



THE UN IN VIET NAM

Speaking with 'One Policy Voice'



To support the Government of Viet Nam in developing effective, evidence-based policies and programmes, UN agencies in Viet Nam are increasingly collaborating on joint research initiatives, policy papers and policy advocacy work, especially through the eight Programme Coordination Groups (PCGs). The PCGs are a unique mechanism to facilitate UN agencies working together with their Government partners on key shared issues such as social and development policies, education, HIV and governance. The PCGs are increasingly undertaking research and developing policy papers on priority themes, or providing inputs for UN policy discussion papers on cross-cutting themes.

In this overview, examples are provided of the UN's policy-related work under the One Plan 2006-2011 in the following areas: generation and sharing of knowledge and evidence; policy development, policy review and policy advice; law review and development; and related initiatives, including creating and strengthening partnerships. This type of work is a direct response to Government calls for more "upstream policy support" from the UN, and illustrates how an analytical perspective and unified UN approach is increasingly being used to address key development challenges.



GENERATION OF KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE

Social impact of the economic crisis. The UN supported a “rapid impact monitoring” exercise on the social impact of the global economic crisis undertaken by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences/Centre for Analysis in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Oxfam, Action Aid and the World Bank. The findings were presented to the National Assembly and high-level Government officials to inform them about how the global crisis was actually impacting economic sectors, workers, and households in Viet Nam. This was particularly relevant for a decision-making environment in Viet Nam characterized by scarcity of real-time information. The rapid assessment work also shaped UN-wide messaging on the impact of the economic crisis (through a strong outreach to the media) and discussions with policymakers during the 2009 Consultative Group meeting and at related policy dialogues. UN support in this area aims to eventually strengthen Government systems and capacity for gathering real-time data and information to better inform policymaking.

Impact of the global economic crisis on education. This study was conducted under the Education Sector Group (which includes several UN agencies and other partners in the education sector) to examine the impact of the global economic crisis on education in Viet Nam and identify recommended actions for the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and other concerned stakeholders. In order to provide strategic support to the Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) 2011-2020, which the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was developing at the time, the UN, through the Education PCG, initiated a discussion and offered to prepare a strategy to assist MOET in addressing the issue of universal access to quality education for all children in the EDSP.

Human rights. The UN’s Human Rights Technical Working Group, with support from relevant UN staff, conducted an assessment of Viet Nam’s human rights situation, with a focus on development issues. This report formed part of a wider UN human rights analysis compiled by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which served as a key document in Viet Nam’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2009. As part of Viet Nam’s preparation for the UPR, the UN and the Embassy of Switzerland fostered an exchange of experiences between Viet Nam and representatives from the Philippines and Indonesia. The UN is now in dialogue with the Government to provide support to the UPR follow-up process, in particular with respect to the ratification and implementation of human rights conventions, and facilitating the visits of several human rights “independent experts” and “special rapporteurs” to Viet Nam. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed an interest in extending the UN’s support to the UPR until 2013, when Viet Nam’s human rights record will again be reviewed.

Food security. A quick assessment by the UN on the impact of the global economic crisis on different groups and sets of development challenges resulted in a paper issued to inform policy dialogue and decisions to be taken by the Government. The paper was used by the UN Resident Coordinator in his advocacy work with the Prime Minister in 2008.

National census. Analysis of census data is an example of a coordinated UN approach – in this case supporting the national statistical indicator system. With assistance from the UN and other development partners, the 2009 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census was successfully conducted, with preliminary results disseminated only four months after completion of the field work. The results provide information for the assessment of the implementation of the 2000-2010 Socio-economic Development Strategy (SEDS) and for the development of the 2011-2020 SEDS and 2011-2015 Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP), as well as other sectoral strategies and policies.

Research on the family. The UN supported the first-ever nationwide Survey on the Family in 2008, which provided data on important issues such as domestic violence (experienced by one in three families), time parents spend caring for children (one in five fathers spends no time at all on a daily basis with their children), decision-making in the family, etc. The launch of the survey findings in June 2008 generated a high level of media and public interest, and featured, at the UN's urging, an innovative video presentation of the key findings. The survey was supported technically and financially by the UN, and has since served to inform the work of multiple UN agencies working with the General Statistics Office (GSO) on a nationally representative survey of domestic violence.

