

Draft:

National strategy for advancement of women in Vietnam for the period 2001 - 2010

Introduction:

Vietnamese women account for 50.8% of the population and 50.6% of the social labor forces. Women play an extremely important role in the cause of the establishment and defense of the country in the past. At present, women and men together struggle for the objective *"a wealthy people, powerful country, just, democratic and civilized society"*.

The Party and State are always well aware of and highly appreciate the women's role. At the same time, the Party and State also have an orientation to liberate women, carry out equality between men and women in the cause of the establishment and development of the country. Women have actively participated and effectively contributed to the achievements of the poverty eradication, economic development, and social stability. Being wives and mothers, women have made a great contribution to the bringing up of the new generation for the country and have taken care of the Vietnamese families in accordance with the standard *"Prosperity, Equality, Progress, Happiness, and Stability"*. Women are an important factor in preserving the Vietnam's national identity and bringing many achievements in culture, education, art and sport...

Review of the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam since the National Strategy on advancement of women in Vietnam until 2000 started:

In 1997, The Vietnamese Government approved the Strategy and National Plan of Action for Advancement of Women in Vietnam until 2000. *As overall assessed, some important objectives of the Strategy and Plan of Action have been fulfilled as follows:*

- regular jobs for nearly 19 mil female labors - accounting over 48% of labor workforce in all economic sectors have been created. Through the national job creation and HEPR programmes, on an average, 1.2 mil laborers receive jobs annually of which women account for 50%. In the rural areas, in general speaking, efficient time use rate has satisfied the target (approximately 72 - 75%).
- On the education and training, the national target on the primary education universalization and illiteracy eradication on the nation scale have been fulfilled. Gender balance in education has been ensured. The literacy rate among women is 90.6% compared with 95.3% among men. In school year 2000 - 2001, the female lower secondary school rate is 46.9% and 46.8% in higher secondary school, 51.9% in the college and 39.1% in the university level. The vocational training has increased the labor - trained rate from 10% in 1996 to 20% in 1999 of which women make up 47%.
- The women and children's health has improved remarkably. The target on the family planning has been fulfilled and exceeded. Average number of children of the married women at the childbearing age has been reduced from 2.69 in 1996 to 2.3

children in 1999. The healthcare conditions for women have been improved. The maternal mortality rate was reduced from 1‰ in 1997 to 0.9‰ in 1999. The average life expectancy of women is 69.8.

- On the political participation: Vietnam is ranked the first in Asia in terms of the rate of female members of the National Assembly (26.22%). There was an increase about 2% of female members participating in the People's Council at different levels in 1999 - 2004 term. In details: female member in the People's Council at provincial and city level is 25.2%, 20.7% in the district level and 16.34% in the commune level.
- The National machinery for advancement of Women has been strengthened and expanded on the nation scale. Up to date, all 61 provinces/cities under the central management and 50 central ministries/branches have established CFAWs. In some places, the CFAWs have been established in sub - units, districts, wards. The Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) has continued developing strongly in its both organizational structure and operation. VWU has been asserting its position of the representative for the rights and benefits of the Vietnamese women.

Reasons for successes:

Firstly, during the recent years, the Party and Government have made accurate and timely orientations which have strong and positive impact on the advancement of women.

- The advancement of women during the recent years has closely attached to the successes of the reform. The fast economic growth, society development and stability has facilitated the material and spiritual life of people including women in particular.

Besides, the aforesaid objective reasons, women of the Vietnam Women's Union and women related organisations have made remarkable efforts. The orientations of the Party and State especially the National Strategy for advancement of women until 2000 have been highly welcomed in widely implemented on the national scale. Although NCFAW has newly established, NCFAW and CFAWs of ministries / branches and localities have brought into full play role as an advisor and monitorer of implementation of policies for women and gender.

In addition to these, orientations and policies for advancement of women have received effective support and assistance from the international community.

Difficulties and shortcomings:

In spite of outstanding achievements in the Strategy and POA until 2000, however, the gender equality still faces to many difficulties and obstacles:

- the unemployment rate among women, shortage of jobs, and unstable jobs have been high. On an average, actual income of women is only 78% compared with men.
- The higher the education level is, the lower the number of women follows study. The number of women participating in post-graduate training and science and advanced

technology has been limited. The illiteracy rate among women at the age 15-35 has been two times higher than that among men especially women in the remote and ethnic areas.

