

**SPEECH BY VICE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT – MR. HOANG VAN THANG - VICE CHAIRMAN OF  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE VIETNAM CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE FOR NATURAL DISASTERS PREVENTION AND  
CONTROL**

**AT THE ASIAN MINISTER MEETING ON DISASTER RISK  
MITIGATION**

**In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia July 2018**

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*Dear Co-chairs,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the United Nations,  
representatives of Member States!*

*Distinguished guests!*

I am very honored to be here at the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Mitigation held in the beautiful city of Ulanbato today. On behalf of the GoV and people of Viet Nam, I would like to thank the host country and take this opportunities to congratulate the Republic People of Mongolia for successful coordination with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) in the organization of this important event to promote disaster prevention and mitigation based on Recommendations of the Sendai Action Framework and I hope that the results of this conference will be important steps forward for regional countries to continue their efforts in effective implementation of the Sendai Action Frame.

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Vietnam is a country frequently affected by natural disasters. Over the past 20 years, there have been 20 types of natural disasters hitting Vietnam, including the most common disasters as storms, floods, landslides, flash floods, river bank and coastal erosion, drought and salt intrusion. Annually, disaster related damages make up 1.5% of the GDP and cause over 300 deaths and missing. From the practical point of view, Vietnam is now deeply aware of climate change and unsustainable socio-economic development which increase disaster risks and affect all aspects of social life:

- As a country with long coastlines and two large deltas, Vietnam is considered one of the most vulnerable countries due to climate change impacts which are best manifested through sea level rise and salinity intrusion. Only in 2017, Vietnam has been hit by a record number of typhoons, tropical cyclones and low air pressure, along with unusually heavy rainfall which have not ever observed in some mountainous areas, causing landslide and flash floods. Typhoons tend to affect areas less prone to storms and where local people and governments are inexperienced, lack resilience skills and significant losses of life and property are inevitable. In the early 2016, the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam experienced a severe drought that caused significant damages to agricultural production and affected lives of millions of people.

- Natural disaster risks are increasing due to the pressure of population growth, urbanization and excessive use of natural resources such as degraded quality and reduced area of watersheds, excessive sand mining on rivers contributing to flash floods, serious landslides in mountainous areas and riverbank and coastal erosion in the deltas. Being the upstream country of Mekong and Red River systems, the development of hydroelectric reservoirs upstream are changing flow regime and seriously reducing silt and sediment load to the downstream area. The situation is significantly worsening riverbank and coastal erosion, especially in the Mekong Delta.

*Lady and gentlemen!*

After the adoption of the Sendai Action Framework by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, Vietnam has undertaken the following activities:

- 1. Enhancing knowledge of natural disasters***
- 2. Improving governance for better disaster risk management***
- 3. Investing in disaster reduction to improve resilience:***

We promoted communication as a way to enhance understanding of natural disasters. Vietnam considers communication as one of the most important solutions to disaster risk reduction. We have directed the development and dissemination of technical guidelines to communities to raise their awareness of natural disasters as well as disaster preparedness and response skills in which children are centered in such campaign as "building safe schools".

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development- The Standing agency for disaster prevention and control who is finalizing the National Strategy on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control to 2030 with a vision to 2050 through the review of former National Strategy on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control which was issued in 2007. The new Strategy incorporates many updated aspects of the Sendai Framework including viewpoints of disaster risks management, promote participation and clarify role of stakeholders, accelerate the development of disaster prevention plans at all levels; public-private partnerships, especially in the development of scientific and technological solutions, infrastructure development without new risks arisen etc. , reviewing and updating standards and criteria system to ensure Plant back better during the recovery and reconstruction after disasters.

- We are suggesting that the Government amend the Decree on Disaster Prevention and control Funds at all levels from central to local. We also suggest the list of disaster prevention related expenditures to better finance disaster management activities.

- Public-private partnerships in science and technology development: we promote cooperation with enterprises to order science and technology solutions to be applied in natural disaster prevention and control, especially for such disasters as landslides, flash floods, river bank and coastal erosion. In the coming time, Vietnam wants to continue its intensive cooperation in science and technology with other countries in the region and international organizations in order to achieve more gains relating to disaster risk reduction.

- Strengthen international cooperation to create resources: Year 2017 is considered as a year with many historic natural disaster events (Typhoon Damrey, flash floods and landslides). Vietnam received valuable supports from the international community with a total relief value of over USD 25 million;

- Together with domestic resources and supports from international community, Vietnam has been investing in the construction and upgrading of natural disaster prevention and control works such as dykes, dams, anchorages storm shelter. We also pay attention to non-structural solutions such as disaster response plans adaptable to individual region and locality. We build disaster risk maps by river basins for integrated basin management and enhance ecosystem-based disaster resilience.

#### ***4. Improve preparedness for natural disasters***

- Increase investments and intensify training to improve the accuracy of forecasting and warning activities; install early warning system and online disaster monitoring system;

- Direct standing agencies of disaster management of Ministries, sectors and localities to develop and implement Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan taking into account Recommendations of the Sendai Framework; develop criteria and guidelines for integrating natural disaster risk reduction contents into local and sectoral socio-economic development plans;

- Transform livelihoods to adapt to natural disasters and climate change (e.g. for areas impacted by drought for a long time, salinity intrusion, areas frequently affected by flash floods, riverbank and coastal erosion).

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

To take initiative in adapting to climate change and ensuring sustainable development, apart from above mentioned actions, Vietnam needs to focus on a number of key issues as follows:

**Firstly**, focus on communication, raising awareness and understanding of disaster risks and community-based and child-centered disaster management and prevention, especially in vulnerable areas before storms, floods, landslides, flash floods;

**Secondly**, it is necessary to guide the localities through the preparation of detailed and feasible Plans for natural disaster prevention and control in line with natural disaster characteristics of each region. The Plans should identify task allocation and roles among all administration levels and sectors involving disaster prevention, response and recovery. Responsibilities of local authorities in the development of disaster scenarios in preparation of the worst possible disaster case are highlighted.

**Thirdly**, strictly control the exploitation of natural resources, focusing on forest protection, afforestation and forest quality improvement, including watershed and coastal mangroves. Strictly control sand mining in rivers;

**Fourthly**, transform livelihood to actively adapt to climate change and saline intrusion. Take advantages of floods, salinity and brackish water for livelihood development;

**Fifthly**, continue to invest in disaster protection works such as dykes, dams, anchorages for boats and ships in storms and to ensure safety of hydraulic works. The integrated disaster risk management plans will also help improve disaster risk management activities.

**Sixthly**, strengthen international cooperation, especially with other countries in the region to share information and experiences on natural disaster prevention and control as well as sustainable exploitation of rivers to reduce disaster risks.

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

We feel and see that this conference is a great opportunity for Asian countries to share and exchange practical lessons to promote the implementation of the four priorities in the Sendai Action Framework. This is also a good opportunity for Vietnam to affirm its efforts and promulgate the implementation of Disaster prevention and control plans at all levels for safe society and resilience before disaster impacts.

On behalf of the Government and people of Viet Nam, we would like to respectfully thank and look forward to cooperation and receiving valuable assistance of countries and international organizations to Vietnam for our disaster risk mitigation and response. We will perform well our responsibilities and national commitments.

Wish you good health and happiness and wish our conference a success!