Gender-based violence. A 2009 UN paper on gender-based violence was designed to inform strategic planning, visioning and priority-setting, as well as development of policies and programmes to prevent gender-based violence and provide support to survivors. While the paper reflects the views of the UN, stakeholders in the Government, donor community, academia and civil society were consulted as part of its development and in the process of refining and finalizing the recommendations. While Viet Nam has been proactive in addressing the problem of domestic violence, and policy and legislative frameworks are in place, more needs to be done to address gender-based violence and implement the laws that exist. This paper brings a broader perspective that looks beyond domestic violence by raising awareness and understanding of other forms of violence, and also provides strategic recommendations to advance efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence.

Climate change. In recent years the UN, in collaboration with national partners, has identified and analyzed the main climate change policy challenges that Viet Nam is facing, and has shared suggestions on ways the country can address these challenges in different forums. This ultimately led to the development of a UN policy discussion paper on climate change in 2009 providing a joint UN analysis and key messages from all relevant UN agencies. The final version was discussed at a high-profile meeting with senior national and international panelists, and the core messages have been shared with Vietnamese climate negotiators on several occasions. The policy discussion paper followed earlier joint work around climate change with policymakers, as well as the media, such as the global Human Development Report 2007-08 on climate change, which was shared through an interagency launch and published in both English and Vietnamese.

Climate change and gender. The gender dimensions of climate change had received limited attention in Viet Nam when the Gender PCG decided to commit resources to a desk review on this issue in 2008, and support a senior official from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to attend a regional workshop on gender and climate change where the review's initial findings were presented. The UN and Oxfam then conducted a second round of research with local partners that included fieldwork, stakeholder dialogues and senior international advice, which led to a policy discussion paper on the links between gender and climate change. The paper was presented to the Government and key stakeholders at a national workshop, positioning the UN as an expert and key partner in addressing this challenge. This has resulted in well-informed Vietnamese leaders in different ministries and the National Assembly. The report also fed into a workshop that helped prepare the Vietnamese delegation attending COP15. The collaboration between UN organizations on gender-climate change links in Viet Nam resulted in a meeting in Copenhagen between the Executive Director of UNIFEM, an Assistant Administrator of UNDP and the Vietnamese Prime Minister to discuss gender-climate change links at the highest level.

Sex ratio at birth. The UN in Viet Nam has been supporting the Government to collect and analyze demographic data, including data on the sex ratio at birth (SRB), for the past few decades. The surveys that provide data on the SRB are the annual Population Change Survey and the 10-year Population Census, of which the latest was conducted in 2009. The UN supports the GSO to release annual booklets on recent demographic data, and to conduct in-depth analysis of data on the SRB trends. The release of Government-owned data demonstrating the rapidly increasing imbalance in the number of boys born compared to the number of girls has had a substantial impact in Viet Nam: it has attracted significant media coverage and led to a number of actions by the Government to reverse this trend. Actions taken by the Vietnamese Government in 2009 include the destruction of 30,000 books and seven websites on traditional and modern methods for pre-conception and pre-natal sex selection, as well as the implementation of a pilot programme to reverse the SRB trend in 18 provinces. SRB has also been one of key concerns that will be addressed by the upcoming National Strategy on Population and Reproductive Health 2011-2020.

Youth. The UN has provided joint analysis to inform the Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (SAVY), and is doing so again for another phase of the survey. The youth survey will inform a new round of UN advocacy on youth and health issues.

Ethnic minority girls' education. A UN study on ethnic minority girls' education was conducted to draw attention to the major reasons why ethnic minority girls often fail to make the transition to secondary education in Viet Nam. Based on an in-depth analysis of the multiple obstacles ethnic minority girls face, a set of strategies were provided that were drawn from discussions with local children, parents and community leaders. The findings provided policy makers with practical solutions and informed recommendations.

