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Education for all for learning to live together: Development and Equity

1. The technological scientific revolution and the globalization that are currently taking place have both positive and negative impacts. These changes require each nation as well as each individual to adapt to changes that are fundamental for development. The Vietnamese Government regards education as a national policy of the highest priority within its socio-economic development policies. The major educational objective of government is that Vietnam is enabled to catch up with the global development on the basis of the foreign policy of peace, cooperation, mutual respect and benefits.

2. Implementing the national development strategy for the period 2001 - 2010, Vietnamese education enters the 21st century with very significant achievements over the last 50 years. For example, 94 % of adults are now literate and the inequity of gender in local education has been eliminated. The Vietnamese Government understands that for the objective "Learn to Live Together", the equity in education must be achieved. This requires not only equity of the enrolment opportunity but also of educational quality for everyone, every grade and every cycle, of which local education must be given priority. The Vietnamese Government has instigated policies to promote education in disadvantaged areas and to bridge the educational gap between developed areas and underdeveloped ones. At the same time, the government pays special attention to education for ethnic minority children and children of families, in need of, and benefiting from social policies.

3. Because "Education for All" is especially important in human development, the Vietnamese Government and people have been heavily investing staff resources, financial resources and intellectual endeavor in every component of "Education for All". In Vietnam the budget for Primary Education currently represents approx. one third of the national budget for education and training over the last 10 years. Furthermore, the fund for primary education contributed by the society in general and by individuals is approximately equal to the national budget destined for the primary cycle. The Vietnamese Government plans to increase the budget for education and training from 15% of the overall national budget in 2000 to 18% in 2005 and above 20% in 2010, Vietnam has basically completed primary education universalization for children aged 6 - 14 by 2000. During the next decade, in conjunction with consolidation of anti-illiteracy, the universalization of primary education will be enhanced to ensure that 99% of children of the schooling age range (6 -11 years old) will be encouraged to attend schools. The Vietnam Government is fully committed to implement the universalization of secondary education, raising the number of students in the age range of this cycle from 74% in 2000 to 80% in 2005 and 90% in 2010.

4. The active participation of the civil society in the program "Education for All" will be the cornerstone and the guarantee of Vietnam's achievement. In addition to financial contribution, Vietnamese people through social associations and organizations as well as individuals will further contribute to the program "Education for All", especially continue with the cultural tradition " The day of the entire people taking their children to school" to start a new school year, Based on the activity, every sector of the society provides general support to the comprehensive aspects of national education and in particular gives support to the "Education for All" program

5. Through implementation of the "open door" policy, the Vietnamese Government has been strengthening international cooperation in education, particularly the program "Education for All", International organizations, governments and non-government organizations have provided significant support to Vietnam during the past decade. The focus of this support has been on pre-primary education, on primary education, in the program of illiteracy elimination and post illiteracy elimination and in regular

education. In the context of using resources provided by programs and projects, Vietnam has been utilizing the opportunities kindly provided by International support to achieve the objectives set by the program "Education for All". The Vietnamese Government hopes that this significant and most welcome international assistance will be enhanced in the next decade and beyond, Finally, the Vietnamese Government wishes to take this opportunity to extend its heartfelt thanks for all the support that it has received from many countries, international organizations and international development agencies over recent years. *S*