

## **OPENING SPEECH BY H.E MINISTER AT THE HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON UN SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR INITIATIVE**

**(On 14 October 2010 at Melia Hotel)**

H.E. Michelle Bachalet, Chair of Social Protection Floor (SPF) Advisory Group,

H.E. John Hendra, UN Coordinator in Vietnam,

Distinguished Ambassadors, Leaders and Representatives from international organizations and development cooperation agencies working in Vietnam,

Distinguished Leaders and Representatives from related ministries, agencies and social partners in Vietnam,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, I would like to welcome the official visit by Madam Michelle Bachelet, as Chairperson of Social Protection Floor (SPF) Advisory Group lead by the ILO and WHO on behalf of the UN.

I also highly welcome the participation of leaders, representatives from related ministries and institutions in Vietnam; of Ambassadors, representatives from international organizations, donors in this important forum.

We sincerely congratulate Madam Bachalet for her appointment as Under General Secretary, Head of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and wish her success in this important position.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the purpose to promote the new initiatives on social protection and prepare to implement the initiative in UN member countries, Viet Nam as selected by UN, among other countries, to be consulted on this important and meaningful initiative. This indicates the positive recognition by UN system not only of the efforts of Government and people of Viet Nam, but also the commitment toward a more close and effective cooperation between UN agencies and international organizations and Viet Nam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Promotion, guarantee and development of social protection have always been a consistent policy of the Government of Viet Nam during the

past 65 years. This is well illustrated by the fact Vietnam is still a poor country but it always pays attention to and try its best to meet people's essential needs as the first priority.

Together with the "Doi moi" reform and comprehensive economic development strategy Viet Nam has trying its best during the past 20 years to achieve equality for people of all social strata. A number of economic development strategies and programs have been implemented by the Government of Viet Nam, that integrate the rights and legitimate benefits of people of all age all geographical areas, while giving special attention and priority to vulnerable groups so that they can better integrate in and contribute to the country's development course. To count, there are more than 40 policies, programs have been implemented in such areas as health; education, water and sanitation; food and adequate nutrition; housing; legal support and social relief in order to secure basic social services for people, particularly the poor, ethnic minority groups, people living in rural remote areas, women, and children in need and persons with disability.

Viet Nam is well recognized by the international community not only for its impressive achievements in economic development, but also for its initial achievements toward implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Five years from the target date for MDGs, Vietnam is reported to achieve basically 5 out of 8 goals, i.e. eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, universal primary education, gender equality promotion, child mortality reduce, health improvement and combat malaria and other diseases.... These achievements were applauded by the international community as successful lessons to be learnt.

Despite these achievements, like other countries in the world, Viet Nam is facing great challenges in the new phase of development. We have to try to overcome the consequences caused by the war, to response to the increasing natural disasters, climate changes, newly borne diseases and global financial crisis. The national social protection system has revealed its inadequacies i.e. the limited coverage of social protection system; inadequate provision of services to the needed citizen in term of time, quality and quality; low level of self-reliance of the people and many other arising issues

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The overall objectives of The Socio-economic strategy for the period 2011-2020 is to bring Vietnam to the level of Middle-Income Country; to achieve economic growth in harmonization with social progress and equity;

to improve the people's living standard; to develop a multi-tiered and effective social protection system; to create equal access to basic social services and welfare. Thus, the topic of our discussion today is relevant to the internal needs of Viet Nam as well as the world development trend. This is opportunity for us to approach the basic contents of UN Social Protection Floor Initiative in order to share experience and enhance the cooperation between Vietnam and UN during the course of development and implementation of the Social Protection Strategy for period 2011-2020 and the Social Protection Project for period 2011-2015 in Vietnam.

Based on the good relationship between Vietnam and UN and between Viet Nam and other countries and organizations, the experience and goodwill of Madam Bachalet as well as active involvement of all participants, may I believe that this forum would bring expected. With such a confidence I would like to declare the opening of the high level discussion on social protection initiative

Thank you very much./.