Employment trends. A report on employment trends in Viet Nam was compiled by MOLISA with technical and financial support from the UN. The report is an analysis of Viet Nam's labour market developments over the 1997-2007 period based primarily on data directly from MOLISA's labour force surveys. The principal emphasis is on trends in employment and unemployment, with particular focus on key indicators of Viet Nam's labour market. The report also shows the linkages that labour market data has with many other economic indicators, such as GDP and productivity.

Industrial competitiveness. The UN provided an analysis of sustainable industrial development for the Vietnam Competitiveness Report, to be issued in June 2010 by the Central Institute for Economic Management /Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI).

Macro-economic and development policy. The "Choosing Success" series of four policy dialogue papers, prepared by the UN and Harvard University, critically examined macroeconomic and development policy options available to the Vietnamese authorities. All four papers were directly submitted to the Prime Minister and had great resonance within policy circles and the media, both nationally and internationally.

Policy dialogue on socio-economic development. The UN has been very active in organizing both public and 'closed-door' policy dialogues with the Vietnamese policy research community and representatives of civil society, the Government, international development partners and the Party on priority socio-economic development issues. Among other initiatives, socio-economic policy dialogue events have been organized with the participation of prominent academics and practitioners such as Professor Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Ha-Joon Chang, Simon Maxwell, and James Riedel.

POLICY REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT

[Development of Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Strategy/Socio-Economic Development Plan \(SEDS/SEDP\)](#). To support the development of the 2011-2015 SEDP (currently under preparation) and advocate for the inclusion of certain key issues, UN-wide advocacy messages were developed and adopted by the UNCT in 2009. The messages are a key instrument to support a unified UN voice on issues critical to Viet Nam's socio-economic development in the medium term. Most advocacy work will take place in 2010, in particular when the second draft SEDP is made available by the Government for consultations. Together with bilateral and other multilateral donors, the UN has established a Donor Working Group that will consolidate various UN agency inputs and engage with the SEDP drafting team. Already it is clear that the first draft of the SEDP reflects issues which were the focus of significant recent UN policy advice and advocacy work, such as the importance of social protection in socio-economic development and reducing child poverty.

[Poverty reduction, including the National Targeted Programme on Poverty Reduction \(NTP-PR\) and the Socio-Economic Development Programme for the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas \(Programme 135\)](#). In a joint effort, coordinated by the former Social and Development Policies PCG, UN agencies provided significant substantive support to the mid-term review of the NTP-PR and Programme 135. The review process itself, as well as the various studies that were conducted to support it, have significantly influenced Government thinking about the future orientation of these critical programmes, in particular on approaches for addressing chronic and multi-dimensional poverty (in general) and poverty among ethnic minority groups (in particular); the role of social protection in view of the changing nature and geographical distribution of poverty in Viet Nam; the specific contribution of cash transfers in tackling poverty and preventing vulnerable households from various shocks; and the coordination of various programs and policies that currently form the poverty reduction and social protection policy framework. A concrete example of evidence-based advice influencing Government policy is the review of cash transfers for ethnic minority students attending semi-boarding schools. The recommendations provided through the review have actually contributed to the Government revising a decision (Decision 101 in 2009) related to the implementation of this social transfer, and broadening eligibility so that all children living in poor households in areas covered by Programme 135-II and the 62 poorest districts programme can receive the subsidy.

In addition, the UN engaged with the Committee for Social Affairs of the National Assembly to conduct a review of Government policies for poverty reduction, with financial support from Spain's policy facility. The UN has been working to articulate a number of key policy messages regarding poverty reduction in Viet Nam, and has actively engaged in discussions with the National Assembly's Committee and other Government representatives. The UN made a presentation to donors at a meeting organized at the World Bank office to highlight key findings and policy messages on poverty reduction.

It is now expected that under the Social and Economic Development Policies PCG a special meeting will be organized to discuss the architecture and directions of Government policies and programmes for poverty reduction in a forum that will bring together relevant ministries, as well as donors. The UN has worked on the concept note for this policy forum, which has been communicated to the Government.

[Child poverty](#). National and international experiences were used by the UN to support MOLISA in developing an approach to measure and analyze multi-dimensional child poverty specifically for Viet Nam. This work was taken forward via an international conference organized by MPI, MOLISA, and the

UN which focused on how to integrate the multiple dimensions of child poverty into future Government policy, the SEDP, the National Social Protection Strategy, and the NTP-PR in particular.

Elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The UN is supporting the Government to strengthen the national policy framework to eradicate the worst forms of child labour through reviewing, updating and harmonizing various legislation and policies relating to child labour. The UN is also assisting in the process of linking provincial child labour monitoring information to national statistical and labour systems.

Climate change. The UN has actively contributed to consultations on climate change policy that were enabled through the donor coordination group co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Danish Ambassador. The UN has provided direct policy advice to the Government, including in the lead up to COP13, 14 and 15 and the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC), which was approved by the PM in late 2008. The NTP-RCC mandates that sector ministries and provinces formulate climate change action plans and mainstream climate change in the national and local socio-economic development plans (2011-15), a process which began in 2009 and is continuing in 2010. Donor awareness of the NTP RCC is high and this has enabled the mobilization of substantial international finance to support Viet Nam in addressing climate change in a coordinated and coherent manner.

Economic policy. In the area of economic policy advice, an increasing number of UN projects have been moving 'upstream', focusing on the provision of assistance for capacity building and mobilizing international expertise for policy-related purposes. This includes projects on economic diplomacy policy with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), land reform policy with the Ministry of Rural Development (MARD), policy advisory services for fiscal, macro-economic and financial services (MOF), strategic development planning (DSI/MPI), urban poverty and labour market dynamics (GSO), and most recently economic analysis for the National Assembly. The UN's policy advisory work in the field of economics has included provision of analytical inputs and quality assurance to these projects through discussions and research programmes, participation in seminars and workshops, or assistance with the formulation and design of policy-relevant programmatic activities.

Public administration reform. In order to generate strategic policy advice to the Government, four policy advisors are part of the UN Viet Nam team. Working on key policy issues, the advisors provide research and recommendations to high-level decision makers. In 2009, through policy work on public administration reform (PAR), the UN's involvement has made a difference in a number of key areas related to governance and State management effectiveness.

Administrative reform. The UN provides direct policy advice to the Government on business registration reform. This work aims to link 63 provincial business registration offices to MPI and MOF for single-point, rules-based, online enterprise, tax, and statistics registration. This will allow the public to access nationwide enterprise information online and will contribute to improving transparency and corporate governance.

Social work as a profession. For the past several years, the UN has been advocating for the recognition and development of social work as a profession in Viet Nam. Following this advocacy work, provision of international technical expertise and a major national conference on social work in 2009, the Prime Minister issued a decision in March 2010 officially approving the proposal on "national social work development". He also approved the allocation of USD120 million in the proposal for the period 2010-2020. This represents a tremendous accomplishment and will make a major difference in the kind of

social welfare system that Viet Nam puts in place and sustains in order to protect the most vulnerable groups in society. Other partners involved included Ireland, Save the Children, and Atlantic Philanthropies.

National Family Strategy and National Population and Reproductive Health Strategy. The implementation of the 2005-2010 National Family Strategy, and the 2001-2010 National Population and Reproductive Health Strategies, were assessed with UN support as part of preparations for the new Family Strategy for 2011-2020 and the new Population and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2011-2020. Several policy advocacy meetings were held with the Central Committee for Social Affairs of the Fatherland Front and the MOH to stimulate discussion and action on related key issues such as the reproductive rights of couples, gender-based violence, abortion, child protection, the increase in the male-female SRB (due to a preference for boys), the “population bonus”, ageing, migration, urbanization and regional disparities in fertility and maternal mortality rates.

Internal migration. A joint paper was prepared by the Social and Economic Development Policies PCG, that outlines the opportunities and challenges that internal migration presents for Viet Nam’s socio-economic development. It is the first document of this kind that addresses the impacts of migration on the migrants and their families, on the sending as well as the receiving communities. A joint UN-VASS Conference entitled “Migration, Development and Poverty Reduction” was held in October 2009, which celebrated the release of the 2009 Human Development Report. This was followed by a two-day discussion forum on the interlinkages between internal migration, development and poverty reduction in Viet Nam, as well as the sharing of experiences from other countries in the Asian region.

