



OUR VOICES, OUR FUTURE

Consolidated Report on Viet Nam's Post-2015 Consultation Process



Foreword



As the target date for reaching the eight Millennium Development Goals rapidly approaches, Viet Nam is one of 83 countries worldwide to actively participate in a global conversation to shape the “world we want”, in setting a new development agenda for post-2015.

Since December last year the United Nations in Viet Nam has engaged more than 1300 Vietnamese women, men, young people and children - including those from some of Viet Nam’s most vulnerable groups - in voicing their concerns, as well as setting out their hopes and aspirations for the future. The rich information collected and shared at a national workshop held here in Hanoi in March is already feeding into the global debate.

The Post-2015 Consultation Process in Viet Nam is an excellent example of the UN working together to ‘deliver as one’. All UN agencies working in country contributed their unique skills and expertise, and partnered with their respective line ministries and counterparts to reach eight key target groups, each with important perspectives to share.

For the global process, the Secretary-General has established a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda chaired by the President of Indonesia; President of Liberia and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. They will provide inputs that will feed into the Secretary-General’s own report on a post-2015 future, which will be discussed at the UN General Assembly session in September 2013. In addition several thematic consultations are taking place globally, including those on environmental sustainability; governance; growth and employment; population dynamics; health; and inequalities.

In making strong progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals, we believe Viet Nam has an important contribution to make to the discussion on the post-2015 agenda. However the simple calls that Vietnamese citizens are making for increased equity, inclusion, participation and better governance, are not so different from hopes expressed elsewhere.

As the global conversation moves forward we will continue to work with our partners in Viet Nam to ensure that the process does not stop here, and that a new Post-2015 framework continues to remain relevant for Viet Nam.

With less than a thousand days till the MDGs expire we have a unique opportunity to accelerate progress in MDG’s to ensure that all people, in Viet Nam and elsewhere, can enjoy a life of prosperity, equity and dignity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pratibha", with a horizontal line underneath.

Pratibha Mehta
UN Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Executive Summary	4
<i>Viet Nam’s progress in achieving the MDGs</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Voices from the consultations: Challenges and aspirations across the target groups</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Key messages on a post-2015 future in Viet Nam</i>	<i>8</i>
1. Background: A Post-2015 Development Agenda	11
2. Viet Nam’s Experience with the MDGs and Lessons for the Post-2015 Framework	13
2.1 Viet Nam’s progress in meeting the MDGs.....	13
2.2 MDG shortcomings in capturing human development	13
2.3 The future of the MDGs	14
2.4 Key issues for Viet Nam’s future development	15
3. The Consultation Process	18
4. Consultation Voices: Challenges and Aspirations	20
4.1 Specific Challenges and Aspirations	20
4.2 Common Challenges and Aspirations across the Target Groups	33
5. Key Messages on a Post-2015 Future in Viet Nam	38
5.1 Equality, including gender equality.....	38
5.2 Vulnerability and social inclusion	39
5.3 Governance and participation	40
5.4 A demographic shift	41
5.5 Universal access to quality and affordable health care	43
5.6 Quality employment and a new growth model.....	44
5.7 Education and vocational training	45
5.8 A cleaner environment	45
Annex 1: List of Questions Used in the Consultations.....	47
Annex 2: Key Background Documents Used in the Analysis.....	49



Executive Summary

This report is the United Nations (UN) in Viet Nam's contribution to the global discussion on a Post-2015 Development Agenda. It presents the outcomes from a consultation process that took place between November 2012 and March 2013, with representatives from eight target groups throughout the country. As part of the consultations, over 1,320 men, women, young people and children were asked what kind of future they would like post-2015, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire.

The eight groups were selected on the basis that they do not usually have a voice in formal consultation processes and comprised ethnic minorities, older people, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, the private sector, the rural poor, the urban poor and young people.

Throughout the consultation process, efforts were made to ensure that women as well as men had the opportunity to articulate their particular challenges and aspirations. More than half of the participants in all the consultations were women. Consultation events took place in 13 of Viet Nam's provinces, covering both major cities and the countryside, with a particular focus on poorer and remote rural areas.



More than 1,300 men, women and children were consulted on the future they want.
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The conversation was facilitated in true Delivering as One (DaO) spirit. Led by the UN Resident Coordinator, the process was guided by an interagency task force. Each of the consultations was led by a UN agency, and each of these agencies in turn partnered with Government, research bodies, and political, social, professional and mass organisations to reach the target groups and facilitate the consultation process.



Viet Nam's progress in achieving the MDGs

To date, Viet Nam has made significant progress in achieving the MDGs. This is particularly the case with MDG 1 on poverty reduction, as well as MDGs 2, 3, 4 and 5 on education, gender equality, child mortality and maternal health. Areas where progress still needs to be made include combating HIV/AIDS and ensuring environmental sustainability. However, MDG progress has been uneven across the country. Remote and mountainous regions are doing less well and there are wide disparities between population groups, with ethnic minorities in particular lagging behind.

The challenge for the post-MDG framework is how to represent these issues, and other development challenges, in a way that ensures human development is measured meaningfully. Important issues do not readily lend themselves to the kind of quantitative and aggregated targets that the MDGs set. On gender equality, for example, domestic and sexual violence, both major concerns in the country, are not reflected in the MDGs. Health related disparities between regions are also disguised by national aggregate data. The quality of governance, another important issue for Viet Nam, is not easily measured in quantitative terms. As Viet Nam moves to middle-income country status, exactly what constitutes development is becoming increasingly contested and less easily quantified. Therefore, the new post-2015 development goals will need to better reflect and capture these complex realities if they are to be relevant.

Voices from the consultations: Challenges and aspirations across the target groups

Each of the groups consulted raised particular challenges and aspirations. A vast range of issues were covered, and the consultations provided a unique insight into the hopes and wishes for the future of many people whose voice would not normally be heard.

- **Ethnic minorities:** The low level of access to basic social services was a significant problem raised by many. Ethnic minority groups often live in remote areas with poor infrastructure and poor land quality, and many people said they have few livelihood alternatives. Many ethnic minority women mentioned their heavy workload, both in the community and households, and their exclusion from agricultural training sessions and community meetings because of household responsibilities.
- **Older people:** Older people hope for a social protection system that they can fully participate in and benefit from. This includes accessing adequate state pensions and receiving good quality and affordable health care, both issues they were particularly worried about. Older people expressed concerns about their increasing responsibility to care for the young in the household. They also wished to remain useful to society, and to remain connected to family yet still able to live independently.
- **People living with HIV/AIDS:** The main concern for people living with HIV/AIDS were problems of stigma and discrimination – within the family, among service providers such as health workers, and in society in general. Men and women from this group, which also included drug users, reported that they often encounter problems in accessing public services and vocational training opportunities. The discrimination they face in turn leads to low self-esteem, which was a common theme in the consultations. Women living with HIV said they are often pressured to not have families and are not provided with information on how to deliver a HIV negative child.

- **People with disabilities:** People with disabilities were also concerned about the stigma they face, and strongly expressed their desire to be treated equally and with respect. They encountered difficulties in accessing state benefits and mentioned that public transportation is often inaccessible, leaving them dependent on family members. Women with disabilities reported that they are often seen as unable to have a family. For children with disabilities, a strongly expressed desire was to attend school with able-bodied children.



People with disabilities expressed their wish to be treated equally and with respect.
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- **The private sector:** Representatives from the private sector highlighted the need for Viet Nam's business sector to be more deeply integrated into global value chains and to improve the sector's capacity to follow international standards. The non-transparent business environment was seen as a challenge and participants called for further equity and transparency in how the business sector is treated. The target group also felt there is a need for better vocational training. Finally, they were keen on playing a greater role in policy making.
- **The rural poor:** According to the rural poor, the main reason why they are unable to improve their situation is the lack of off-farm work opportunities, leaving them few alternatives to urban migration. They also called for a fair system of land allocation and a more transparent way to determine land loss compensation. Rural poor women and men would like to see better infrastructure in their communities, including roads, electricity, schools and access to clean water. They were also concerned about the lack of good primary health care and check-up services.
- **The urban poor:** For the urban poor, a lack of education was seen as the main reason for many of their problems. They are often unable to access social services as they lack the correct residency status. Many of those consulted worked in low-paid, insecure jobs, with no social safety net to protect them. Poor quality housing and insecure land tenure also mean that urban poor men and women live in difficult conditions and are unable to make long-term plans. Finally, problems of domestic violence, sexual harassment and unequal sharing of household responsibilities between men and women were raised.



Both the rural poor and young people were concerned about the need for a good education.
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- **Young people:** Young people were particularly concerned about the need for a good education to enable them to find a secure job and income. They worry about unequal access across the country to health care services, and wanted more information on sexual and reproductive health. Young men and women, and girls and boys, also called for greater protection from school violence, sexual abuse, domestic violence and drugs. They expressed a strong wish to be able to participate in decision-making processes, and a demand for social equity and gender equality. Finally, they also wanted to tackle issues such as climate change and pollution.

Apart from these specific aspirations and challenges, several common themes across the eight target groups also emerged, including:

- A desire for a more economically and socially equal society, which also addresses gender equality;
- A desire for a stable job, with decent employment terms and a good income;
- The need for quality education and vocational training that helps all young people find employment and prepares them for life;
- Affordable and quality health care services, that include sexual and reproductive health, and which meet the needs of all people, providing good treatment no matter who they are and where they live;
- A wish for an effective and comprehensive social protection system that provides a safety net for those in need, particularly in times of unemployment, maternity and old age;
- The aspiration for public services that closely meet the needs of people, as well as a stronger public service culture which treats everyone equally and with respect;
- The need to tackle corruption effectively, in a way that will promote equal access to state services for all;

- The desire to be listened to and to have more opportunities to voice opinions and be included in decision-making processes, particularly on decisions that affect people's lives;
- A common wish to eliminate public as well as private stigma and discrimination, to be respected and valued, and to be recognised as a useful member of society;
- And finally, the hope for a cleaner environment, where pollution, environmental degradation and the negative consequences of climate change are fully addressed.

