discussions and a policy research paper on liability of legal entities. These outputs were all submitted to the National Assembly and the Central Steering Committee on Anti-corruption for policy advocacy and fuelled discussions on compliance in terms of criminalization of corruption, corruption in the private sector, illicit enrichment and liability of legal entities.

The issue of police accountability, transparency and internal oversight were

discussed among MPS senior management, representatives of the National Assembly, Government Inspectorate, Supreme People's Procuracy, Supreme People's Court and the MPI during the first police integrity workshop in Viet Nam, co-hosted by UNODC and MPS. Experts from different agencies engaged in open dialogue on the concept of police integrity with a number of international law enforcement experts as well as UNODC experts from headquarters.

These efforts are part of the UN's overall support to the GoV to strengthen accountability of public officials, including law enforcement and justice institutions, in line with the recommendations of the UPR and the commitments in the UN Convention against Corruption, the ICCPR and the recently ratified CAT. Favourable major internal changes took place in 2014, including legislative reforms which provide greater opportunities to improve public sector accountability. Amendments of some laws created opportunities for the UN to provide technical inputs to advance gender equality.

UNDP, UNODC

Outcome 3.4: More effective and sustained participation by civil society

According to numerous national and UN reports, the institutional framework and dialogue mechanisms available for political, social, professional and mass-organizations in Viet Nam to participate in policy discussion and decision-making processes require improvement. Moreover, there is a need to strengthen their human resources and organizational capacities.

Results in 2014

Citizens and political, social, professional and mass organizations (PSPMOs) play an active part in Viet Nam's socio-economic development process under a revamped national regulatory framework, including the Grassroots Democracy Decree. Together with the National Assembly and People's Councils, citizens as well as PSPMOs and other social organizations have the potential to contribute further to national development. The UN supports two dimensions linked to the participation of PSPMOs.

Firstly, advocating for an **enabling legal, policy and institutional framework and dialogue mechanism for PSPMOs and other social organizations to participate in policy discussion and decision-making processes** (output 3.4.1). In 2014, the UN commissioned the Ho Chi Minh Political Academy to conduct an analysis with robust participation of CSOs in different sectors of the national legal framework for participation in policy-making processes and overcome obstacles that hinder CSOs' ability to operate at local and national levels for revisions. Also, CSOs' initial experience and lessons learnt from their participation in Viet Nam's law-making process were documented and discussed with National Assembly members for consideration in the amendment of the Law on Laws. In terms of **dialogue mechanisms**, in 2014 the UN supported national dialogues between people with disabilities organizations, MoLISA and the National Assembly in preparation for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Secondly, the UN contributed to the strengthening of **PSPMOs and other social organizations' human resources and organization capacities** (output 3.4.2), mostly focusing on PLHIV, people with disabilities and women's organizations. In 2014, the preparation of the national review



report on 20 years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the GoV and the NGO shadow report to the CEDAW Committee, due in 2015, provided an important opportunity for the UN to engage with and support NGO networks working on gender equality to strengthen coordination and capacity to develop coherent advocacy messages. Young women and men, women living with HIV and those with disabilities were trained on policy advocacy and rights and were integrated in this process.

Some 225 PLHIV and key populations in five provinces increased their knowledge of legal rights and available redress mechanisms through nine trainings conducted by VNP+ that used the UNAIDS manual “Learn about your rights”.

In 2014, as a result of UN-supported trainings in policy advocacy, the capacity of people with disabilities organizations was enhanced to a level where they submitted a report to MoLISA on health insurance and another to the Ministry of Transport on improvements to meet people with disabilities’ needs.

Contribution story:

Empowering CSOs to make a difference

CSOs and actors are individuals and groups who voluntarily engage in forms of public participation and action around shared interest, purposes or values that are compatible with the goals of the UN: the maintenance of peace and security, the realization of development and the promotion and respect for human rights.

They also proactively raise awareness of development of new laws and policies, and can ensure members’ views are considered by policy-makers and reflected in legislative changes. Despite this potential, Viet Nam’s CSOs currently operate in a challenging environment. A lack of transparency and an uneven playing field for social organizations in Viet Nam were among issues raised by the Human Rights Council during 2014’s UPR session.

To support and help bring CSOs further into the policy debate, a number of UN agencies (UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC



and UN Women) worked together in 2014 with CSOs to examine their roles and legal frameworks governing their participation in law-making processes, lessons learnt and to develop recommendations for increased involvement. In particular, an interactive dialogue and discussion between CSOs and National Assembly members provided clarity on how CSOs' potential could be maximized in the development and law-making processes. This discussion was shared with the National Assembly to inform the amendment of the Law on Laws. In another case, UNODC and UN Women jointly supported the Network for Empowerment of Women and Centre for Women and Development to engage drafters of the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes to heighten awareness of GBV as well as prosecution and victim protection challenges.

