

ОФИЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ДОКУМЕНТЫ

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER
PHAM BINH MINH'S REMARKS
“REVITALIZING MULTILATERALISM
FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT”
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 74TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK
ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2019¹**

Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande on his election as President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly. I firmly believe that he will skillfully lead our Session to success.

May I express my appreciation to Her Excellency Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, President of the 73rd Session, for her important contributions to the work of the General Assembly, as well as to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his work and dedication over the past year.

Mr. President,

Eighty years ago, the Second World War erupted and became the deadliest chapter in the history of mankind. This global conflict took the lives of tens of millions, destroyed economies and societies. It witnessed horrendous crimes and the emergence of new weapons and means of warfare with unparalleled destructive power.

By the close of this chapter, nations have come to realize the importance of a collective security system based on multilateral cooperation and international law as the foundation of a post-war global order. This has proven to be a wise choice.

For the past 75 years, multilateralism, with the United Nations at its heart, has become indispensable. Multilateral institutions provide the forums for states to deliberate and establish common policies in all aspects of global governance — from overarching themes of peace, security, economy, trade, development and human rights, to specialized areas of cooperation in maritime, aviation, postal and telecommunication... They also incubate ideas, set standards and strategies to coordinate states' efforts to address traditional and non-traditional security challenges, and improve the quality of life.

Mr. President,

We are at the threshold of the third decade of the 21st century. We can pride ourselves in a world of peace, cooperation and development. We can rejoice at the achievements of peace efforts in various regions, from Mali to Liberia, South Sudan to Côte d'Ivoire. Viet Nam welcomes all efforts to settle disputes by dialogue and peaceful means, including the dialogue process between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

¹ Online newspaper of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 29.09.2019. URL: <http://news.chinhphu.vn/Home/Deputy-PM-FM-Pham-Binh-Minhs-remarks-at-General-Debate-of-UNGA74/20199/37618.vgp>

We have also seen significant achievements in global development. Hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. Universalization of primary education has been achieved in many nations. Maternal and child mortality rates have been considerably reduced. Together, we have established important strategies and frameworks for global development efforts, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Yet, multilateralism is facing acute challenges. It is alarming that narrowly interpreted national interests are chosen over common values, big power politics, coercion, competition and confrontation are favored over cooperation, dialogue and respect for international law. The consequential reduction in political commitment and resources has impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of multilateral cooperation.

This is all happening while the challenges we are facing is greater in magnitude and more complex in nature. No nation is immune to the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change, environmental degradation or pandemics. Conflicts are protracted in many areas, especially in the Middle East and Africa, while the risk of conflicts looms large in other regions.

Battlegrounds are no longer confined within designated warzones, but have spread to densely-populated cities and villages. The global arms control and non-proliferation regime is becoming more fragile.

The development of science and technology have brought about new means and methods of warfare. Global military spending is at its highest. And in the words of the Secretary-General, “The world is on the verge of a new Cold War”.

In this context, we welcome the timely theme set by Mr. President for this Session — “Galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion”.

Mr. President, Multilateral cooperation has a special place in Viet Nam’s foreign policy. Our history of reform, development, and international integration are closely associated with our participation into global and regional multilateral institutions. The assistance of the UN and other international organizations helped Viet Nam rebuild our country after decades of war.

Solid policy and legal frameworks have allowed Viet Nam to further advance integration and socio-economic development, and better implement global development goals. The UN and multilateral forums have provided Viet Nam with important political and legal platforms to expand our cooperation with nations of the world. Viet Nam has been an active and constructive partner in multilateral processes. We are working with other ASEAN Member States to enhance ASEAN’s centrality in promoting peace, security and prosperity in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

In the United Nations, members of the Viet Nam People’s Army have joined the Organization’s peacekeeping operations. Our diplomats and experts have contributed substantively to the development of UN agendas and policies on sustainable development, oceans and seas, human rights, amongst others.

Viet Nam is strongly committed to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement, and in particular is taking concrete steps to end single-use plastics by 2025.