Key messages on a post-2015 future in Viet Nam

This final section of the report summarises the key messages emerging from Viet Nam's consultation process on a post-2015 future. These are based on the voices and information from the target group consultations, as well as a comprehensive review of research and analytical documents relating to Viet Nam's current and future development challenges. The eight key issues are, according to the UN in Viet Nam, essential for Viet Nam to address post-2015, and ones that any new global development agenda needs to take into account, if it is to remain relevant for Viet Nam.

- 1. Equality, including gender equality:** The desire for greater equality was a cross-cutting issue of major concern throughout the consultations. Inequality in Viet Nam manifests itself in many different ways. It includes regional inequality, inequality between urban and rural areas, inequality between groups, particularly ethnic minorities and the majority Kinh, and inequalities emerging from the discrimination of particular groups, such as people living with HIV, people with disabilities and urban migrants. Gender inequality was also a key cross-cutting theme, with many of the women consulted saying they lack equal opportunities, rights and household responsibilities compared to men. Achieving women's rights requires, among other things, eliminating gender-based inequalities and discrimination and promoting women's empowerment. Greater gender equality in education and employment will also make a significant contribution to human development and economic growth. Specific investment and institutional change will be required to address all types of inequality.



Addressing gender inequality emerged as key theme across many of the groups. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

- 2. Vulnerability and social inclusion:** The consultation participants expressed a sense of increasing vulnerability to different kinds of shocks and risks in Viet Nam. Some of these

relate to changes from the transition to a market economy, which is leaving vulnerable people behind. They also relate to economic processes and increasingly volatile labour markets, and the vulnerability associated with migration to urban areas. Rural people are also increasingly at risk from the effects of natural disasters. Growing vulnerability highlights the need for a truly effective system of social protection in the future, particularly for the poor and marginalised in society.

3. **Governance and participation:** Improving governance, tackling corruption and strengthening participation were all key themes to come out of the consultation process. There is, for instance, a need to develop modern institutions with a bureaucracy that is technically competent and able to promote social and economic development. Corruption also needs to be addressed. It is a major barrier to economic development and as many of the people consulted said, has a significant impact on their livelihoods as they routinely make out-of-pocket payments simply to receive the services they are entitled to. Finally, strengthening participation will ultimately address the challenges of marginalisation that many of the consultation groups face, and is critical in ensuring Viet Nam becomes an inclusive and more cohesive society in the future.

4. **A demographic shift:** Viet Nam's demographic profile is changing rapidly, enjoying both a 'demographic bonus' period, with a large young population, and a rapid 'ageing' process, with the number of older people increasing quickly. Significant challenges lie ahead in both creating productive and meaningful employment for young people, and in ensuring older people can access social services and enjoy a good quality of life. A further challenge comes with the increasing rural to urban migration and the rapid urbanisation that is taking place. Cities need good planning for infrastructure and social services, and the large numbers of migrants need to be accommodated and provided with safe and secure working conditions, as well as access to health and education services.

5. **Universal access to quality and affordable health care:** Having a healthy and well educated workforce is critical for Viet Nam's future development prospects and was a key issue highlighted during the consultations. However, the current health system is far from ideal. The relatively equitable system of the state planning era has been replaced by one that is more heavily reliant on user fees. Consequently, big gaps in coverage are starting to appear between different population groups and geographical areas. A two-tier system



Providing universal access to quality and affordable health care is critical for Viet Nam's future development prospects. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

is increasingly apparent, with those who can afford it opting out of the state system into private health care and the poor left behind with sub-standard services. Quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health, which are universal and affordable is a key aspiration for the future.

- 6. *Quality employment and a new growth model:*** A key aspiration for the future for all of the target groups consulted was for a stable job and income. Quality employment was seen as crucial for future security: that is employment which is long-term, well paid, secure and has social security benefits attached, such as workplace protection and a pension. Ensuring quality employment for the future is closely linked to the need for Viet Nam to develop a new growth model, one which promotes innovation and greater value added, which in turn will translate into better wages and working conditions. Transitioning out of the low technology, low value-added and low skilled production sectors that currently drive Viet Nam's economy is therefore a critical challenge for the future.
- 7. *Education and vocational training:*** A fundamental requirement in making this transition to a new growth model will be investing in human capital development, in terms of better education and vocational training. A middle-income country aspiring to high income status must invest in human resources. This means ensuring that the population is highly numerate and literate, that they have good technical skills relevant to the needs of industry and business, and that national universities equip top level graduates with the capacity to be innovators and leaders in high technology fields. Just as important is ensuring that all people, wherever they live in the country, also have the opportunity to enjoy a good quality education. For as many of the participants in the consultations observed, education is the key to a brighter future for all.
- 8. *A cleaner environment:*** Viet Nam's current growth model is heavily reliant upon polluting industries and the exploitation of natural resources. A more environmentally sustainable model is needed, one that is more knowledge intensive, and that makes use of more environmentally sustainable technologies. As Viet Nam develops and becomes richer, patterns of consumption must also change, and society must become more aware of the need for environmental sustainability and inter-generational equity. There is also a significant threat from climate change, with Viet Nam particularly susceptible to a sea level rise and threats such as desertification, drought and flooding. Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and appropriate social protection are therefore all pressing needs for the future.

1. Background: A Post-2015 Development Agenda

In 2010, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly met to review the progress being made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the global development targets set for 2015. This meeting requested the UN Secretary-General to make recommendations on how to advance the global development agenda after 2015. Since then, a high-level UN Task Team has started to coordinate a process for defining this Post-2015 Development Agenda, in close consultation with many different stakeholders.

In a June 2012 report to the Secretary-General, entitled 'Realizing the Future We Want for All', the UN Task Team observed that efforts to improve our material well-being are threatening to go beyond the ability of the natural resource base of the planet to support us. A radical change is needed in how we produce and consume. The report observed that inequalities and the struggle for increasingly scarce resources are behind many of the situations of conflict, violence and hunger the world is facing, and that these factors in turn are holding back human development and efforts to achieve sustainable development. The Task Team observed that:

"Business as usual thus cannot be an option and transformative change is needed. As the challenges are highly interdependent, a new, more holistic approach is needed to address them."

This statement sets a clear orientation for the Post-2015 Development Agenda globally, as well as a frame for Viet Nam in thinking about, and planning for, a post-2015 future. The Task Team challenges all of us to bring about '*transformative change towards inclusive, people-centred, sustainable development*'. This vision for the future rests on the core values of human rights, equality and sustainability – values widely shared in the world and embodied in the Constitution of Viet Nam and in Viet Nam's UN treaty commitments.



National workshop on the Post-2015 Consultation in Viet Nam in Ha Noi on 20th March 2013.
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In setting the orientation for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the UN Task Team reaffirmed the commitment of the UN, in principle, to a set of concrete end goals and targets, one of the perceived strengths of the MDGs. They also recognized that new goals for the post-2015 period need to be developed in a highly participatory and inclusive way. Consequently, Viet Nam was chosen as one of more than eighty countries in which national-level consultations would take place, in order to inform and provide input for the development of the global post-2015 agenda and goals. These national consultations have provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders in Viet Nam to influence the global discussion, and for the UN in Viet Nam to facilitate a wide and inclusive conversation on the kind of future people in Viet Nam want. At the same time, Viet Nam is also part of the global 'My World' survey, which aims to capture people's voices, priorities and views globally on a post-2015 future.

This report is the outcome of the consultation process in Viet Nam. It presents findings from consultations with a range of stakeholders undertaken between November 2012 and January 2013. The consultation process is described in detail in Section 3. In Section 2, the report briefly looks at Viet Nam's record in achieving the MDGs, reviewing where the goals have been achieved, where work still needs to be done and what Viet Nam's experience with the MDGs might mean for a global framework in the future. A summary of some of Viet Nam's main development challenges post-2015 is also presented in this section, taken from a UN Viet Nam background paper developed in advance of the consultation process. Section 4 presents findings from the consultations with the selected target groups. The first part of this section discusses the challenges and aspirations particular to each of the groups, while the second part highlights the common themes that emerged across the groups. Finally, in Section 5 the key messages emerging from Viet Nam's consultation process on a post-2015 future are summarised. According to the UN in Viet Nam, these are essential issues for Viet Nam to address post-2015, as well as issues that any new global development agenda needs to take into account, if it is to remain relevant for Viet Nam.



2. Viet Nam's Experience with the MDGs and Lessons for the Post-2015 Framework

2.1 Viet Nam's progress in meeting the MDGs

Viet Nam has made significant progress in achieving the MDGs. For MDG 1 on poverty reduction, for example, the poverty rate has been reduced from 58.1 percent in 1993 to an estimated 14.5 percent in 2008, a reduction of 75 percent. The food poverty rate was reduced by more than two-thirds, from 24.9 percent in 1993 to 6.9 percent in 2008. Other areas in which significant progress has been made include education, gender equality, child mortality (where the targets for both under-five mortality and infant mortality have already been achieved) and malaria control. Although maternal health has improved substantially, with the maternal mortality rate dropping from 233 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 69 per 100,000 live births in 2009, greater efforts are needed to reach the MDG 5 target of 58.3 per 100,000 live births. Significant work also needs to be done in the areas of combating HIV/AIDS and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, while overall poverty levels have dropped remarkably and improvements have been made in health and education, the pace of reduction has not been equal across regions and population groups. Ethnic minority groups in particular have fared less well, along with the landless and poor urban migrants, and there remain large gender inequalities amongst these groups and within the general population. There are also significant gaps between urban and rural residents and between regions, with the northern mountains, central highlands and central coastal regions all faring less well.



While Viet Nam has made significant progress to achieve the MDGs, there are still significant gaps between urban and rural areas and between regions. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

2.2 MDG shortcomings in capturing human development

An important question to consider for the post-2015 framework then, is how inequalities within countries can be better recognised and reflected in the new targets that are developed. For instance, on the issue of gender equality Viet Nam has been successful in increasing girls' participation in education at primary and secondary levels. The primary net enrolment rate is now 91.5 percent for girls and 92.3 percent for boys, a gap of less than one percent, and girls' lower and upper secondary net enrolment rates are higher than for boys. However, other areas of

gender equality which are not so easily captured in aggregate, quantitative terms, but which are no less important in understanding gender relations, are not represented in the current MDGs. For example, high rates of domestic and sexual violence are reported in Viet Nam, with a 2010 study by the General Statistics Office stating that nearly one in three women that have been married have suffered physical or sexual violence at the hands of their husband.