National Action Plan on Children and AIDS. In 2008, the Government, with support from a broad range of partners, including the UN, finalized the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Children and HIV/AIDS, which was subsequently approved by the Prime Minister’s Office. The NPA represents an important step forward as it defines a comprehensive multi-sectoral response to the issue of children and AIDS that includes HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS. In this context, the partnership between key donors and organizations working on the issue of children and AIDS in Viet Nam has been recognized as a success in terms providing coherent and coordinated support to Government counterparts for the development of the NPA. The Partners Group consists of UN agencies, USAID and international NGOs. The NPA is currently being implemented.

Methadone Maintenance Therapy (MMT). A focus on HIV prevention has resulted in progress towards increasing access to HIV services, and most notably, to the implementation of a national pilot MMT program for drug users. This pilot was possible due to a change in the attitude of senior political leaders and legislators and in policy, and was reflected in the 2009 decision to decriminalize drug use. The UN Joint Team on HIV leads efforts to advocate for this change and inform the new policy positions. The UN worked with Government counterparts from relevant ministries and brought in bilateral partners and civil society representatives to support this process.

Nutrition/breastfeeding. The UN supported the drafting of the National Nutrition Strategy 2011-2020, together with NGOs such as Alive and Thrive. This also includes work on infant and young child feeding/exclusive breastfeeding; strong UN policy work with the MOH on infant and young child feeding and exclusive breastfeeding; and strong media outreach.

Education sector response to HIV. The Education Sub-group of the Joint UN Team on HIV has supported HIV prevention efforts by MOET. There have been two key achievements in this area to date: (1) the development of a new national curriculum integrating reproductive health and HIV prevention; and (2) the establishment of a central coordinating mechanism in MOET. The new curriculum was developed following a review of existing curricula and global best practices and, although still in the pilot phase, teachers are already seeing positive results as students start talking more openly about HIV.

In addition, during the reporting period, senior political leaders spoke out on the right of children affected by HIV to attend school. Wide media coverage of Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong's visits to children living in closed settings focused public attention on the rights of people living with HIV and the negative effects of stigma and discrimination.

Science and technology. The UN has provided direct policy advice and analysis for the formulation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2011-2020.

Cleaner production. The UN provided policy advice on the Cleaner Production Strategy, which was issued in 2009.

Climate change, industry and trade. The UN is providing policy advice on the National Action Plan of the Industry and Trade Sectors in Response to Climate Change, which is being prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT).

Infection Control MOH Circular and Master Plan 2010-2015. In order to facilitate a comprehensive and unified approach to infection prevention and control, the First Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) International Partners Informal Meeting was held in November, 2008. Updates were provided by all the international organizations and a matrix was compiled containing all the activities within Viet Nam. In November 2009, the MOH approved the Infection Control Circular. This was a landmark achievement in efforts to improve the national capacity for infection control in Viet Nam.

National employment strategy. The UN has been providing technical advisory services and financial support to MOLISA for the formulation of Viet Nam's National Employment Strategy 2011-2020. Research has been carried out to review different aspects of employment and its links with various socio-economic areas, and policy advice has been provided for the drafting of the strategy's outline.

Labour Market Master Plan. The UN has been providing technical advice and financial support to MOLISA in the formulation of Viet Nam's Master Plan of Developing Labour Market 2011-2020, including policy advice in the drafting process.

Labour market governance. Support for a harmonious labour market governance system has been provided to the National Assembly and High Level Tripartite (Government, employer and worker representatives) leaders for the development of effective policies, institutions and mechanisms.

Enterprise competitiveness. The UN, together with the IFC, are providing support to the Government and private sector to improve Viet Nam's competitiveness through greater compliance with national laws and international labour standards.

LEGAL REFORM

Gender equality. The Gender PCG has worked to support implementation of the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence. Once these laws were passed, the Government began working on the decrees to support implementation of the laws. Decrees are important because they specify Government responsibilities and also the measures to be taken to implement the law, as well as associated penalties. For both laws, UN agencies participating in the Gender PCG worked collaboratively to provide comments and feedback on the draft decrees. For the decree on measures of the Gender Equality Law, the UN convened a workshop with the drafting committee and other interested stakeholders to discuss in detail the proposed wording of the decree. Many of the suggestions made were taken up by the drafting team. For the Domestic Violence Law, the UN worked closely with the MOH to support and inform the development of a circular about how health professionals should respond to incidences of domestic violence. Consistency with international normative agreements was a key feature of the technical advice provided by the UN. Now that the decrees are developed, the UN, under the Joint Programme on Gender Equality, is continuing to support implementation, including through assistance for development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for both laws as well as training for responsible officials.

