

Overview of trends in achieving gender equality
women's advancement

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1. Introduction

The Fourth World Conference on Women

improving various countries' attitudes and actions towards women's rights, so

ically, politically and socially. All countries attending this

ce unanimously approved Beijing Platform for Action to accelerate the

and advancement for women all over the world. At this Conference, the

ent of Vietnam submitted its National Development Strategies for the

ent of Women in Vietnam to the Year 2000 with the 10 objectives.

Government's policies is centered in achieving the goal of gender

and women's advancement.

Government's perspective on gender equality and women's advancement.

the Renovation undertaken by the Vietnam Communist Party and the State.

is the center, the ultimate objective and the driving force in this process. This

renovation has responded people's aspirations and received active responses

and Socio-Economic Development to the Year 2000 have enabled us to

gender equality and women's advancement. Nowadays, women of Vietnam

in making significant contributions to the industrialization and modernization

of 50.61 of the process in Vietnam. Accounting for 50.20% of the total popu-

lating in various fields and labor force, Vietnamese women have obtained many achieve-

ments in the political, economically, culturally and socially, thus remarkably

the national construction and from the year 1975, overall achieve-

ment of people, strong country, equitable and civilized country.

Thanks to the Government's specific policies, the gender equality

has been obtained and the goal of the National Development Strategies for the

Year 2000 is being achieved.

Advancement of Women By the Year 2000

Right after the Beijing Platform for Action and National Strategy

for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, the Government endorsed this Plan of Action with

actions to be taken. This plan is the follow-up to a

series of measures aimed at uplifting women's emancipation and advancement. The major objectives are:

• Poverty alleviation:

Women have become the focus target in poverty alleviation programs. Government of Vietnam has set up the National program on poverty alleviation, the National Bank for the poor and integrated poverty alleviation objectives. Therefore the poor households have reduced from 23.3 million in 1994 to 17.7 million in 1997.

The integration of the National plan of Action's objectives with other National

programs, undertaken by various ministries and institutions is also
government as reflecting Vietnam's efforts in achieving gender equality and wom

ending and endorsing CEDAW Convention

commitment in ensuring equality between men

Vietnam is one among 154 c

this indicates Vietnam Governme

and Women and Women's Voice of Society, INCRAW under the

interpretation of CEDAW during 1981 - 1988 which has been submitted to the

Vietnam Government's Commitment not only reflects in its policies, but also in its annual budget allocation for women's advancement activities. The integration model is effective in our context. Government policies on gender equality and women's advancement are incorporated into the national development strategy and implemented by the functional Ministries and Institutions.

Women
Funding
Location
Budgets
in 48

As described above, the "National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women by the year 2000" being endorsed in 1997 is an indication of Government investment for gender equality. Part IV in this plan defines the specific budget for the implementation of the plan. The NCFAW performances receive funding from the Government. Committees for the Advancement of Women

Ministries, Institutions, and in 68 Provinces of Vietnam. The Ministry of Labour has released a guideline on the allocation of some funds for this kind of activity which has been enforced. This is very essential for the implementation.

However, the success in achieving women's advancement in Vietnam could not be achieved without the technical and financial assistance from various International Organizations in Vietnam and abroad. We receive their support through projects which are aimed at the integration of gender, women. Now, the NCFAW is implementing the 3-year (1997-2000) project on "Capacity building for the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women" at a value of more than 1.5 million American dollars funded by UNDP and the Netherlands Government.

Strategies and mechanisms for institutionalization and implementation of the National Plan of Action

Ministry of Women in Vietnam (NCFAW)
The National Committee for Women's Inheritance Right after

at the National Committee for Women's Inheritance Right after
The NCFAW was established in 1997 based on the remaining from

jects for production development. This provides

investment policy in program
women access to employment

more than 1 million persons

Regarding policy on employment creation in 199

11,000 small projects funded by the Government have provided employment to 250,000 workers, of which female workers make up 60%. Thus helping to reduce unemployment in urban areas.

To provide women access to economic resource, the State Bank has drafted "the plan to provide women access to economic resource, credit and fund for women". This is on going to set the commitments and feed-backs from the concerned institutions before its finalization.

an organization representing all strata of women in the credit scheme of the National Fund of Employment value of 25 billion Dong as a revolving loan fund. The... employment to their members through its nation-wide campaigns on mutual assistance among women for household economic development and the formation of women's saving groups, loans for production, self-employment and income generation for poor women.