Furthermore, while Viet Nam has done well on the health-related MDGs, disparities and inequities are still glaring. The infant mortality rate and under-five mortality rate of the Hmong ethnic minority people is nearly three times higher than the national average. Reports in 2012 also showed that the maternal mortality rate was twice the national average in 225 difficult-to-reach districts and five times the national average in the 62 poorest districts. Another critical area that is not easily measured is the quality of governance, which studies consistently show to be a key concern for Vietnamese citizens and a key factor in shaping development outcomes. The challenge for the post-MDG framework is thus how to represent these important but less easily quantified issues in a way that ensures human development is measured holistically and in a meaningful way.



The quality of governance, a key concern for many Vietnamese citizens, needs to be reflected in the post-MDG framework. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

2.3 The future of the MDGs

Viet Nam recently became a lower middle-income country. This reflects the significant changes that have happened in the country over the past twenty-five years. Many people now enjoy a significant level of financial security and have sufficient household income for disposable consumption, far greater choices in how they spend their money and leisure time, and in what they can do to improve the prospects for their children's future. At the same time, deep and chronic poverty still exists, as the consultations have highlighted, and many people still live perilously close to the poverty line and are only a small step away from falling back into poverty.

In this regard, Viet Nam's situation reflects changes that have happened globally, with more than half of the world's poor, for example, now living in middle-income countries. An important question that Viet Nam's development poses for any post-2015 framework then, is whether the goals that are set should relate only to those still not able to (or at risk of not being able to) meet their basic needs, or whether they should reflect the wider concerns of those who have attained

a significant degree of security in society. It will also be important to consider whether the post-2015 framework should be nationally focused or focused upon the poorest, no matter where they live.

2.4 Key issues for Viet Nam's future development

As part of the UN in Viet Nam's process of contributing to the post-2015 debate and consultations, a background paper was developed on Viet Nam's key development challenges and opportunities for the post-2015 future. The paper was prepared prior to the start of the actual consultations and drew on a wide range of Government policy and strategic documents, UN analyses and reports, and key documents from other development partners. A list of the key documents that were consulted is included in Annex 2. The paper identified six development issues, which it argues are important for Viet Nam to address.

- 1. Development in a resource constrained world:** *Responding to the global challenge of climate change and ensuring an environmentally sustainable future.* This theme highlighted the vulnerability of Viet Nam to the effects of climate change and the consequent need to take steps to both adapt to the impacts of climate change, as well as tackle the root causes (mitigation). Addressing climate change extends to the way we produce and consume, and modifying our current behaviour is critical for future environmental sustainability. The Government of Viet Nam has a critical role to play in ensuring that Viet Nam plans and governs for an environmentally sustainable future.



Viet Nam is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and this is a central issue that needs to be addressed.
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- 2. A new model for economic growth:** *Developing an environmentally sustainable, inclusive and innovation-led model.* The second theme in the paper explored the limits of the current growth model, both in terms of production and economic efficiency, and the structural restraints the economy is facing. Improving the quality of growth is key, with human resource development at the centre of a vision for innovation-led growth which is more environmentally sustainable and more equitable in how opportunities are distributed, both across regions and between population groups.

3. The poverty challenge: *Tackling chronic poverty and addressing new forms of poverty, inequality and vulnerability.* Chronic, inter-generational poverty still exists in Viet Nam and is particularly prevalent amongst ethnic minority groups, who are much more likely to experience poverty than the majority Kinh ethnic group. Poverty is also more likely to affect people living in rural than urban areas, and not just in terms of income. Inequalities between ethnic minorities and Kinh, and between rural and urban areas, are reflected in all dimensions of human development. Top-down approaches to poverty reduction, which have been successful in the past, are no longer sufficient to address the chronic poverty that remains. Instead, more participatory approaches are needed, addressing social exclusion which keeps the chronically poor locked into the poverty cycle.

New forms of poverty are emerging, particularly urban poverty, and vulnerability to shocks, both economic and environmental, is increasing. Inequalities are also on the rise and pose a major threat to Viet Nam's future development. Inequality manifests itself in a number of ways – economically, socially and in terms of access to social services. One of the most prevalent forms of inequality in Viet Nam is that between men and women. Sustainable and inclusive development is not possible when gender inequalities persist and inequality in all its forms must be addressed.

4. Viet Nam's demographic shift: *Responding to a changing population structure and the need for a comprehensive social protection system.* Viet Nam is undergoing a unique demographic process. A large young population and a rapidly ageing population are providing both challenges and opportunities for the young and old, and society in general. For young people, the challenge is to find meaningful, productive employment. For older people, it is to secure adequate state care and social security in the face of the erosion of traditional household caring for older persons.



There is a need for a comprehensive social protection system for all Vietnamese citizens.
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These trends are compounded by rapid urbanisation, which is re-shaping the population distribution of the country and fuelling economic growth in urban centres, whilst simultaneously placing stress on the urban environment and urban management. These demographic changes highlight the need for a comprehensive social protection system for all.

- 5. Access to quality social services:** *Ensuring universal and equitable access for all to quality health and education services, including sexual and reproductive health, and tackling new public health challenges.* The universal and equitable provision of quality social services, particularly in health and education, is a pressing need for Viet Nam. The country has a legacy of relatively equitable and comprehensive social services but this is long gone, with market reforms substituting instead the principle of 'socialisation' or sharing the cost of public service provision. In practice, this has led to user fees and the emergence of a two-tier system, whereby the poor are unable to meet the charges now required for social services, and the rich increasingly opt out of the public system in favour of private treatment. Access to services is highly uneven, both geographically and between particular social groups, with ethnic minorities, urban migrants, the rural and urban poor all much less likely to enjoy adequate health and education services. New challenges in public health are also emerging, and tackling HIV/AIDS in particular is a pressing problem that demands urgent attention.
- 6. Governing for the future:** *Enhancing the quality of governance, promoting participation and the concept of an inclusive society.* The final theme identified in the background paper is that of improving governance, which underlies many of the other challenges identified. There is a need for public administration reform, for tackling corruption and for enhancing participation, accountability and the freedom of expression. All are critical prerequisites in building a modern, confident and progressive Viet Nam, in which the development potential of all citizens is realised and in which cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated.

3. The Consultation Process

The consultations in Viet Nam on the post-2015 agenda took place with women, men, young people and children from eight target groups. Each group was selected by the UN in Viet Nam on the basis that they do not usually have a voice in formal consultation processes.

The eight groups were:

- Ethnic minorities
- Older people
- People living with HIV/AIDS, including drug users
- People with disabilities
- The private sector
- Rural poor, including landless farmers
- Urban poor, including informal sector workers and migrants
- Young people

A consultation framework with general guiding questions was developed. The framework was intended to steer the consultation process and ensure the adoption of a common analytical approach and reporting format, which conformed to the overall requirements of the UN Development Group and the global consultation process. The framework included a gender mainstreaming strategy that stressed the importance of consulting both men and women, and capturing gendered perspectives across all of the groups and themes covered in the consultations.

The consultations started in November 2012 and ended in January 2013. Reporting and documentation was finalized during January and early February 2013. A workshop was then co-organized by the Government and UN in Viet Nam in March 2013 to discuss the findings from the consultations.



Q&A section opened to participants on the process of consultation with the eight focus groups at the National workshop on the Post-2015 Consultation in Viet Nam in Ha Noi on 20th March 2013. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Trương Việt Hùng

Table 1: Summary of the consultation process

Target group	Number of people consulted	Gender break-down	Location	Consultation method	Lead and involved UN agencies
Ethnic minorities	186	Men: 67% Women: 33%	Yen Bai, Dak Lak	Focus group discussions and interviews	<u>UNDP</u> , UNFPA, UN Women, UNESCO
Older people	29	Men: 50% Women: 50%	Hanoi, Hung Yen	Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews	<u>WHO</u> , UNFPA
People living with HIV/AIDS	130	Men: 50% Women: 50%	Ho Chi Minh City	Focus group discussions	<u>UNAIDS</u> , UN Women, UNODC
People with disabilities	193	Men: 53% Women: 47%	Hanoi, Thanh Hoa, Quang Binh	Focus group discussions	<u>UNICEF</u> , ILO
The private sector	98	Men: 45% Women: 55%	Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City	Consultation workshop	<u>UNIDO</u> , ILO
Rural poor	85	Men: 40% Women: 60%	Vinh Phuc, Quang Nam	Focus group discussions	<u>FAO</u>
Urban poor	179	Men: 35% Women: 65%	Da Nang, Hanoi	Focus group discussions and interviews	<u>UN-Habitat</u> , ILO
Young people	423	Women: 57% Men: 43%	Hanoi, Phu Tho, Bac Kan, Long An	Focus group discussions and survey	<u>UNFPA</u> , ILO, UNV, UNICEF

UN agencies were appointed for each target group and these agencies were responsible for organizing the consultations, selecting partners and participants and choosing the methods of consultation. Many partnered with civil society, academia and/or professional association networks to reach the target groups. Throughout the consultations, the questions that were included in the consultation framework, and which are detailed in Annex 1, were generally followed.

In addition, for each target group specific questions were developed, including questions to identify particular issues and aspirations of women and men. Each UN agency decided on the particular consultation methodology to be used, and experienced facilitators were employed to manage the process and document the findings.

The consultations took place in the major cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang. Events also took place in provinces with different levels of socio-economic development, such as Hung Yen, Vinh Phuc, Phu Tho, Quang Binh, Yen Bai and Dak Lak.

In total, over 1,320 people participated in the consultations. In most of the consultations, the group size varied between 6-10 people, a small enough size to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to speak. Women participated in both mixed groups and in female only groups.