People with disabilities. The UN facilitated a legal analysis of existing domestic legislation on persons with disabilities and the development of recommendations for improvement. Specific areas of attention included the promotion of a social model of disability (as opposed to a medical model), promotion of specific attention to children with disabilities through a separate chapter, and more attention to prevention (rather than an exclusive focus on rehabilitation). These inputs were well received by the Government and the revised Law on Persons with Disabilities has been brought more in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The final version of the law is to be considered in the May 2010 session of the National Assembly.

Health insurance. The development of the 2009 Health Insurance Law was supported by the UN. In response to requests from the MOH for support, the UN provided assistance for development of a decree supporting the law and for aspects of the law that were most relevant to children's health issues.

Public consultation/policy analysis in lawmaking. The UN advocated in support of proposals for inclusion of public consultation and regulatory impact analysis in draft revisions of the Law on Laws. UN staff then (at request of the Ministry of Justice) acted as expert advisors for drafting of the implementing legislation.

Judicial reform. The UN supports the Judicial Reform Secretariat (within the Party Central Office), whose function is to conduct policy analysis and make recommendations on judicial reform to leaders, through a five-year comparative research project. The first research project – a five-country comparative study of justice sector functions – is ongoing with the University of Sydney Law School. The next project on reforming the court administration is currently under formulation.

Access to justice. The UN has commissioned independent research (currently underway) on: (i) the role of public defenders in criminal cases; and (ii) access to lawyers more generally in both civil and criminal cases. The aim is to highlight shortcomings in the existing regulatory system and advocate for change – both through inter-agency working rules currently under discussion, as well as in future revisions to the Criminal Procedure Code.

Road safety and child injury prevention. The UN has engaged strongly in policy debate and the development of public policy on both the national helmet law and the issue of children wearing motorcycle helmets.

Biodiversity. The UN supported the development of the Biodiversity Law in 2007.

Food Safety. The UN has assisted the Government in drafting the new Food Safety Law which was submitted to the National Assembly last year and awaits final ratification. Expert legal advice was provided and the UN was able to ensure harmonization and international compliance of the law. Along with the submission of the draft Food Safety Law, subsidiary decrees are being developed with UN support to facilitate the actual enforcement by the National Assembly. As part of the associated information campaign, a media event will take place in April 2010 to promote food safety in Viet Nam.

Pesticides. The UN has been asked by the Government to provide assistance in drafting the Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine Law. The first draft has been completed and related assistance will continue to be provided by the UN.

Labour standards. The UN has provided technical assistance for the revision of the Labour Code Law and Trade Union Law to make them more compliant with international labour standards. Advice on international standards and good practices are currently being provided by standards and industrial relations specialists to the two drafting committees for both laws.

Occupational health and safety. The UN has provided technical advice for the development of a new law on occupational safety and health. This has included an advisory note on the outline of a draft law to help MoLISA prepare for development of the new law (expected in 2012).

Social security. The UN has provided policy advice on development of decrees and regulations under the Social Security Law. Technical support were provided by the UN to MoLISA for the development and improvement of several implementation decrees on compulsory social insurance and voluntary social insurance, and the options for coordination of compulsory and voluntary insurance funds.

Unemployment insurance. The UN has provided policy advice and technical support for implementation of the Unemployment Insurance Law. This includes advice and support to MoLISA for the drafting of decrees and regulations for the new unemployment benefits scheme, in designing the new administrative structures, as well as building capacity for the implementation of the scheme.