- the unhealthy physical status is prevailing among female workers. Women mainly take the responsibility to carry out the population and family planning
- The women rate participating in the leadership is low especially in the state administration and local governments
- the family workload causes women in general and rural women in particular disadvantages in material, spirit life and their health. Women, therefore, have less conditions to participate in the social activities
- The patriachal thinking "Respect men and disrespect women" still exists among cadres and people. Some social evils and discrimination in the family cause vulnerability for a segment of women

The main causes:

- Awareness and cooperation among branches and authorities at different levels in implementation of the strategy and POA for advancement of women are still relatively limited
- The law, policy system for women and the implementation mechanism is not quite proper. Gender issue has not fully mainstreamed and has not become a cross-cutting issue in organizational aspects and activities implemented by branches at different level
- The National machinery for advancement of women is still new. Its cadres work on a part-time basis, which have not brought into full play their capacity and have not implemented all functions as the assigned advisory and monitoring role
- Human and finance investment in activities for women for advancement and activities of the women union and women's unit have not satisfied yet.
- Women's awareness on the equality rights is limited. Self inferiority and self resignation to the fate's have reduced the efforts made by women.
- Backward thinkings on the role of women still exist in the society.
- In addition to these, one major challenge to the advancement of women is negative impact of the integration and globalisation process which will be shouldered more by women rather than men.

Lessons learnt:

From actual experience in the implementation of the Strategy and POA for advancement of women during the past years, the following lessons are learnt:

- Gender issue is well understood and mainstreamed into the state policy planning process and national programmes of branches, which will ensure the social equality and advancement of women.
- Closer coordination among branches at different levels needs to be strengthened in implementing POA and strategy especially the realisation of POA in branches at different levels. Regular monitoring is an important and essential factor.
- The national machinery for advancement of women must be finalised in term of the organisational structure, capacity developmet for cadres, awareness on responsibility and operational skills
- Objectives in the strategy and POA need to be more specific and feasible

Deeply aware of the great role of women in development of the country and actual experience in the implementation of the Strategy and POA for advancement of women during the past years to the year 2000 are scientific and actual basic for establishment of the Strategy for the period 2001 - 2010. This is an integrate part of the National Social - Economic Development Strategy 2001 - 2010 in order to carry out the commitment of Vietnam in struggling for the target "*Gender equality, development and peace for the 21 century*".

Part 1: Points of view, principles and overall objectives:

1.1 Points of view:

- Vietnamese women has a prestige historical tradition and great potential and play an important force in the "doi moi" reform and the socio-economic development of the country. Women are laborers, mothers and the first teachers of the people. Therefore, the role of women in the family and society, their material and spirit lives have a profound impact on future Vietnamese generations in general.
- Liberlization and the overall development of the women are an important objectives of the Vietnamese revolution, having direct and long-lasting impact on the country's development. Implementation of the gender equality and progress of women are both important contents and measures to gain a sustainable and effective socio-economic development.
- The women's progress is not only for benefits of women but also benefits of families and the whole society. Therefore, investment in the progress for women is a long term and basic strategy in order to raise women's status in general and is an actual measure to narrow the gender gaps, contributing to the success of implementation of the objective "*wealthy people, powerful country, just, democratic and civilized society*"

1.2 Major principle:

- Mainstream gender into all state legal system, policy planning, and development policy implementation, programs, projects and workplans of branches at different levels

- Implement gender equality and progress for women is a task of the whole society and each family in which the first responsibilities must be laid to state administration and local governments from the central down to the grassroots levels.

1.3 Overall objectives of the strategy for advancement of women for the period 2001 - 2010

Remarkably increase the material and cultural - spiritual life of women, develop the human resource, ensure all basic conditions for women to participate and get full and equal benefits in all aspects in the political, economic, culture, social, and family life.