By working together, the comparative advantages of each UN agency were

maximized. While UNAIDS and UNICEF offered in-depth technical support in highlighting inequity issues by drawing out CSOs' experiences and lessons learnt from participation in the formulation and monitoring of implementation of laws and policies to support vulnerable population groups, UNDP had a direct partnership with the National Assembly's Institute for Legislative Studies and provided management support to implement advocacy activities. ILO, UNDP and UNICEF jointly supported a CSO through the UN disability rights project to engage people with disabilities organizations in advocacy and policy-making. It resulted in the CSO organizing a policy advocacy training in June 2014 to strengthen such organizations' advocacy capacity. More than 20 representatives of these organizations, who were young community leaders with disabilities, joined provincial representatives from Can Tho,

Focus Area 3



Dong Nai, HCMC and Vung Tau in the training. The organizations were thereby empowered to engage constituencies and their peers through application of their newly acquired policy advocacy methods.

These skills can also be utilized by other disadvantaged groups representing vulnerable members of society to participate in Viet Nam's law-making process and implement international human rights treaties to which the country is a party, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities it ratified in November 2014.

- UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC and UN Women



Chapter 3

One Plan Budget and One Plan Fund

Financial Status of the One Plan Budget 2012-2016

The nature of ODA in Viet Nam has changed since its transition to a MIC, with fewer options available for grant ODA. Most key donors prioritize trade and infrastructure issues over assistance to the social sector. However, support to the social sector is still needed to help Viet Nam complete the MDG agenda as well as address new emerging challenges. These trends continued in 2014 and were the reason why the UN – in close cooperation with MPI and the EU Delegation – initiated and completed a Development Finance and Aid Assessment Study to obtain a better understanding of the role that

development finance has and will play. The study also identifies development finance opportunities and challenges in order to better inform Viet Nam's future strategy orientation and policies.

Overall, the change in the development context in Viet Nam and the decreasing ODA grant funds has affected the UN's resource mobilization efforts for the One Plan, forcing the UN to adopt both a short- and long-term approach to identifying new funding sources, complementing the funds raised through more traditional means.

This chapter provides an update on the funding status of the One Plan 2012-2016 and describes the analysis and resource mobilization initiatives launched by the UNCT in 2014 to help bridge the funding gap. The chapter also provides detailed information on contributions and allocations to the OPF in 2014.

One Plan Budget 2012-2016 analysis

As a short-term approach to assess the impact that the decreasing availability of funds was likely to have on the implementation of the One Plan 2012-2016, the UNCT conducted a detailed analysis of the One Plan Budget 2012-2016. This followed an initial assessment carried out in 2013, which concluded that based on the funding received so far and an estimation of the financial support the UN will be receiving for the remainder of the One Plan programming cycle, the total funding gap for the One Plan 2012-2016 would be approximately US\$140 million.

Based on this initial assessment, the DaO Steering Committee decided that further analysis was needed to fully assess the extent to which the One Plan outputs can be expected to be implemented in part or in full, with the currently available funding.

The UNCT undertook a detailed review of the funding status of each of the 43 outputs of the One Plan 2012-2016. Significant disparities were found, with for example six outputs having less than 30 per cent of the required funding already secured or expected to be secured. In an effort to ensure effective allocation, the One Plan Steering Committee decided that future fund allocations, including from the OPF, should be prioritized for programmes and projects that have already been approved by the Government. It was also agreed that, to the extent possible, no new projects or programmes should be developed and submitted for GoV approval.

UN breakthrough initiatives

To ensure readiness for fundraising, the UNCT prepared a pipeline of breakthrough proposals, based on the UN's comparative advantage, that help address development challenges in a cross-sectoral way. Based on a set of criteria, 10 joint fundraising proposals were then prepared by the One UN Joint Programming Results Groups

and approved by the UNCT. Two of the proposals have already been selected for funding. The project "Joint Programme on Integrated Nutrition and Food Security Strategies for Children and Vulnerable Groups in Viet Nam" received funding from the global Sustainable Development Goals Fund, and the Delivering Results Together Fund awarded funding for a project on accelerated MDG achievement in ethnic minority areas.

Analysis of Government cost sharing and ODA expenditure rates

In 2014, the UNCT conducted analyses of how the UN can continue to deliver effectively as well as of alternative funding sources for the UN in a challenging funding environment.