4. Consultation Voices: Challenges and Aspirations

Each of the eight groups consulted had specific challenges and aspirations particular to them as a group. There were also a clear set of common challenges and aspirations that all the consultation participants strongly articulated. This section presents first the particular issues of each group, followed by the shared issues, common across all of the eight groups¹.

4.1 Specific Challenges and Aspirations

Ethnic minorities: The ethnic minority men, women and children consulted identified a number of specific challenges they face. Ethnic minorities often live in remote and mountainous areas and are much more likely to lack food and suffer from poverty than other people in the country, and this was confirmed by the consultation findings.



Low levels of access to basic social services is still a significant problem for ethnic minorities. © UN Viet Nam\2013

“We received support from the Government for production land and for mango, durian and cashew plant seeds. But they all died because the land quality is too poor and because we don’t have access to water supplies for the plantation. We don’t have enough food to eat. Even drinking water is not available and we have to buy it.”

(Head of Ea Pong village, Easin commune, Dak Lak province)

“It’s very difficult to travel to our village without a solid road. That’s why the women suffer a lot because they are weaker than men. They very often fall on the ground when they walk to the field in the rain. Children, particularly girls, sometimes drop out of school because it takes too long to walk to school.”

(Group discussion in Dau Cau village, Xa Ho commune, Yen Bai province)

Ethnic minorities identified their low level of access to basic social services as a significant problem. This is compounded by poor infrastructure and the insensitivity of those delivering

¹ It is important to remember that identities are complex and multi-faceted. Participants in the consultations might well identify themselves in a number of different ways and thus have a diverse range of wishes and concerns.

services towards the specific culture and customs of ethnic minority groups. The land they have for production is also more likely to be of poor quality than for farmers elsewhere, making agricultural diversification and income improvement more difficult, and problems of food insecurity much worse. Ethnic minorities are often isolated from the market and do not have access to alternative economic opportunities and employment through which they can diversify their incomes.

“Besides roads, electricity for lighting is also one of the constraints faced by our commune. Only with electricity can production and services be developed.”

(Commune official in a group discussion, Xa Ha commune, Yen Bai province)

“The surrounding communes have markets, so more people can speak the Kinh [Vietnamese] language than in this commune [Easin].” Question: “Why is that?” Answer: “Because sellers only speak the Kinh language, so buyers have to be able to speak [the language] to avoid being cheated, you know.”

(In-depth interview with one seller in Easin commune, Dak Lak province)

Gender inequality is a significant issue for ethnic minority women, who have a very high workload. They have to do tough agricultural work whilst also caring for the household. Ethnic minority women often have many children and report having to return to work only a few days after giving birth. They are often excluded from agricultural training sessions despite the fact that they are heavily responsible for the household’s agricultural production. They are also unable to attend community meetings as they cannot leave children or household tasks unattended. They lack fluency in Vietnamese, as compared to ethnic minority men, which worsens the problems.

“Outside school hours, I have to take care of my brother and sister, cut the grass for the cows, feed the pig, cook the meals, water the eggplants, do the weeding and many other tasks.”

(Female student from Easin school in a group discussion)

“Ede women suffer from a lot of hardships. When pregnant, we still have to work until we deliver, and three days after delivery we have to work again: fetching water, fetching firewood and working in the upland fields, and we have to carry our babies with us. It’s very hard but if we do not do it, no one will help.”

(Female in a group discussion, Easin commune, Dak Lak province)

Economic and social changes brought about by the change to a market economy are creating new dilemmas for ethnic minorities, as their testimony during the consultations shows. There are some reported cases of the commercialisation of land putting pressure on ethnic minorities’ traditional landholding systems, and new social and cultural influences changing the nature of community practices and interactions.

“I can’t read. I got the chance to attend agricultural extension training but I don’t know how to follow the guidance when I go back home.”

(Group discussion with Mong farmers, Xa Ho commune, Yen Bai province)



In expressing their aspirations for the future, ethnic minority girls and boys shared many of the desires for modernity and comfort that other children aspire to, whilst also appreciating their natural and cultural environment.

"I hope that I will study well so that my parents will let me attend college."

(A sixth grade girl student, Xa Ho boarding school, Yen Bai province)

"I want to change my life. I hope I will have a nice house where all my family members can live together happily."

(A fifth grade student, Easin school, Dak Lak province)

Older people: Older people in the consultations strongly wished for a social protection system that they can participate in. They also expressed a number of concerns about the effects of rapid social and economic changes on them, their families and society as a whole. This includes concerns about increasing responsibility for the care for young people that falls on the elderly, as mothers and fathers have to work long hours.



The effects of rapid social and economic change are a major concern for older people. © UN Viet Nam\Colorista\2013

"Previously, a family had several generations. Now, young people are busy with their work. Even if they stay in the same village as their older family members, they rarely visit them, except when the older people get sick."

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hung Yen province)

"We are old but we still have to work in the field to support the family, children and grandchildren."

(Group discussion in Dau Cau village, Xa Ho commune, Yen Bai province)

Older people were also concerned that state pensions remain low, compared to the rapid increase in prices, and that old people lack full health insurance coverage, with rising health care costs exceeding their ability to pay for them. In general, old men and women were critically concerned about the provision of health services and their ability to pay for these.

“A few years ago, I got a stomach ache. At a district hospital, I received a little medication under the health insurance. The serving attitude was not good either, so I went to Hospital 108 without any health insurance coverage. It was much more costly there, but we had to accept that solution as the health insurance was poor and provided too little medication which was not enough to cure my disease.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hung Yen province)



Older people are still keen to contribute to their communities and to society. © UN Viet Nam\Colorista\2013

Another concern for older people is what they see as a decline in the morality of young people, and a feeling of helplessness that they are often unable to help their families educate young people. This, they believe, is a critical role they still have to play. Older people conveyed a strong wish to be able to make a contribution to the community and to society generally.

“Social problems are common now, especially drug use. Children and young people are lazy in schools, hang around and steal. We are worried about them and don’t want our children to engage in such things....”

(Focus group discussion in Hung Yen province)

Among older people in rural areas, there was a concern about the increase in the level of contributions they are expected to make to social events, weddings and funerals in particular, which they feel is becoming too heavy.

“Traditions are sometimes financially heavy. Going to a party means paying money. Those who do not have money must borrow from others to go to such parties, and thus become worried and afraid of the parties.”

(Focus group discussion in Hung Yen province)

Generally speaking, older people expressed a wish to be able to keep a close connection with their children and family networks, but at the same time to be able to live independently. They expressed a wish to be able to participate in, and enjoy, their own social activities with other older people, and highlighted a lack of facilities and spaces set aside for them.

“There was no place for older people to join their association activities. We had to borrow a pagoda to do such things. We asked the village head if we could use it, but if he did not agree we would have to accept his decision. We did not have any activities due to the shortage of facilities. Occasionally we go on a trip. For example, the Women’s Union visited Bai Dinh pagoda in Trang An but it was several years ago.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hung Yen province)

Both elderly women and men expressed similar views on the importance of strong family relationships, a good community life, good health and available and affordable health services. However, more women than men expressed their wish to access social and recreational activities and to reduce their household responsibilities so that they have more free time, indicating how limited their current opportunities are and the heavier household responsibilities of women.

People living with HIV/AIDS: Stigma and discrimination were the widespread themes running through the consultations with people living with HIV/AIDS and drug users. Stigmatising practices are prevalent at all levels, from within the family, amongst state employees and service providers and in society in general. For example, people living with HIV report discriminatory attitudes among health service providers, and identify their lack of information regarding their legal rights as a problem.



Stigma and discrimination are identified as major problems facing those living with HIV/AIDS.
© UN Viet Nam\2013

People living with HIV/AIDS also face barriers in accessing other public services and in getting access to vocational training opportunities. They are often asked to pay an “employment fee” to get jobs or to provide supporting documents such as certificates of being healthy or “well-behaved”. People living with HIV/AIDS can rarely afford to pay these fees or to get the personal documents needed from the police or mass organizations. They also face difficulties in getting health insurance as their income is often unstable and they are not able to meet the premium payments.

Stigmatising and discriminatory practices in turn lead to low self-esteem and self-stigmatising behaviour among people living with HIV/AIDS, and this was a common theme in the consultations. This keeps them away from health services and also means they are not able to follow drug treatment regimes.

In addition, people who use drugs raised their concerns about the current way that drug use is treated, which results in high relapse rates. National authorities still view drug use as a “social evil”, and so many drug users consider the current treatment programmes as methods of punishment, rather than actual health treatment.

“At the moment, after detoxification, relapses happen again and again – this treatment is superfluous.”

(Participant in a focus group discussion with drug users, Ho Chi Minh City)

“Using drugs is thought of in conjunction with a social evil. Mention drug users and they [people] think of robbers, thieves, bad people. But their perception is wrong. This is a great barrier for drug users to integrate into community and quit using drugs.”

(Male participant at a focus group discussion with drug users, Ho Chi Minh City)

Women reported facing unequal treatment as drug users compared to men, and a loss of control of their reproductive rights because of their HIV status. Women also mentioned that they are advised by health workers to not have children, or to abort children, rather than being advised and coached in how to have a safe pregnancy and deliver an HIV-negative child. In addition, women living with HIV/AIDS expressed their wish to have happy families and a family environment that is supportive and where they are respected.

People living with HIV wished for a future in which health service providers are more friendly and supportive, and with policies and practices that protect their confidentiality. People who inject drugs also called for effective and affordable drug-dependence treatment for everyone in need. Finally, people living with HIV/AIDS mentioned the need for campaigns that build employers’ knowledge about HIV issues and that promote a positive image of people living with HIV, including their ability to work efficiently.

People with disabilities: A theme that comes out clearly from the consultations with people with disabilities is the stigmatisation they face in many aspects of their lives, and their desire to be treated equally and with respect in society.



People with disabilities want to be treated the same as everyone else. © UN Viet Nam\2013

International legal frameworks have had a positive effect on people with disabilities, and their rights are clearly set out in law in Viet Nam. However, there is still a widespread perception that the laws cannot be fully implemented. For example, people with disabilities receive limited information on vocational training opportunities and are generally considered unemployable.