Vietnam Women's Union. The Union has... through various small projects... dynamic creative...

This campaign has been implemented effectively throughout Vietnam. For example, Hai Phong province has absorbed and managed more than 60 billion Vietnam Dong as a loan fund for 58,970 women. In 1998, they have explored 5.61 billion Dong for another 10,961 women. In 1997 the Vietnam Women's Union launched the campaign "Saving Day for the poor" which receive active public responses.

In 1998, unemployment rate in Vietnam was 6.85% including 6.55% among the women - higher than in 1997, 6.84%, according to the statistics from Labor Investigation

Poverty... and social inter... agencies program which requires the

Poverty alleviation The Government has set up the National Poverty Alleviation Program which requires the... generated actions in

poverty alleviation activities: 260... out of hunger (source from

In 1998, 3.158 billion Dong was allocated... thousands of hungry households in the 8 areas... Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs).

and areas leads to crop failures... 17.45% while in 1997 was

However, severe drought in the Central and... and poverty by many households. Poverty rate in 17.4%

(2) Education and training of women. Education

- improve education and vocational training for women;
- increase female enrollment at all levels.

* Eradicate illiteracy:

- The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) has developed their own Plan of action for the advancement of women, with concrete actions to be taken aiming at to complete the universalisation of primary education, increase female enrollment in schools and universities.

- Education and Training Services at the local levels in collaboration with the concerned branches continues to implement the Law on Universalisation of Primary Education. This program has been carried out in all areas throughout country, particularly in mountainous and remote areas. According to the report of the National Committee for Illiteracy

2764 provinces were recognized as having met the national standards on universalisation of primary education (in 1997 there were only 276)

improved remarkably the rate of primary level - 47.3% at the junior secondary and 46.3% at the senior secondary

in public education system, gender equality female enrollment account for about 48%

at organized class rooms and provide many women and children in rural areas and illiterate women and children in rural areas. In school are still being aware of women in the first 6 months of 1997 literacy to 259 ethnic women.

of vocational training Centers and created jobs for hundreds of thousands. Many women are interested in tailoring. Women's Union at various levels has got good outcomes.

3) Women and health:

- Priorities:
 - Improve health care for women
 - Enhance the reproductive health
 - Minimize occupational diseases

more than 50% of women is always paid attention by the annual budget for health care is from 15 to 20% in addition to the activity has been improving. More than 90% of the population lives at commune and ward levels.

Public health care Party and the State international assistance are provided

from various branches and localities. Women's reproductive health from the concerned institutions. Women are provided regularly medical insurance, home visits when they are sick, clean working

According to the has grabbed attention medical check-up environment, health

in collaboration with the concerned agencies conducted communication, training and signing the sub-contracts to implement effectively the maternal and child health care program. As a result, the number of pregnant women who receive tetanus injection has increased from 70% to 90%; the number of women who suffer gynecological disease has been decreased from 50% to 32%; the number of children who receive immunization from the enlarged program has been increased from 90% to 100%.

In population and family planning: A great change on the awareness of population issue with the further investment in human and physical resources, population and family planning

is very active in providing a range of activities such as "Club for population and family planning", "Club for good child care", "Club for those who don't have four children", "Club for family planning". The crude birth rate has been decreased from 22.1‰ in 1997 to 21.5‰ in 1998.

4) Violence against women:

The Party and the State are always pay attention

Vietnamese women's equality and

on Women (A.S.W.) and the focal point for women is A.S.W. The Women's Union is a member of ASEAN Confederation of Women's organization (ACWO), thus indicating Vietnamese women's good will in strengthening the friendship and peace.

6) **Women and economy:** Vietnamese women account for 50.1% of the labour force in the society. Under the Vietnamese Law, women and men above 15 years of age have the right to join the labour force. They have the right to create jobs for themselves or conduct jobs in the State, collective or private sectors. In fact, they have made significant contribution to the national economic development. The State's direction is to increase women's participation in economic development through structural adjustment, development of small and medium enterprises, development of services, handicrafts, animal husbandry in rural areas.

(see more details in Part I: job creating)

7) **Decision-making:** Vietnamese Government has focused on increasing the women's role and status in leadership and decision making positions with the following priorities:

- Streamlining female cadres at all levels;
- Strengthen women cadres' competencies at all levels.