The first study looked at the possibility of Government cost sharing of UN projects and programmes. This included a review of the experiences of other MICs. The study pointed out that Government cost sharing of UN programmes and projects predominately occurs in MICs. It is generally considered a way for the Government to preserve the UN's presence and expertise in the country when there is a significant change in the donor landscape and when other sources of funding do not allow UN agencies to continue operation. The study also documented that for some UN agencies in MICs Government cost sharing is a significant source of funding, with more than 20 per cent of the total budget coming from this source.

The study concluded that in light of the changed donor landscape, Government cost sharing could be considered as one of the funding options for the UN going forward. However, as the GoV has no prior experience with cost sharing, it was decided that a more detailed analysis, including Government procedures to allow cost contributions, is needed.



The second study was an independent assessment of the ODA disbursement rates in Viet Nam, with a particular focus on the correlation between thematic development areas with low disbursement rates and the programmatic framework of the One Plan priorities. The study pointed out that as of December 2013, US\$19.65 billion remained in undisbursed loans and US\$1.22 billion in grants, allocated to a total of 463 projects. Some of these funds are in key One Plan areas such as agriculture, education, health and governance. The study also pointed out that there might be legal challenges in terms of transferring ODA disbursement between projects, and that Viet Nam overall has very little experience of outsourcing in Government projects financed through ODA loans and grants, including to the UN. Further analysis would therefore be required, including of legal and procedural issues, to explore a possible UN partnership with the Government in the disbursement and absorption of ODA.

One Plan Fund

Designed to promote pooled funding, reduce transaction costs and attract non-earmarked funding, the OPF continued as a critical pillar to support the implementation of the second generation of the DaO process in Viet Nam, acting as

an incentive fund for joint programming of the One Plan. The One Plan funds that were expected to be mobilized through the OPF amounted to approximately 30 per cent, or US\$135 million, of the total budget required to implement the One Plan 2012-2016. However, it is now anticipated that only US\$35 million will be raised for the OPF over the 2012-2016 period. This figure corresponds to approximately one-third of the US\$95.4 million allocated by donors to the previous OPF for the period 2007-2011.

Figure 1 summarizes the contributions by donors to the OPF in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The total number of donors has decreased from 15 to 10. This has been accompanied by a decrease in contribution levels, from US\$95.4 million for the 2007-2011 period to US\$25.3 million for 2012 and 2013 (with an additional US\$9 million pledged for the remainder of the One Plan period). Furthermore, where previous OPF contributions averaged US\$6.8 million per donor, contributions to the current OPF have averaged US\$1.8 million.

The donors contributing to the current OPF are the same that contributed to the previous OPF, with the Government of Belgium being the only new donor.

**Figure 1: Donor Contributions to One Plan Fund II (2012-2016)
31 December 2014 (US\$)**

Donor	One Plan Fund II 2012	One Plan Fund II 2013	One Plan Fund II 2014	Total (2012-2014)
UK Department for International Development	1,588,878	2,295,684	781,861	4,666,423
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	2,003,309	1,200,000	300,000	3,503,309
Irish Aid	1,492,490	1,305,100	1,305,100	4,102,690
Expanded DaO Funding Window	2,225,000	-	-	2,225,000
Delivering Results Together Fund	-	-	1,480,000	1,480,000
Government of Norway	3,619,313	273,304	1,243,588	5,136,205
Australian Agency for International Development	-	2,411,180	-	2,411,180
Government of Finland	-	2,656,500	-	2,656,500
Government of Luxembourg	810,197	750,000	1,050,000	2,610,197
Government of Belgium	1,289,000	1,316,900	1,293,800	3,899,700
Accumulated interest from previous OPF donations	22,701	-	-	22,701
Total	13,050,886	12,208,668	7,454,349	32,713,903



Over time, there has been a gradual move by donors towards an increase in soft earmarking of funds at the One Plan 2012-2016 outcome level. Whereas almost all funding allocated to the previous OPF was not earmarked, more than 50 per cent of funds provided are now soft earmarked contributions. In addition, some donors are moving away from using the OPF as the only mechanism for providing financial support to the UN in Viet Nam and are providing direct funding to individual agencies.

2014 One Plan Fund allocations

The allocation of donor contributions from OPF is done on a competitive basis, subject to the quality of the proposals submitted by UN agencies. In 2014, for the first time and following a One Plan Steering Committee decision in November 2013, the allocation of OPF funds was done jointly by the GoV and the UN. The new approach included a joint review of the criteria for allocation of funds. The proposals submitted by UN agencies were assessed by an Independent Review Panel against the allocation criteria. The composition of the One Plan Fund Independent Review Panel and the final OPF allocation are also jointly decided by the UN and Government.