A further aspect of stigmatisation that was highlighted by women with disabilities is the widespread belief that they are unable to have families and become mothers. Furthermore, women with disabilities who are married complained of receiving little support within the household from their husbands. The consultations also highlighted how vulnerable women with disabilities are to sexual abuse.

During the consultations, people with disabilities mentioned that they receive little support from the state in terms of tax exemption and encountered significant difficulties in accessing state benefits. The consultations also highlighted how public transportation is largely inaccessible to people with disabilities, and that accessibility to public places and to public services remains poor, even in the large cities of Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi. This impacts upon disabled men, women and children's sense of independence. The private sector too could do more, for example in terms of access to ATM machines or internet services for the blind.

"My wish is to be able to live independently, and not depend on family members and friends. My biggest difficulty is not to have any means of transportation and lack of access to public buildings. This creates barriers to my study. Therefore, I have to depend on my own family."

(College student from Dong Thap University)

A common wish amongst children with disabilities in particular, was that they be able to study at school with able-bodied children and not be stigmatised as being different. They also wished for a stable job and income in the future and a happy family life.

The private sector: The private sector consultations focused on four key topics: Viet Nam's business sector in the global economy and global value chains; new economic growth models; ensuring a qualified workforce; and issues of representation, policy advocacy and the regulatory environment for businesses in Viet Nam.



The private sector called for stronger recognition of their contribution to socio-economic development.
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Consultation participants highlighted a wide range of issues that they felt need to be addressed. This includes deeper integration into global value chains, especially higher value-added and more technology-intensive segments, and improved capacity to follow international standards. They also identified a need for awareness raising on treaty agreements to better prepare businesses for both opportunities and risks; greater involvement of the private sector in treaty negotiations; and the need for businesses to develop their own roadmaps on environmental compliance. In addition, they called for more technological and financial support for environmental protection.

"Small and medium-sized enterprises are vulnerable to trade commitments and technical barriers. They cannot apply new technology immediately to adapt to new standards or new technical requirements because of an insufficiency of finance and technological capacity."

(Group discussion in Hanoi)

Better networking was identified as a critical need to facilitate a more joined-up approach to value chains, with a stronger role for business associations and industry clusters. The non-transparent business environment was identified as a major challenge, along with over-regulation by Government and the unpredictability of policy changes. Participants called for better information, transparency and equity in the treatment of enterprises by Government, for example in enforcing compliance with regulations.

"On the one hand, enterprises do not have enough professional knowledge to comply with environmental regulations. On the other hand, ambiguous and overlapping regulations also result in a low compliance rate."

(Group discussion in Ho Chi Minh City)

The private sector representatives highlighted the need for more flexible, technical vocational training to better prepare the workforce for the needs of industry; more soft-skills development; and strengthened linkages between training institutions and the business community.

“Enterprises have to compete at regional and global level. The labour force therefore also has to be competitive at the ASEAN level, which requires not only technical skills but also soft skills, such as English, computer skills and so on.”

(Group discussion in Ho Chi Minh City)

The consultations identified the need for a far greater role for the private sector in policy making and a stronger recognition of the private sector’s role in socio-economic development, along with the need for many different stakeholders to be part of promoting sustainable development.

In the consultations, women reported facing more challenges due to discrimination in job training or in seeking promotion. Women also wanted to see new business models that are more inclusive in terms of involving people in rural areas, delivering services to the poor and providing education to poor and rural people.

Rural poor: Although the rural poor are a very diverse group, the consultations highlighted a number of shared challenges and aspirations. Participants in the consultations identified the lack of off-farm employment opportunities as a critical reason for why they cannot improve their situation, and this leaves them with few job options other than urban migration. For many women, however, urban migration is not possible as they have family and care responsibilities in the household.



For many a lack of access to financial capital and employment opportunities are major barriers to moving out of rural poverty. © UN Viet Nam\2013

Those consulted also called for a clear and fair system of land allocation and fairer and more transparent methods to determine compensation for land losses.

The rural poor would like to see better rural infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, access to clean water and schools, along with local economic development that creates local jobs. Both

women and men shared their concerns about unstable jobs and income, the unavailability of good primary health care and check-up services, poor infrastructure and the lack of support to improve agricultural techniques.

Poor farmers in particular said they would like more stable market prices and better market information, so that they can receive higher prices for their goods. A lack of access to, or availability of, financial capital was highlighted by all as being an important barrier to moving out of poverty.

Farmers were also concerned about incidences of cancer, which they felt had recently increased in rural areas, and which they believed to result from the use of chemicals in agricultural production and a polluted environment. They wished to see improved services for early detection of cancer, especially breast and cervical cancer, at commune and district health centres, so that poor female farmers would be able to have regular and inexpensive check-ups.

“How can women in remote areas, like us, access services to detect breast and cervical cancer at an early stage?”

(Representative of the commune Women’s Union, Bo Ly commune, Vinh Phuc province)

The urban poor: Urban poor people raised a number of particular challenges that they face. They highlighted a lack of education as being at the root of many of their problems, and were particularly concerned about their children’s education. Poor urban migrants also face barriers in getting their children into schools, as they lack the appropriate residency categorisation, and are therefore excluded from using state services in their new areas of residency.

Poor quality housing and insecurity of land tenure were also major issues faced by the urban poor. They frequently live in very poor quality housing and, even when they build houses, their tenure is often very insecure. They can be displaced at short notice and are often not properly compensated for their losses. Urban poor people therefore live a very insecure life and are unable to make long-term plans.

“My only dream is to have money to repair my house, because we all suffer badly when heavy rain comes with strong wind. The roof is leaking and instead of having a temporary cover put up, inside the house we are all soaked to our bones.”

(Female, Phuc Tan ward, Hanoi)

A lack of capital was seen as an important reason why the urban poor cannot move out of poverty. They are often involved in low-paid, insecure work that can be dangerous and exhausting, with no social safety net to protect them in the case of an accident or loss of their jobs. Urban poor men and women called for a safer working environment, with regulations that are enforced by law. They also said they would like to see more support from businesses and social organisations for their rights.

"I wish my daughters had more stable jobs, and my second daughter was well-trained and able to receive a loan to run a small hair salon."

(Female, Thanh Khe Tay ward, Da Nang)

The urban poor recognise that because of all of these challenges, they are locked into a chronic cycle of poverty which it is very hard to break out of. They have little self-worth and lack confidence, which exacerbates these problems and makes breaking the poverty cycle even harder.

"I just live for today and take care of my children. I may die tomorrow and that is the end."

(Male, Hoa Hiep Bac ward, Da Nang)

Furthermore, the consultations identified important gender issues that need to be addressed in the urban context. These include domestic violence, sexual harassment at work and the unequal sharing of household and care responsibilities between women and men.

The need for social protection policies and programmes for the poorest families was also mentioned by all participants, especially by single heads of households, whether male or female. Those who have a spouse in poor health or those whose spouse has passed away highlighted how they have a particularly difficult time to improve their lives, as they lack the household labour to be able to generate family income.

For migrant workers, the main challenge faced by both men and women was unstable living and working conditions. For example, female live-in domestic workers are often exploited, discriminated against, sexually harassed, have unsafe working conditions and sometimes do not get their salary. They also have to go back to their home region to receive medical treatment when they get sick, because they do not have a residency categorisation that enables them to access social services.

Young people: Young people were particularly concerned about the need for a good education, better and more jobs for youth, quality health care, the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, better youth and child protection and a safe and clean environment. Across these themes, young people expressed a demand for social equity, gender equality and equal rights without any discrimination. The desire for a fair society and the importance of eliminating corruption was also repeatedly raised.

Young people were concerned about their future and their ability to find a job and secure an income that will provide security for themselves and their families. They highlighted the importance of equal and fair access to job opportunities, and were aware that more jobs need to be created to meet the demands of a growing population of young graduates. They expressed a wish for young people to be given more help in finding good jobs.

“After I graduate, where I work is not important but I want a job with a fair salary and which is good for my life.”

(Male student, 24 years old, Yen Bai province)

Another emerging theme was the strong wish of young people to be listened to and respected, and to have more opportunities to voice their opinions about important matters and to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

“I wish that ethnic minority children and young people in particular will have a stronger voice in the future. I look forward to the days when we are not only informed but also consulted on issues that matter to us and are related to us.”

(Male student, 16 years old, Bac Can province)

Young people highlighted several issues around education: the need for a good education system to prepare them well for the future, but also a curriculum that teaches them essential life skills, as the current curriculum is considered outdated. For example, they called for more communication and discussion on safe sex practices. The consultations also highlighted young people’s awareness of the problems caused by drugs, and their wish for better education on the danger of drugs as well as protection from drugs.

“Just like many other students, the issue I care most about is health because in my opinion, you can do everything with a good health. Based on what my friends and I perceive [about] sex education and other domains of health, I believe that young Vietnamese people are lacking information in these fields. I hope that in the future we will receive better education, enabling us to stay healthy and to reach qualified health services.”

(Male student, 23 years old, Hanoi)

Young people expressed their concerns about inequality in access to health care services and information, including sexual and reproductive health. The quality of health care is not good enough. According to young people for instance, there is a lack of knowledge about hygiene and health issues in remote areas. In families and schools, parents and teachers are reluctant to talk about sexuality and reproductive health. The current curriculum does not cover soft skills and sexual health education, yet young people continue to have unsafe sexual relations. Young people also felt that many people are not fully aware of sexual and reproductive health and the rights of young people and teenagers, and that many adults criticize and blame young people for having sexual relations, becoming pregnant, having abortions or giving birth before marriage.

“Young people avoid using contraceptive measures or measures to prevent infections while having sexual relations. Young people are not provided with opportunities [...] so that they can understand and respect the right to have access to and to use safe and friendly reproductive and sexual health care services.”

(Female, 18 years old, Ha Noi)



Another theme highlighted was the enormous pressure young girls and boys face to succeed in school. They called for greater protection from school violence and bullying, which was considered a widespread problem, and more action against cheating at school.

"I am looking forward to a future when school violence no longer exists. I wish my school mates and students in general would be more friendly to one another."