Viet Nam is honored to have been elected non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. On behalf of the Government and people of Viet Nam, I extend to you our most sincere gratitude for once again entrusting us with this important position. As a member of the Council, Viet Nam will do our level best to work with the broader UN membership toward the ultimate goals of sustainable peace and development.

Given today’s daunting challenges, it is critical that we all work to revitalize multilateralism and strengthen the United Nations. And I would like to offer some thoughts on how that can be achieved.

First, we must all reaffirm the fundamental importance of international law and the UN Charter in international relations and multilateral cooperation. International law is the foundation of equal relation among states. Our actions must be in line with and guided by respect for international law.

Viet Nam believes that respect for international law is the most effective measure to prevent conflicts and to seek sustainable solutions for disputes. We support all efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the UN Charter and international law, including negotiation, conciliation and judicial settlement.

We call for the immediate lifting of the unilateral embargoes against Cuba contrary to international law.

We urge relevant parties in the South China Sea to respect international law, especially the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS), appropriately referred to as the “Constitution for the Oceans”. Linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the South China Sea is strategically important to peace, security and prosperity in the Asia — Pacific region. Efforts by relevant states have yielded positive outcomes in settling differences and disputes.

However, Viet Nam has on many occasions voiced its concerns over the recent complicated developments in the South China Sea, including serious incidents that infringe upon Viet Nam’s sovereign rights and jurisdiction in our maritime zones as defined by UNCLOS. Relevant States should exercise self-restraint and refrain from conducting unilateral acts which may complicate or escalate tensions at sea, and settle disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the UNCLOS.

Secondly, it is important to enhance the synergies between the global and the regional. Global actions can only be effective if adapted to the particular historical, socio-economic, political, cultural and geographical conditions of each region and state. Regional organizations could play a critical role in support of UN efforts. Viet Nam welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations, especially the UNSC, with the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States in addressing security challenges in Africa and the Middle East.

In the Southeast Asian region, ASEAN is a regional institution that is based upon “shared commitment and collective responsibility in enhancing regional peace, security and prosperity”. After more than 50 years, ASEAN has become an embodiment of the vision of regional governments and peoples of a politically, economically and socially connected Community. ASEAN has proved its centrality in the regional rules-based security architecture and provided a forum for regional and other states to cooperate for sustainable development, peace and stability in the region and the world.

In 2020, Viet Nam assumes the Chairmanship of ASEAN, as we also serve on the Security Council. We will endeavor to enhance the cooperation and complementarity between the Council and regional organizations, particularly in conflict prevention and sustainable peace efforts.

Third, multilateral efforts need to put people at heart. Lasting peace is the prerequisite for sustainable development and can only be achieved when the basic safety and living condition of the people are ensured. Viet Nam deplore attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructures critical for the survival of civilians. We support and commit to advance the UN agendas on women, peace and stability, children and armed conflicts. Viet Nam has endorsed the Safe School Declaration to join efforts to protect the rights of children to education under all circumstances. We will promote post-conflict reconstruction efforts, particularly mine action, for the safety of people and socio-economic recovery and development of states.

Fourth, multilateral institutions must be reformed to meet new requirements and better serve the interest of all member states, especially developing states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Viet Nam welcomes efforts to reform the UN development system to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. We underline the need to increase government ownership, and to garner the contributi-

ons of non-governmental organizations, other stakeholders and communities. Viet Nam will work with member states to actively contribute to reforming Security Council's working methods to enhance transparency, democracy and effectiveness.

Finally, Mr. President, political commitment of world leaders is indispensable to any effort to revitalize multilateralism. The UN or multilateral system can only be empowered if each country commits to the greater good of the international community instead of narrowly defined interests, and to invest their will and resources. Only when such commitment is guaranteed can we enter a new, brighter chapter in the history of mankind — a chapter of cooperation and dialogue, a chapter of sustainable peace and development.

I thank you for your attention.