Administrative punishment system. The UN is providing – at the request of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) – comparative inputs and advice on a number of key policy issues in relation to the current reform of the administrative punishment system, including on the sensitive issue of strengthening due process of the of administrative detention system.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF UN POLICY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

Health Partnership Group. The UN supported the MOH to ensure effective functioning of the Health Partnership Group and the Joint Annual Health Review. The UN was one of the partners that supported the Hanoi International Conference on Human Rights, Health and Development in October 2009. Through a partnership between the University of New South Wales and the Communist Party, the event provided a forum to discuss how human rights can contribute to health and development. The conference was followed by a national research symposium to identify research and policy priorities for Viet Nam in this area. (More information about the International Conference is available at www.healthandrights.com)

Consultative Group and Gender Action Partnership (GAP) processes. The Gender PCG and its sub-working groups have been successful in lobbying the Government to reinstate the GAP, the major cross-stakeholder consultative mechanism on gender in the country. This mechanism is receiving assistance for different policy areas from various UN agencies, including gender equality and gender-based violence. Since the re-establishment of the GAP within the new Government machinery, the UN, through the Gender PCG Sub-working Group on Gender Equality, has developed key gender policy advisory briefs for the previous mid-term and end-of-year Consultative Group meetings. A report from the December meeting has illustrated a significant increase in donor and government discussions on gender issues since the development of these briefing papers and other advocacy activities led by the group.

National Strategy (NS) and National Targeted Programme (NTP) on Gender Equality. The UN is providing strategic advice and support as part of an ongoing process of development between the sub-working group of the Gender PCG and a sub-working group of the GAP. The Gender PCG is coordinating the cross-stakeholder input into the NS and NTP as the Gender PCG is seen as a trusted partner by the Gender Equality Department in MOLISA.

Public advocacy on gender issues. To launch the UN's Asia Pacific Human Development Report 2010 on gender, the UN convened a joint media launch on 9 March 2010. Presentations from the UN were followed by a panel discussion on gender issues in the Viet Nam context. The event generated significant media interest and was widely reported in the Vietnamese and English language media.

In addition, a joint UN-Government stakeholder workshop was organized to report on the Government's Beijing +15 Progress Report and also launch several key global publications on gender equality made available in Vietnamese. A panel of representatives from different UN agencies presented initial findings of key studies and papers developed by the UN on gender issues in Viet Nam, including gender-based violence, intimate partner transmission of HIV and women's role in decision-making. The event received media attention, was well attended by stakeholders, and generated productive discussions related to emerging gender issues and trends in Viet Nam.

Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC). The UN has been asked by a small donor group to provide technical assistance to the World Bank-led Poverty Reduction Support Credit as these donors are interested in championing gender as one condition ("trigger" in World Bank parlance) for the annual loan installments.

International treaty reporting. The UN in Viet Nam is actively supporting the Government to fulfil its treaty body reporting obligations. The UN is currently implementing a project called “Capacity Building for the Implementation of International Human Rights Treaties” with MOFA. The project has succeeded in building knowledge and awareness among several hundred Government officials at central and provincial levels on the international human rights regime in general, and Viet Nam’s treaty body obligations in particular. The project has also facilitated the provision of international technical expertise and exchanges on various issues such as the Special Rapporteurs, treaty body reporting requirements and the ratification of international human rights conventions. Last year, the UN supported the Government in the preparation of the country report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was submitted to the CRC Committee in August 2009. The UN is currently supporting the preparation of the Viet Nam report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and is also supporting MOLISA to prepare the next report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The human rights-based approach to programming. In 2009, the UN in Viet Nam, through the Human Rights Technical Working Group, developed a new toolkit on mainstreaming a human rights-based approach into projects, which was launched on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2009. This is the first toolkit of this kind available in Vietnamese, and can be downloaded from the UN Vietnam website at www.un.org.vn.

Avian and human influenza. The UN assisted the Government in the development of the “Red Book” (Viet Nam’s Integrated National Plan for Avian Influenza Control and Human Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response 2006-2008) and the “Green Book”(the Integrated National Operational Program for Avian and Human Influenza) to address the threat of H5N1. This is currently under revision. An avian influenza communication campaign was also supported by the UN.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Round 9. The success of Viet Nam’s first dual-track HIV proposal to the Global Fund in Round 9 to fund civil society directly was the culmination of many partners’ efforts and led by the UN Joint Team on HIV. There were a number of policy issues to be addressed in making this possible, and the process will have long term impact on policy and programmatic approaches involving civil society. The Global Fund grant will strengthen the multisectoral response to HIV in Viet Nam because it was jointly developed and will be jointly implemented. The MOH, MOLISA and the Ministry of Public Security (MOPS) will work in partnership to implement Track 1 and a consortium of four civil society organizations will implement Track 2.