(Male student, 14 years old, Long An province)

Young people saw sexual abuse and domestic violence as important problems that need to be tackled, and felt that they needed better protection from these issues. They were also acutely aware of gender inequality and wanted urgent action to address it.

"I believe that gender equality is still a major issue for Viet Nam to address in the near future. I hope for a future in which girls and boys, men and women, are treated equally on all bases, at home and in the society."

(Female student, 12 years old, Hanoi)

Young people demonstrated a strong concern about the impact of growing inequalities within the country, and the plight of those people who may be left behind, such as ethnic minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities.

"I hope in the future children in mountainous areas, old people without families and the poor will have more clothes to wear, more food to eat and better health care. I hope for more attention from society to the disadvantaged."

(Female student, 16 years old, Hanoi)

Finally, young people demonstrated an understanding of other, wider challenges and the need to tackle big issues, such as climate change and environmental degradation. They also expressed concern about the consequences of a growing population.

"I am most concerned with the increasing exploitation of Mother Nature and the living environment. Deforestation and over-utilization of our natural resources have left us with eroded agricultural soil, floods and more natural disasters. My hope for the future is that we all join hands in protecting our environment by growing trees, reducing the consumption of energy and minimizing our discharge of waste." (Female student, 14 years old, Long An province)

4.2 Common Challenges and Aspirations across the Target Groups

Several common challenges and aspirations also emerged across all of the eight target groups.

A more equal society: Inequality was a widespread and cross-cutting theme amongst all of the groups consulted. Many people expressed a wish to see less poor people in Viet Nam; less of a gap between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural areas; more equal access to social services and no gender inequality in either the public sphere or in the household. People's voice in decision-making was also regarded as highly unequal. All of the target groups were acutely aware of the effects of inequality, as most are members of communities that are regularly disadvantaged, such as ethnic minorities, people living with HIV, people with disabilities and the urban poor.

"I want a world with brighter colours than the current world. That means a world without poverty, gap between the poor and the rich, and an environment that is not polluted. Everyone can have access to clean water, and young people in mountainous areas receive more investment."

(Female student, 20 years old, Hanoi)

Quality employment, stable jobs and income: No matter whom the target group was, or whether men or women were consulted, one of the most important challenges people identified was a lack of income. Those consulted almost universally aspired to having a stable job and quality terms of employment, meaning a job that is well paid and secure in the long term. A steady job close to home with a decent income was identified as the key to a stable and secure future. Steady employment and a higher income were also seen to be critical in ensuring people had a sense of self-respect and the confidence to participate fully in society.



A steady job close to home, with a decent income, was seen by many as the key to a stable and secure future. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

Quality education and appropriate vocational training: Throughout the consultations, the education system was widely described as being inadequate, with poor quality teaching, poor school infrastructure and widespread problems of bullying and cheating. The school curriculum was seen as outdated and not well suited for preparing students for life or finding employment. It was also considered particularly unsuitable for many ethnic minority groups.

The vocational training system was also seen as problematic. Vocational training institutions were described as outdated and not connected to the needs of modern industry and business. Consequently, students graduate but are not well prepared to find quality employment. Education on life skills and sexuality was seen as lacking, and better links with industry needed to ensure vocational training is more useful and relevant.

“Employers should go to universities and colleges, co-operate with the schools to work out a useful curriculum, interview students and employ them.”

(Male student, 20 years old, Phu Tho province)

Accessibility to vocational training was also identified as a challenge, with many of the groups consulted, such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and the urban poor, finding it very difficult to get enrolled in vocational training institutes. For all of the groups consulted, education was seen as key to the long-term improvement of their household prospects and people universally wished to see a quality education system for their children in the future.

Quality and affordable health care that meets the needs of all: Having a higher standard of health care, including sexual and reproductive health, was also identified as a critical need. Participants in the consultations all wished to have a health care system that meets the needs of all population groups and is of a sufficiently high quality that they can be sure of getting good treatment. They also wanted an equitable health care system that provides a similar level of service quality to all, no matter where they live, their level of income or who they are. The affordability of health care was a critical concern for the elderly, whilst for those facing problems of stigma and discrimination, such as people living with HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities, issues of equal treatment were most important.

“Policy makers need to have more measures to provide health care services of better quality to ethnic minority populations and the most marginalized. I expect a future in which ethnic minorities and poor people have the same access to health services like the majority.”

(Female student, 15 years old, Bac Can province)

Effective and comprehensive social protection: The consultations also highlighted people's growing sense of vulnerability to all kinds of shocks and risks. This partly comes from an awareness of the changes brought about by Viet Nam's transition to a market economy, with employment more insecure and social services more reliant on user fees. It also reflects an awareness that people lack the security of cradle-to-grave safety nets that they enjoyed in the past. Consequently, those consulted expressed their wish to have a comprehensive social protection system to ensure against economic shocks and life-cycle changes, such as periods of unemployment, maternity and old age. Other risks identified were the effects of the global economic crisis and subsequent economic slow-down in Viet Nam, which affected many of the women and men who participated in the consultations, including urban and informal sector workers. Farmers and ethnic minorities also found that there were risks associated with climate change and natural disasters.





Many of those consulted wanted a social protection system that can protect them against economic shocks and periods of change, such as during unemployment, maternity and old age. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

Responsive public services and a stronger public service culture: For many of the people consulted, there was a strong desire to see public services that meet the needs of people much more closely, as well as a stronger public service culture. This is particularly the case for many ethnic minority groups, who must interact with teachers and health workers who have little understanding of their customs and cultures, and who do not speak ethnic minority languages. Across all of the groups, women clearly suffer more from poor and insufficient services, as the burden of household care falls heavily upon them. In regard to health services for older people, the anecdotes below illustrate the lack of communication and information many people face:

“We just got the medication but did not know which one was which and used for what disease. We did not know how good it was either. We just paid what we were asked for.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hung Yen province)

“We got few regular check-ups. They just gave us the medication without explaining what it was.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hung Yen province)

People from the consulted target groups were much more vulnerable to this kind of poor treatment, being those with the lowest status and highest level of dependence on the system. They therefore feel this poor treatment and lack of information intensely. Participants also expressed a wish to see a less bureaucratic culture of public service, which is more responsive and appreciative of their needs.

Tackling corruption and increasing transparency: All of the participants from the eight target groups identified corruption and a lack of transparency as significant challenges in their lives. Corruption affects their ability to access state services because it adds a cost to the price of getting essential services, particularly in health and education. The widespread nature of corruption and the disillusionment it spreads is illustrated in the following quotes:

“It is very hard to get rid of the bribing as it prevails from the central level. I think beyond 2015, the quality of health care might be better but the bribing would be no different.”

(Woman, 70 years old, Hung Yen province)

“Bribing the doctors was the must without explanation.”

(Man, 73 years old, Pho Hue ward’s elderly association, Hanoi)

“Without an envelope [money] for health care staff, it took forever to wait for a consultation. Doctors were not “as compassionate as mothers²” as they were expected to be by people. They just waited to cut us out [get money out of the patients’ pockets].”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hanoi)

“Some are good, some are not. But in general, with bribing, they would receive better care. Otherwise, they would receive superficial services.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hanoi)

“The current minister even said no to bribing, but in reality, everyone does it. No bribing means no good quality. It is the reality.”

(Focus group discussion with older people in Hanoi)

Increasing people’s voice in decision-making processes: A lack of voice in decision-making processes was also a common theme running through the consultations. All of the groups highlighted their sense of powerlessness in being unable to actively take part in making important decisions that affect their lives. Many of them stressed that they would appreciate more opportunities to voice their opinions and to be part of decision- and policy-making processes.



Both men and women stressed that they would like to see more opportunities to be part of decision- and policy-making processes. © UN Viet Nam\2013

Tackling stigmatisation and discrimination: Another common thread was the discrimination and stigmatisation that many people face on a regular basis. This takes institutional forms, from public officials and other people in authority, but also includes problems of stigma and discrimination within the household. Public perceptions, images and representations of groups in the media also contribute to stigma and can lead to these groups having low self-esteem. A

² According to a Vietnamese proverb: “Doctors are as compassionate as mothers”.

common wish among the participants was therefore that they be respected by society in the same ways as other people, and that their potential to contribute as useful members of society be recognised.

A cleaner environment: Concerns about the state of the environment were raised all the way through the consultation process. People in rural areas and farmers noted the significant impacts of environmental degradation on their living environments and livelihoods, whilst people in urban areas were concerned about pollution and the impact that increasing urbanisation is having on cities and the places they live. Young people were most aware of the threat that climate change poses for Viet Nam. The private sector called for better policies to improve technological innovation to promote resource and energy efficiency, and more awareness raising activities to change the attitudes and behaviour of people towards sustainable production and consumption.

“In the new world, everyone and every social class will have a new way of thinking, which is towards sustainable development. Education will provide the practical knowledge and a strong background for everyone. The Government will have a strategy for sustainable development and a clean environment.”

(Male student, 24 years old, Hanoi)



5. Key Messages on a Post-2015 Future in Viet Nam

This final section of the report summarises the key messages emerging from Viet Nam's consultation process on a post-2015 future. These are based on the voices and information from the target group consultations, as well as a comprehensive review of research and analytical documents relating to Viet Nam's current and future development challenges³. The eight key messages are, according to the UN in Viet Nam, essential issues for Viet Nam to address post-2015, as well as issues that any new global development agenda needs to take into account, if it is to remain relevant for Viet Nam.

5.1 Equality, including gender equality

The issue of equality was raised by all the target groups in the consultations, and it cuts across all the other themes highlighted in this report. Addressing inequality is perhaps the biggest challenge and concern identified for the post-2015 period in Viet Nam. There are many different dimensions to inequality in Viet Nam today. The growth model over the past two decades has been very uneven. Economic growth has been centred in the Red River Delta region, the southeast around Ho Chi Minh City, and in a few other urban areas like Hai Phong and Da Nang. Conditions in rural areas in the northern mountains, central highlands and the remote Mekong Delta are very different: these areas are often poorly connected to the rest of the country, with poor communications and infrastructure, and only a basic level of state services. Consequently, the people who live in these areas have far lower living standards and lower levels of human development.



