

Speech of Mr. Tran Ba Viet Dzung
Director General, International Cooperation Department,
Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam
at the 10th VEF Annual Conference

Dear Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Vietnam to the U.S.,

Distinguish Guests,

Dear VEF Fellows and Visiting Scholars,

It is my honor to address a short opening remarks at the 10th VEF Annual Conference. I believe that this annual conference is a very good chance for VEF Fellows and Visiting Scholars to meet one another, to discuss about your experiences, achievements as well as difficulties and obstacles in your lives and studies in a new places. More importantly, this conference will offer an opportunity for you to share your thoughts, dreams, aspirations, intention to devote yourselves to the country from now on and upon return to Vietnam.

On the occasion of the New Year of 2013, I wish the Professors, distinguished guests, VEF Fellows and all a New Year full of health, happiness and every success.

Dear VEF Fellows,

Vietnam has abundant human resources with a population of about 87 millions in which the proportion of working-age people (men 15-60; female 15-55) accounted for 58%. Vietnamese government always considers "*The rapid development of human resources, especially high-quality human resources; Closely combining human resource development with development and application of science and technology*" is one of the 3 strategic break-through in making a robust change to induce development in other sectors, contributing to successful implementation of the socio-economic strategy until 2020.

Focusing on the fundamental and comprehensive innovation of the national education has been identified as a decisive solution to quickly develop the human resources. Vietnamese educational system, especially higher education is undergoing through a profound renovation, from its mechanism to policy, from content to format and implementation mode. I want to share hereunder some strategies and programs being implemented for your information:

1. Developing and effectively implementing the proposal of attracting Vietnamese and foreign experts, scientists from oversea to teach, to conduct and to

transfer technology in Vietnamese institutions by assigning these experts some key positions as directors of research institutes or team leaders of major research teams.

2. Conducting the advanced programs which apply the entire teaching curricular, methodologies, materials and technology of famous universities in the world at some Vietnamese universities. Since 2005, 23 advanced training programs in the fields of Science, Technology, Business and Agriculture of leading universities in the United States have been taught in English at 10 universities in Vietnam. Moreover, faculty members from the counterpart institutions have been also invited to teach some subjects in Vietnam.

3. Implementing the 10 - year program of quality improvement of training and using English in Vietnam's education system (the Vietnamese National Foreign Languages 2020 Project) to renovate teaching and learning foreign language within the national education system and to achieve vivid progress on professional skills, foreign language competency for human resources.

4. Developing and implementing phase 2 of the project "overseas training funded by the State budget period 2000-2010 (Project 322)" and the project "Training lectures to achieve the doctor degree for universities and colleges for the period 2010-2020 (Project 911)" with the goal to train 20,000 doctors by 2020.

5. Conducting the comprehensive renovation of higher education, focusing on: Adjusting the national university network and ranking the higher education institutions; Innovating management mechanism of higher education, transition from state-controlled to state monitoring mechanism; Reforming curricular and teaching programs; Developing national policies on accreditation and establishing a system of accrediting agencies; Innovating the finance management mechanism to higher education; Innovating scientific research activities in the universities link to the needs of enterprises, encourage the creation of science and technology enterprises...

6. Building some excellent universities (universities of international standards) which are self- governance and self-determination in their management and administration. The Vietnam- Germany University and Hanoi University of Sciences and Technology have been in good operation with the Rectors who are German and French.

Distinguish Guests,

In recent years, especially from 2008 - the year that Vietnam and US Government signed the MOU in education, the higher education cooperation between Vietnam and the United States has been developing and achieving good achievements and become an important bridge for the comprehensive cooperation and sustainable development between the two countries.

Contributing to those remarkable results, VEF plays a very important role. Through VEF Fellowship Program, 424 young and talented Vietnamese nationals have been selected for graduate study at more than 80 top-tier universities in the United States. Those who have graduated are making significant contributions to different sectors that will benefit Vietnam. In addition, under the its Visiting Scholar Program, almost 40 Vietnamese professors/researchers with doctoral degrees have been sent to the United States to do postdoctoral programs. Furthermore, under the U.S. Faculty Scholar Program, almost 30 U.S. professors have received grants to teach from one to two semesters at Vietnamese higher education institutions either onsite or via videoconferencing. These programs, which help to introduce American excellence in teaching and research to the faculty and students in Vietnam, have greatly accelerated the renovation of teaching methods and strengthened the capacity for higher education institutions in Vietnam. As the Director General of ICD, MOET Vietnam, I enthusiastically express my appreciation of VEF's outstanding achievements and contributions to Vietnam's education system. After 10- year operation, VEF initially completes its mission as slogan: *"Bringing the United States and Vietnam Closer Together through Educational Exchange"*.

Dear Fellows,

As I mentioned above, Vietnam is on the way to comprehensively renovate the higher education. It is a long and difficult process with several ordeals and challenges, requiring whole-hearted dedication, even sacrifice of teachers, administrators, scientist, and the support, participation of the whole society, students and their families.

For you, I believe that you have many good chances for your job after graduation. However, I truly want to share you that: "East or West, home is best". More than whenever and whoever, you are really expected and welcomed to return home to contribute to the cause of renovating the education in your Motherland in particular and develop a prosperous and happy country in general. More importantly, I truly believe that each of the VEF Fellows and Scholars is an ambassador of Vietnam and of the United States, contributing significantly to the better understanding of both nations, and thus enhancing the relationship between two countries.

May I wish you good health and every success. Our homeland is waiting for you.

Thank you.