The grant for USD 101 million was approved in November 2009 and is expected to support scale-up of effective interventions and address service delivery gaps among injecting drug users (IDUs), men who have sex with men (MSM), the primary sexual partners of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and IDUs, and prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT). Under this grant, HIV treatment will be made available in selected prisons for the first time. MSM issues were also included for the first time. These inclusion of these new areas resulted from careful policy advice and support from the UN.

National Action Plan for Fisheries. The recently completed UN project “Capacity building to enhance positive impacts of WTO accession on the fisheries sector and alleviate coastal poverty” resulted in a national action plan for the integration of Viet Nam into the international fish trade within the WTO framework, which serves as a roadmap for implementation of the necessary legal, institutional and other relevant actions to comply with and fully exploit the benefits of WTO membership.

Labour market information system. Technical advice and support has been provided for developing a labour market information (LMI) system. A national Centre for Labour Market Forecasting and Information, with a network of provincial LMI units, is being developed, with LMI units being piloted in 15 provinces.

Pro-poor policy formulation. The UN participated in a regional project called “Pro-Poor Policy Formulation, Dialogue and Implementation at Country Level” which contributed to building the capacity of key Government agencies for analysis, formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies in agricultural and rural development. The project shared experience and lessons learned in successful pro-poor policies promoted through workshops and a knowledge network.

EXAMPLES OF AREAS AND TYPES OF POLICY-RELATED SUPPORT

KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE	POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADVICE	LAW REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT	OTHERS / PARTNERSHIPS
Social impact of the economic crisis	SEDS/SEDP	Law on Gender Equality	Health Partnership Group
Impact of the global economic crisis on education	National Target Programme on Poverty Reduction and Programme 135	Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control	Consultative Group and Gender Action Partnership
Universal Periodic Review (human rights)	Child poverty Climate change	Law on Persons with Disabilities	National Strategy and National Target Programme on Gender Equality
Food security	National family strategy	Health Insurance Law	Public advocacy on gender
Population census	Economic policy advice	Access to justice	Round 9 of funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
National family survey	Public Administration Reform	Law on Laws	Poverty reduction support credit
Gender-based violence	Social work	Judicial reform	Human rights treaty body reporting
Climate change	National Reproductive Health Strategy	Helmet Law	Human rights-based approach
Gender and climate change	Administrative reform	Biodiversity Law	Avian and human influenza
Sex ratio at birth	Internal migration	Food Safety Law	National Action Plan for Fisheries
National youth survey (SAVY)	National Nutrition Strategy	Plant protection and plant quarantine	Pro-poor formulation
Ethnic minority girls education	National Plan of Action on Children and AIDS	Code of Responsible Fisheries	-
Viet Nam’s employment trends	Methadone maintenance therapy	Labour Code	-

EXAMPLES OF AREAS AND TYPES OF POLICY-RELATED SUPPORT CONT...

KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE	POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADVICE	LAW REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT	OTHERS (INCLUDING PARTNERSHIPS)
Vietnam's competitiveness	Education sector response to HIV	Trade Union Law	-
Macroeconomic policy papers ("Choosing success" series)	Gender mainstreaming in HIV work	Law on Occupational Safety and Health	-
Policy dialogues	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2011-2020	Unemployment Insurance Law	-
Labour and Social Trends Report	National Plan of Action of Industry and Trade in Response to Climate Change	Reform of the administrative punishment system	-
-	National Cleaner Production Strategy	-	-
-	National Employment Strategy (2011- 2020)	-	-
-	Labour Market Master Plan (2011 -2020)	-	-
-	National policy framework and Road Map to eliminate worst forms of child labour	-	-
-	National Target Program on Occupational Safety and Health (2011 – 2015)	-	-
-	National Target Program on Employment (2011- 2015)	-	-