Equality, or the lack thereof, was raised by all eight target groups and many of those consulted mentioned significant inequality in accessing social services. © UN Viet Nam\2013

Even within the rural population there are big inequality gaps: ethnic minorities in particular are far poorer, less well educated and less healthy than their Kinh neighbours, and face inequality in accessing social services.

³ A list of the key documents used in the review is included as Annex 2.

Inequality also results from discrimination and stigmatisation, with some people consequently stuck on the margins of society. The consultations showed how this is the case with many of the target groups: ethnic minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities and poor urban migrants. They all reported problems in how they are treated in society and by state officials, and mentioned significant inequality in getting access to social services.

Promoting equality of opportunities, rights and responsibilities between women and men is another important dimension to addressing inequality. Viet Nam has relatively good statistics for gender equality overall, but women are still chronically under-represented in positions of authority in both the public and private sectors, and in political positions. Increased education levels for women have not translated into gender equality in labour markets, where more women are involved in vulnerable employment than men and are not able to work in all the same jobs as men. At the household level too, there is an unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and this continues to put a heavy burden on women to balance family and work.

Vietnamese women struggle against long traditions of subordination, lack decision-making authority in the household, and girl children's needs (in education and health particularly) are often viewed as not being as important as boys. There is a trend towards favouring male children, which can be seen in the unbalanced sex-ratio at birth, and recent population change surveys show a growing number of male over female births. Women's names continue to be absent from land use certificates, despite legal guarantees of equality. Reported levels of domestic violence are also very high and require urgent action, not just through laws and policing, but also through changes in attitude amongst men. Men and boys need to be actively involved in preventing gender-based violence.

The achievement of women's rights also requires the elimination of gender-based inequalities and discrimination and the promotion of women's empowerment. Greater gender equality in education and employment will make a significant contribution to human development and economic growth, and women's leadership contributes to inclusive, transparent and democratic governance. A specific investment and institutional change is therefore needed to address all forms of inequality.

5.2 Vulnerability and social inclusion

Along with growing inequality, vulnerability to different kinds of shocks and risks is an increasing challenge for people in Viet Nam. This is particularly the case for the poor and marginalised. Vulnerability takes many forms. It may be vulnerability to changes in society and family life for particular groups, like the elderly or disabled, which can result from changes in the world of work that impact upon family networks and the time available for care. New forms of vulnerability and risk also come about from shifts in the market economy. For example, the prices for farming inputs and outputs are increasingly volatile. Urban migrants and informal sector workers are vulnerable to global economic downturns, as they lack any kind of employment security or social protection. Both poor urban and rural consumers are also vulnerable to spikes in the cost of living as basic commodity prices increase. Another kind of vulnerability comes from the effects of extreme weather events. As was highlighted in the consultations, these impact the rural poor particularly, as they often live in marginal areas most at risk from flooding, drought, landslides and other natural disasters. They also lack the assets and safety nets to be able to withstand or quickly bounce back from such catastrophic events.



Many people were concerned about their increasing vulnerability, such as the rural poor who often suffer the most from extreme weather events. © Truong Viet Hung\2010

The consultations took place with groups of people who are often marginalised in society. Greater social inclusion was therefore a critical cross-cutting theme for most: including ethnic minorities, some older people (particularly poor older persons), people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, the rural poor, urban migrants and the urban poor. All suffer from being stigmatised and discriminated against by state officials providing services and mainstream society. Exclusion from mainstream society and everyday life, both socially and economically, reinforces vulnerability and locks marginalised people into cycles of continuing stigma and deprivation. The key to overcoming social exclusion, highlighted throughout the consultations, in the national workshop and the review of key literature, is greater participation. A strong message for the post-2015 era is therefore that enhanced participation is key to ensuring a dynamic, prosperous and stable Viet Nam.

5.3 Governance and participation

As we have seen, improving the quality of governance and strengthening participation in decision-making processes was highlighted as a critical priority for the post-2015 period by those consulted. It is also an important theme in the literature on Viet Nam's development challenges.

In terms of enhanced governance, the need to reform public institutions and carry out public administration reform is critical. Strong institutions are needed that are relevant to economic and social development needs, with a motivated bureaucracy that has the skills for evidence-based policy making. Tackling corruption among state officials is also critical for the future. Corruption is a major barrier to economic development as it misuses scarce resources and erodes the confidence of both foreign and domestic investors. It also has a significant impact upon citizens who, as the participants in the consultations said, routinely make out-of-pocket payments to public servants, simply to receive the state services they are entitled to. This kind of petty corruption, and larger-scale corruption involving the misuse of public funds and abuse of authority, erodes confidence in public servants and threatens social stability. It also undermines people's confidence in, and commitment to, national development goals.



Corruption is a major barrier to economic development and threatens social stability.
© Truong Viet Hung\2013

Enhancing participation and freedom of expression are important as Viet Nam's democracy has always relied heavily upon the strong bond between the people and the Party. Strengthening women's representation in leadership and management positions, for example, is critical in order to gradually reduce the gender gap in politics and the public sphere. Providing further mechanisms for citizens to actively participate in society and to influence decisions that are made on their behalf will strengthen the bond between them and decision makers, thereby enhancing the quality of governance. Enabling people to freely express their opinions in public spaces, the print media and cyberspace is also critical in ensuring a healthy and democratic society. The popularity of social media and the internet is growing rapidly in Viet Nam, particularly among young people, and this should be viewed as an opportunity for strengthening the quality of governance, rather than a threat.

Another critical aspect of enhancing governance is promoting the concept of an inclusive and diverse society. Viet Nam has made significant strides over the past twenty-five years to improve material conditions and raise average incomes. As a result, Viet Nam today is a more prosperous and diverse country and civil society is flourishing. These trends will continue, particularly as Viet Nam continues to integrate regionally and globally. It is therefore important to build an inclusive society that recognizes, respects and celebrates diversity in all its forms. Women as well as men, ethnic minorities, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual communities, people with disabilities, rural migrants – all have a contribution to make to society and should feel valued. This was also a strong message coming from the many consultation events. The notion of an inclusive society has at its heart a belief in the importance of culture and cultural diversity as a key development driver. Championing and celebrating cultural diversity should thus form the basis for future efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in Viet Nam in the post-2015 era.

5.4 A demographic shift

Viet Nam's demographic profile is changing rapidly as a result of three emerging trends: fertility rates (the number of children that women have) are decreasing slightly below the replacement rate; mortality (death) rates are also decreasing; and life expectancy is increasing. As a result, Viet Nam is experiencing a unique situation where there is both a 'demographic bonus' period, with a large number of young people, and a fast 'ageing' phase, where the number of older people is also increasing.



Viet Nam's demographic profile is changing rapidly, with a large number of young people and an increasing number of older people. © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

This situation is creating both opportunities and challenges for young and older people. Viet Nam will need to make the most of the large working age population by creating decent and meaningful work for young people, which in turn will contribute to state revenues and help to provide young people with a good education, health care and a secure livelihood. As the consultations showed this is what they aspire to.

At the same time, there is a pressing need to provide comprehensively for those older people who are no longer able to work, through developing an effective and comprehensive social security system, and providing quality state services and pensions which enable older persons to live a decent and comfortable life. Another changing aspect of Vietnamese society is that fewer older people live with their children in a traditional inter-generational household. Providing care for older persons will therefore increasingly fall on the state, particularly in rural areas, where most older people live.

Increasing migration and rapid urbanization is a further aspect of Viet Nam's demographic shift. The 2009 census shows that the majority of internal migrants are young and increasingly female. They move mainly for economic reasons. The large numbers of migrants to Viet Nam's growing cities is causing strains, both in terms of infrastructure and social services. Urban migrants play a critical role in industry and service sectors, but are often marginalized in urban life and live and work in poor conditions, with no official recognition, workplace protection or access to state services. Rural-urban migration is also resulting in more 'skip-generation' households, where elderly people are left to care for the children of urban migrants. This is a significant care burden for older people, especially elderly women. A strong message for post-2015 is then that development goals must respond to the demographic shift that Viet Nam faces.

5.5 Universal access to quality and affordable health care

Having a healthy and well-educated population and workforce is critical for Viet Nam to further improve human development. Universal access to good quality and affordable education and health care, including sexual and reproductive health, were also critical aspirations for all the women, men, young people and children consulted. As the consultations showed however, this is currently not the case, with wide gaps apparent in how essential services are provided to different population groups and areas.

Traditionally, access to health services in Viet Nam has been relatively broad-based and equitable, in comparison to other countries with similar GDP per capita levels. This is a legacy of the central planning era, when there was a strong political commitment to equity and universal coverage. With the transition to a market economy, this commitment has steadily declined and been replaced by a sharing of the responsibility for state services, which has resulted in more people paying for these. These services also often require additional payments to doctors and administrators. Consequently, large gaps in access to social services have opened up, as well as in human development outcomes: poorer people are less healthy and pay a larger average share of their incomes for health. Inequality of access is most apparent between rural and urban areas, and between Kinh people and some ethnic minority groups.



Access to good quality health care is not even across the country. Poorer people are less healthy and pay a larger share of their incomes for health.” © UN Viet Nam\2013\Aiden Dockery

In addition, many people who can afford to are opting out of the state system by paying to be treated privately by doctors. This growing private sector is expensive and thus out of reach to the poor. The result is a two-tier health system, which increases inequality and is ultimately unsustainable. Providing quality public health services for all must be a critical area of investment in the future.

Closely related to providing quality public health services is the need for a comprehensive social protection system in Viet Nam. This means providing comprehensive and effective social protection for the elderly, workers and families at times when they are unable to either care for themselves or participate fully in the economy. This includes during pregnancy, when the family has small children, during sickness or temporary unemployment, and during retirement. Providing such a safety net, and the quality social services through which social protection can be delivered, is the foundation stone of a modern economy, and as seen in the consultations something that people aspire to. Viet Nam is implementing some aspects of this system but

in a disjointed way. In the future it requires a more systemic, comprehensive and integrated approach, focusing firstly on those whom the consultations have shown are currently excluded and critically at risk, such as informal sector workers, the urban and rural poor, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

5.6 Quality employment and a new growth model

A widely shared wish among the target groups consulted was good quality employment. This means employment that is long-term, rewarding and with equal pay for men and women, at a rate that enables workers to live a decent life. It also means employment that provides for workers' futures, through providing health insurance, protection in case of accident or injury, and ensuring a pension.