Part 2: Specific Objectives

Objective 1

Implement women's equal right in the area of labour and employment to improve women's economic status and living standard

Targets:

- 50% women out of the total 13.5 millions new job-placements
- Rate of women' workers receive professional training reaches to 40%
- Reduce the rate of women's unemployment in urban area to 5%
- Increase efficiency of working time of women in rural areas 80%
- Rate of women participating in the agriculture extension services reaches to 50%

Major actions to be taken:

- Strengthen gender-mainstreaming activities into all social and economic programs in order to ensure social sustainability, at the meantime create job-placement opportunities and recruit women in all sectors of the economy.
- Revise and strengthen the implementation of labour and employment policies for women in order to ensure gender equality in accessing to job creation opportunities, ensure suitable working conditions for women and equal income and social welfare.
- Strengthen women' access to economic resources such as land, credit, techniques, information, labour market and agricultural extension. Support women in developing various types of enterprises in the informal sector as well as in international and regional sphere.
- Target - invest in women's resource development by carrying out professional and vocational training programs. Increase women's rate in advanced technical areas.

- Strengthen and improve the quality of HEPR program by continuing and expanding the campaign of women's participation in household-economics' development.
- Strengthen researches on impacts of economic development policies and the transition of economic structure on women. Develop a database of women's workers in labour and employment market.

Objective 2

Implement equal rights of women in education - training and create conditions for women to enhance their qualification levels in all aspects

Targets:

- 70% children at pre-primary age and 20% children at kinder age attend creches and kindergartens
- Complete the illiteracy eradication for women at the age of 35 and gradually expand to women at the age of 40, firmly strength the primary education universalisation, and secondary education universalisation for women
- Ensure rates of girls and boys attending in education levels to be equal to the gender rate
- 35% toward of women out of total trained people in the post - graduate
- Each education and training units have at least one female leader

Major actions to be taken:

- Promote the *education socialisation activities and remote education*. Create more good opportunities for women and female children to participate in the all the regular and follow - up training types, strengthen the knowlege for women who have been eradicated illiteracy
- The state issues policies to assist and support women and female children in training and education especially those in the remote and ethnic areas
- Mainstream gender into the training and education plans and include gender into the curriculum and textbook at all education levels and the specialized training schools for staff.
- The state implements encouragement measurements for women studying in science and technology branches in order to open new job opportunities with high income for women and reduce the sex - disaggregation in the fields of study, occupation and qualification levels

- Widely disseminate gender knowledge in order to increase knowledge on education for women and female children of branches at different levels, education centers and people including women

Objective: 3

Improve the health status for women

Targets:

- The average life expectancy of women is 73
- The rate using modern contraceptive methods is 70%
- The rate of pregnant women check health before birth delivery: 90%
- The rate of women who visit hospital for qualified pre-natal check three times: 60%
- The rate of women who deliver birth in medical sites: 80%
- The rate of women who accesses to the health service is 95%
- 80% of the medical establishments have obstetric and paediatric nurses

Major actions to be taken:

- To increase the IEC activities for the community in general and for the women and girls in particular on healthcare and reproductive health, encourage men to provide healthcare for women and share responsibilities in family planning
- To make key investment of resources in medical centres especially in the difficult communes, ensure to conveniently and suitably provide primary healthcare services and pre-natal health care for women
- To basically shift the population and family planning activities to satisfaction of the demand of the reproductive healthcare for people, implement specific actions to reduce the SDT including HIV/AIDS among women
- To create conditions for all women to participate in different types of the medical insurance and implement supportive measures for poor women to be better provided with healthcare
- To closely co-operate with all different sectors to solve the occupational diseases and improve the working conditions for female labours in different occupations especially those in the agriculture and rural sector
- To ensure the proper implementation of all policies for health workers, provide training to increase qualification level for them, increase the female rate participating into the management and leadership mechanism in the healthcare sector at different levels

Objective 4

Enhance the role and position and increase the participation of women in leadership mechanism and decision making

Targets:

- Obtain from 15% onward of women in the party committees at different levels
- 33% onward of female members in the National Assembly
- Obtain from 30% onward of women in PC at provincial and city level, 25% at district level and 20% at commune level.
- Obtain from 20% onward of women who are leaders in the administrative machinery
- 100% of ministries, branches, central organisations, authorities, local branches has female cadres participating in the leadership mechanism
- All education, health, culture and social organisations, enterprises with 30% of female staff has female cadres participating in the leadership mechanism

Major actions to be taken:

- Establish and implement *"the 10 year planning on development and training for female leaders and managers"*
- Complete the legal regulations and policies for staff in order to ensure equality of women in participating into state administration
- Mainstream gender into the human resource development policies, personnel organisation activities and public administration
- Enhance the leadership provided by the Party on the activities for female staff, strengthen the leadership and monitoring activities in the implementation of the 37-CT/TW on the activities for women
- Increase responsibilities of leaders and managers in the personnel organisations, bring into full play of the mass organisations in developing the female staff contingent
- Promote IEC activities in order to increase the awareness of branches at different levels, men and women in women's participation in the leadership and management

Objective 5

Ensure women's rights and benefits and facilitate women's participation in socio-economic activities

Targets:

- 100% of draft legal and policy document relating to women are reviewed by organisations representing for women
- 100% of communes and wards establish book shelves for legal documents
- 100% of courts, procuracy, civil case execution organisations have women magistrates, investigators, and executors
- 100% of all provinces/cities under central management have women working in legal assistance centres.

Major actions to be taken:

- Establish and implement mechanism that ensures gender integrated into legislation-making process; mechanism for consultation process and evaluation from organisations, representative agencies for women in the documents, policies, which directly relate to the rights and benefits of women.
- Develop and gradually finalise the legal system on equal rights of women, solutions to violations and prevention of the social evils, that gives negative impact on women and girl children; socio-legal framework and proceedings and suitable legal procedures to protect rights and benefit of women especially those are violence's victims, strengthen the management effectiveness of the state organisations and cooperate with different forces to protect and solve violence cases to women
- Strengthen measures to integrate gender into awareness and actual activities of the cadres contingent of the law making, law executing and justice officials in law implementation process. Establish statistic system for penal and civil codes from the gender perspective, which are based for assessment on actual situation and plan for orientations and effective measures to protect the women's equal rights
- Strengthen programs and suitable measures to raise understanding and legal awareness and capacity of women especially those in rural and remote areas in access and use of socio-legal tools so that they are active to implement and protect rights and benefits for themselves and their families; directly participate into community's activities; implement monitoring activities of the law implementation situation according to the Grassroots Democratic Dregree
- Bring and support initiative and resources, programs, types of activities of VWU and social organisations in order to increase responsibility of the community and society in protection women's rights and benefits of women and in consultation and support for women those are victims of social evils and violence
- Strengthen the movement for establishment of the cultural family in accordance with the standard "prosperity, equality, progress, happiness" with new contents in order to increase awareness and gender equality, encourage men to share responsibility with women and take care of all aspects for female members of the family.

- The State encourages to widely develop services for family's activities in order to reduce domestic workload, increase entertainment conditions for women.

Objective 6

Capacity building and effective operation of national machinery for the advancement of women

Targets:

- 100% of all CFAWs have a full-time staff or a permanent staff with appropriate qualifications and capacity.
- 100% of all members of CFAWs are trained in operational and technical skills for the advancement of women including gender analysis and planning
- 1% of current spending of branches at different levels is allocated to satisfy demands for operation for advancement of women
- 100% of all CFAWs have sufficient budget for their regular activities and member's allowance

Major actions to be taken:

- Enhance the national machinery in all ministries and levels from central down to grassroots levels to ensure sustainable human resource which are qualified and capable to meet functional requirements of advisory and monitoring role of all policies relating to gender equality and women's advancement policies.
- Continue to improve NCFAW and CFAW's procedure, activities and co-ordination machinery to mainstream gender into policy making process made by the Government and branches at all sectors and levels, as well as to implement successfully National Strategy for the advancement of women for the period 2001-2010.
- Develop an appropriate financial mechanism and budget to ensure a proper resource for activities of advancement of women in all sectors and levels.
- Strengthen the co-operation between VWU and Women's Units at all levels, encourage organisations, individuals, esp. men to involve in activities for the gender equality.
- Improve a process of collecting, processing and disseminating sex-dissegregated data, strengthen researches on situation of women and gender.

- Regularly conduct research and assessment of impact of macro-economic policies and policies of employment, education, health and women cadres to ensure their positive impacts on women in the realty.

Part 3: Implementation measures

The Government gives leadership on realisation of the Strategy through two 5 year POA with implementaion mechenism and necessary input investment.

Propagation and dissemination of the Strategy on the nation scale. The Strategy's contents must be well understood with the State Administration System, branches, mass organisations from the central down to grassroots levels

The implementation of the Strategy must be closely attached to regional and international commitments of Vietnam in order to promote the implementation of the CEDAW for the target "*Gender equality, development, and peace for the 21 century*"