The objective by the year 2000 is to increase the capacity, promote equal rights of women in leadership and management to meet the requirements of national economic modernization, contributing to enhancing women's role and positions in the society, by the contingent of qualified women cadres.

In order to fulfill the task mentioned above, the Governmental Personnel - Organization Department has collaborated with the concerned agencies to provide guidelines for implementation.

The authorities at all levels, at ministries and localities have implemented the promotion of women cadres. Of women in political: 01 Vice President of the State, 01 Vice Chairman of the National Assembly and 5 Women ministers or equivalent.

In the Ministry of Finance, there are 2 women Vice Ministers (accounting for 28.6% in the total ministerial leaders), 9/47 directors and deputy directors (accounting for 19.1%).

As mentioned above, female representation in the National Assembly has increased by 26.22% thanks to great efforts of the NCFAW and other concerned institutions. The NCFAW has been successful in the fight for the people's council election at three levels which was held in November, 1999.

However, the proportion of female representation in public management is still low, inappropriate to women's labour force and capacity.

3) **Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women:** Mentioned in Part III, item 3.

9) Human rights of women: The main objective is to protect and enhance the legal and political rights of women and to ensure their participation in social and economic development.

Protect women's rights, interests and dignity.

■ Create condition for women to participate in social activities.

Water supply: according to the report by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in 1998 the Ministry concentrated to provide drinking water for 1.2 million people (2% of the rural population with 1% investment from the Government and 1% from the people); communication, advocacy and training have been promoted; the development of environment sanitation model... The total budget in 1998 for such activities was 74,400 million Dong. As a result, 7,600 water supplying places in 116 target districts in 61 provinces, cities including 520 water supplying places for schools have been established.

activities; in 1998, 32% of population in rural area have accessed to
increase of 2% in comparison with 1997.

Thank to
clear water

education, and communication training: 37 communes in 32
provinces, cities have accessed to these services.

Environment
sanitation

can and

Hanoi Women's Union has launched a movement "Keeping the city
beautiful". Many women are very active in this movement.

s Union
of stove

As a member of the National Steering Committee on CWFH, the Vietnam
is active in advocacy for environment protection, hygiene practices, food
system and living conditions. A fact for the books widely disseminated

12) The girl child:

The main activities protect girl child's rights and interests based on
national education has conducted a large

a) Obstacles:

- The first obstacle in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action is the awareness. The women attitude, hinder the implementation of the Platform
- Socio-economic difficulties: Vietnam is now in the transition from central planned economy to the market oriented under the socialist direction. We lack socio-economic conditions and are influenced by the negative impact of the economic crisis and natural disaster to achieve the targets worked out by the Platform.
- The Platform has set out very great, covered and general objectives of which some targets are rather higher than the implementation capacity within 5 years (1995-2000)

b) Lesson learnt:

The determination and commitment of the Government and high officials is a key factor in the success of the implementation of the Platform for Action.

Objective 1. Create job opportunities, increase income, contribute to poverty

equal opportunities for women in education, training and employment
(improving their educational level in all areas).

Objective 2.

improve health care for and protection of women and children.

Objec

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

Objec

Protect and promote women's rights and facilitate women's participation in
social activities.

Objec

Enhance the role of the family.

Objec

Develop the role of women in the management of the environment,
and natural resources, contributing to the sustainable development and to the
improvement of the living environment.

Objec

Intensify communication activities to enhance the awareness of equal rights
among men and women.

Objec

Contribute to the preserving and strengthening of peace.

Objec

Enhance the capacity of the national machinery for the advancement of
Vietnamese women.

Objec

Objective 1.1. Protect girl children and facilitate their development in all fields.

In comparison with the national strategy, in this plan, we added the objective 1.1 on girl
child and the objective 6 on the family's role to meet the Vietnam contexts (See the Part III).

To implement the National Plan of Action, the Government has assigned the Ministry of
Planning-Investment to work out and arrange the plan, the Ministry of Finance to balance
the budget, the NCFAW to monitor the implementation and branches' authorities at all
levels to implement the POA.

- Each ministry and branch, province developed its own plan of action and establish the
machinery for the advancement of women.

- Annually, the national review conference, drawing experience and making the follow-up
plan is held every year.

- The National plan of action is disseminated widely and training courses on gender in poli
making are organized.