Economic growth is critical in order to meet these employment aspirations. However, the limits of Viet Nam's current growth model have increasingly become apparent. Growth has so far relied heavily on low wage, low technology production and has been uneven, as we have seen, between population groups and geographical areas. For instance, people in rural areas, ethnic minorities and others continue to be rooted in traditional forms of low-value agricultural production. For these groups, the current growth model provides no clear pathway out of poverty. Providing quality employment is closely linked, therefore, to the issue of developing a new growth model for Viet Nam.



A new growth model which focuses on high technology production is needed. This will help to improve Viet Nam's competitiveness. © Truong Viet Hung\2013

This new model needs to improve Viet Nam's economic competitiveness and value-added production. This means relying less on exporting unprocessed natural resources or on producing low value-added products for export, such as clothing and footwear. Instead, new technology-led sectors need to be developed. Developing such industries and scaling up the manufacturing and industrial production processes will also offer better protection from the periodic fluctuations in global demand for cheap consumer goods and the fierce competition to produce these goods from other emerging economies. It will also generate wealth nationally and encourage the development of an internal market for goods and services, another

important safety net against global fluctuations and a vital element in ensuring the sustainability of employment.

Ensuring quality employment for all and gender-equal pay means spreading the benefits of economic growth more evenly across the country, and including those previously excluded in the growth process. It means making structural changes to the economy to ensure much greater value addition, innovating and enhancing the levels of productivity of industry and workers, and reaching international quality levels in order to be competitive in the global economy. All of these factors are critical for meeting the aspirations for decent work and a fair wage that participants in the consultations highlighted.

5.7 Education and vocational training

A new economic growth model also requires a heavy investment in human capital development, in particular better education and vocational training. Investing in technological innovation requires a well-educated workforce. It also requires institutions that provide good technical and vocational training, which meets the needs of industry and employers. This is currently not the case. In the consultations with representatives from the private sector, they highlighted the need for more flexible vocational training to better prepare the workforce for the needs of industry; more soft-skills development; and strengthened linkages between training institutions and the business community. At the top end of the spectrum, Viet Nam needs to invest in high quality universities, as well as research and development facilities, so that business leaders and innovators can be home-grown and can play a lead role in the development of Viet Nam's knowledge-based economy.

The men, women, young people and children consulted all recognised the fundamental importance of a good quality education for improving their future opportunities. Education is also critical in improving the lot of girls and in breaking chronic, inter-generational poverty cycles for ethnic minorities, poor urban migrants and other vulnerable groups. As many of the consultation participants observed, education is the key to a brighter future. The key message from the consultation process is therefore that in setting our global targets, improving the quality of education must be a high priority.

5.8 A cleaner environment

Economic growth is necessary for Viet Nam's continued development. The growth model that Viet Nam has followed, though, has depended upon exploiting the natural resource base intensively, and on producing goods in a way that has had a negative impact on the environment. In an increasingly resource constrained world and with growing problems of pollution and environmental degradation, a growth model that is more sustainable and which has less environmental impact is needed. The priority must be on producing in less environmentally destructive ways, relying less on heavy resource extraction and polluting industries, and investing more in smarter and greener alternatives.



With growing problems of pollution both industries and consumers need to focus on promoting green alternatives and behaviours. © Truong Viet Hung\2013

A more sustainable environmental model also requires a change in consumer behaviour, as technology alone will not compensate for an unsustainable use of resources. There is a growing awareness in Viet Nam of the need to conserve water and electricity, use less packaging in products, waste less, recycle more and rely on public means of transport. Education and awareness raising measures are still needed though, for as Viet Nam continues to prosper, these issues will become increasingly important, as richer people consume more and leave a heavier environmental footprint.

Viet Nam also faces the global threat of climate change. Climate change represents a significant source of future vulnerability, particularly for the poor and those on the margins of society, who are least able to deal with the effects. A recent World Bank report placed Viet Nam near the top of the list of countries most at risk from a sea level rise, given that the majority of the population lives in the low-lying delta regions of the north and south, which is also where the majority of agriculture and industry is located.

Climate change will also impact in other ways. It will result in greater variability in weather patterns, with weather events such as storms and floods becoming more intense and fluctuating rainfall patterns affecting the ability of farmers to plan and grow seasonal crops. Effective disaster risk reduction strategies, climate change adaptation and a comprehensive social protection system are all critical measures to protect against the effects of climate change, and should be planned for in a way that enables those most at risk to play a lead role in defining what is needed.

Annex 1: List of Questions Used in the Consultations

Below is a list of common general questions broadly used during most of the consultations:

- What changes would you like to see in your life after 2015? What do you think will stop you/your community from achieving these changes? What will you need to make these changes happen?
- What changes do you think most need to happen in Viet Nam after 2015? What needs to happen for those changes to take place?
- Why are the issues (and challenges) you have identified important to you?
- What are the causes behind the challenges or barriers that will stop you reaching your goals?
- Which individuals or institutions can help or play a role in enabling you/your community to overcome challenges and improve your life? (Please explain in reference to each individual/institution)
- Do you think you can do something yourself to address these challenges and make a difference? What (or who) do you need in order for that to happen?
- How do you think change best comes about in your life/the country? Will it be different after 2015, and if so how?
- By when should the changes that you want to see be brought about?

As part of the strategy of ensuring gender mainstreaming throughout all the consultations, two specific questions to identify gender issues were used.

- What are the main differences between men and women, and boys and girls, in terms of their aspirations and challenges?
- What are the reasons for these main differences?

The questions and topics discussed by the private sector group were tailored to fit with the nature of their consultation. Specific questions included the following:

What:

- What is your aspiration in relation to a more integrated economy / a new model of growth / the quality of the labour force / in policy and regulatory frameworks? (Objectives)
- What is your strength to participate in global value chains / to join the new model of growth / of the labour force at your company / to adapt to the new policy and regulatory framework? (Opportunities)
- What is your challenge/obstacle to join global value chains / to deal with environmental issues/requirements / of the labour force at your company / to cope with the changes in policy and regulatory frameworks?

Why:

- Why do you have that aspiration?
- Why do you have that strength?
- Why do you have that challenge?

How:

- How to build the strength of your company?
- How can your company overcome the challenge?

Who:

- Which stakeholders are part of the solution?
- What can your company do?
- What can other stakeholders do/support?

What/when:

- What is the most urgent issue?
- What is the level of complexity/feasibility?

For the older people group questions were also tailored, and participants were asked:

- How do older people view the role/value/contribution of older people to the family and society?
- What are their views about the current situation of older people?
- What they think about the period in the next 10-20 years in term of the factors above?
- What are their suggestions about what should be maintained, strengthened and/or abolished? What is the ideal future?
- What are their suggestions for some of the problems they are facing or potential future problem?
- What are their expectations for the health system for older people in the future?



Annex 2: Key Background Documents Used in the Analysis

Addressing Inequalities: Synthesis Report of Global Public Consultation. UNICEF and UN Women with support from the Government of Denmark and the Government of Ghana.

Vietnam's Ten Years Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2011 – 2020

Vietnam Joint Country Analysis (http://www.un.org.vn/vi/publications/doc_details/184-joint-country-analysis-of-viet-nam.html)

UN Vietnam One Plan 2012-2016 (http://www.un.org.vn/en/publications/one-un-documents/doc_details/278-the-one-plan-2012-2016-between-the-government-of-the-socialist-republic-of-viet-nam-and-the-united-nations-in-viet-nam.html)

Vietnam Human Development Report 2011 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/asiathepacific/vietnam/name,24010,en.html>)

Post-2015 Development Agenda– Guideline for country dialogues - What Future do you want? (<http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/undg-releases-guidelines-for-country-consultations-on-post-2015-development-agenda/>)

Vietnam's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report (<http://mdtf.undp.org/document/download/6852>)

ODI and UNDP 2011- A Post-2015 Framework for Development

Goals for the Bottom Billion or Goals for the Whole world. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Vietnam National Climate Change Target Programme Document

Vietnam Five-year Health Sector Development Plan 2011 –2015 [http://jahr.org.vn/downloads/Van%20ban%20phap%20quy/Quan%20ly%20quan%20tri%20y%20te/Ke%20hoach%205%20nam%20nganh%20y%20te%202011-2015%20\(Tieng%20Viet\).pdf](http://jahr.org.vn/downloads/Van%20ban%20phap%20quy/Quan%20ly%20quan%20tri%20y%20te/Ke%20hoach%205%20nam%20nganh%20y%20te%202011-2015%20(Tieng%20Viet).pdf)

Vietnam Country Gender Assessment by the World Bank <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2011/11/15470188/vietnam-country-gender-assessment>



The Government's Viet Nam AIDS Response Progress Report http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/knowyourresponse/countryprogressreports/2012countries/ce_VN_Narrative_Report.pdf

Multi-dimensional Child Poverty in Viet Nam and World Bank Poverty Assessment - UNICEF inputs on multidimensional child poverty

Ageing Population in Viet Nam. Current status, prognosis and possible policy responses (2011): <http://vietnam.unfpa.org/public/pid/5230>

Taking Advantage of the Demographic Bonus in Viet Nam – Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Options (2010): <http://vietnam.unfpa.org/public/pid/5230>

Internal Migration and Socio-Economic Development in Viet Nam: A Call to Action (2010): <http://vietnam.unfpa.org/public/pid/5230>

“Realizing the future we want for all”, Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda to the Secretary-General <http://post2015.org/2012/07/03/un-task-team-report-realizing-the-future-we-want-for-all/>.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, April 2012.

The Viet Nam Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI): Measuring Citizens' Experiences. A Joint Policy Research Paper by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), the Front Review of the Central Committee for the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (FR), and the Commission on People's Petitions of the Standing Committee for the National Assembly of Viet Nam (CPP). Ha Noi, Viet Nam: www.papi.vn.



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