In addition to the criteria on promoting joint programming, the proposals

are assessed against three main criteria, including programme priority, cross-cutting issues and past performance. A number of sub-criteria, including alignment to national development priorities, contribution to national policy dialogues and policy development, and contribution to national capacity development, are also taken into consideration. The five cross-cutting issues in the One Plan, that is environmental sustainability, gender equality, a rights-based approach, culturally appropriate programming and HIV, are assessed separately, as is agencies' past performance in previous OPF allocations.

In 2014, the total amount of funding transferred from donors to the OPF was US\$7,454,349, bringing the total contributions to the One Plan 2012-2016 to US\$32,713,903. Figure 2 shows the allocation of funds per One Plan outcome for 2012 and 2013, while Figure 3 shows the allocation of funds per participating UN agency.

The OPF is administered by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office on behalf of the UN system, and administrative charges are applied to both the Trust Fund Office and the implementing UN agencies receiving the funds. This explains the difference between donor contributions and actual allocations.

Figure 2: 2012, 2013 and 2014 One Plan Fund Allocations by One Plan 2012-2016 Outcomes (US\$)

Outcomes	2012	2013	2014	Total Allocation
Outcome 1.1 - Evidence-based Development Policies in a MIC Viet Nam	355,175	1,983,462	965,941	3,304,578
Outcome 1.2 - Opportunities for Decent Work	123,930	704,710	52,800	881,440
Outcome 1.3 - Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	756,360	1,870,000	140,000	2,766,360
Outcome 1.4 - Natural Resources and Environmental Management	62,500	40,500	0.00	103,000
Total Focus Area 1	1,297,965	4,598,672	1,158,741	7,055,378
Outcome 2.1 - Social Protection	691,514	1,269,077	641,218	2,601,809
Outcome 2.2 - Health	928,650	2,123,170	1,952,849	5,004,669
Outcome 2.3 - Education and Training	90,660	670,792	426,182	1,187,634
Outcome 2.4 - Gender Equality and HIV	901,437	2,303,366	712,446	3,917,249
Total Focus Area 2	2,612,261	6,366,405	3,732,695	12,711,361
Outcome 3.1 - Elected Bodies and the Legislative Process	0.00	1,209,898	441,152	1,651,050
Outcome 3.2 - Legal and Judicial Reform and Access to Justice	590,160	805,635	134,000	1,529,795
Outcome 3.3 - Public Administrative Reform	446,836	3,226,131	716,036	4,389,003
Outcome 3.4 - Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organisations (PSPMOs)	286,000	0.00	0.00	286,000
Total Focus Area 3	1,322,996	5,241,664	1,291,188	7,855,848
TOTAL	5,233,222	16,206,741	6,182,624	27,622,587

Figure 3: 2012, 2013 and 2014 One Plan Fund Allocations to Participating UN Agencies (US\$)

UN Agency	2012	2013	2014	Total Allocation
FAO	358,616	520,067	463,000	1,341,683
ILO	679,937	1,099,163	178,182	1,957,282
IOM	47,430	217,575	73,586	338,591
UNAIDS	251,218	394,605	119,300	765,123
UNDP	1,810,694	5,238,823	1,468,224	8,517,741
UNEP	20,000	64,500	-	84,500
UNESCO	163,357	405,722	141,221	710,300
UNFPA	114,000	1,399,680	816,340	2,330,020
UN-Habitat	237,795	331,690	87,134	656,619
UNICEF	1,123,616	3,216,620	1,212,937	5,553,173
UNIDO	227,500	617,230	196,800	1,041,530
UNODC	344,665	850,183	228,372	1,423,220
UNV	59,500	100,452	20,000	179,952
UN Women	345,000	520,914	167,366	1,033,280
WHO	760,212	1,229,517	1,010,162	2,999,891
TOTAL	6,543,540	16,206,741	6,182,624	28,932,905

THE UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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The Mission of the United Nations in Viet Nam

The United Nations, in partnership with the Government and people of Viet Nam, works to ensure that all Vietnamese people enjoy an increasingly healthy and prosperous life with greater human dignity and expanded choices. Collectively and through its individual agencies, the United Nations cares and creates opportunities for the poor and most vulnerable, and for youth, to whom the future belongs.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter and Millennium Declaration, the United Nations advances the principles of equality and social justice, while providing impartial advice, technical expertise, access to global knowledge and local experience to meet Viet Nam's development challenges.

The UN Country Team in Viet Nam

