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**Final common country programme document for Viet Nam,  
2012-2016**

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## I. Introduction

1. For the 2006-2011 programme cycle, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (hereinafter referred to as the three organizations) developed individual country programme documents, supported by organization-based country programme action plans. However, for the 2012-2016 programme cycle, the three organizations and the Government of Viet Nam have developed a draft common country programme document, within the context of the United Nations 'delivering as one' initiative. This initiative seeks to ensure greater programme efficiency by improving harmonization and by simplifying United Nations procedures. UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will therefore submit one common country programme document to their respective Executive Boards for the 2012-2016 programme cycle.

2. The common country programme document will be fully aligned with the One Plan, 2012-2016, which is being finalized. Each organization will contribute to the outputs of the One Plan through specific interventions, which will be measured by indicators. The outputs will be in line with the mandate and comparative advantages of each organization.

3. The draft common country programme document contains a resource and results framework for each of the three organizations. The results and resources framework identifies each organization's comparative advantages at the One Plan outcome and output levels and includes indicative budgets. The One Plan will outline the details of the programme interventions and the programme management of the three organizations. Therefore, the three organizations will not prepare country programme action plans.

## II. Situation analysis

4. In 2010, Viet Nam attained middle-income country status, placing it among the countries that have achieved medium human development. Over the past two decades, Viet Nam has achieved rapid economic growth and reduced overall poverty rates, from 58.1 per cent in 1993 to 14.5 per cent in 2008, thereby raising the living standards of the population.

5. The country is on track to meet, or has met, a majority of the Millennium Development Goals at the national level. National institutions are more experienced and mature after two decades of *doimoi* (renovation) reform, with increased national engagement and participation, in particular by the National Assembly and the media.

6. Viet Nam is also increasingly engaged in global and regional institutions. It acceded to the World Trade Organization in 2007, was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council from 2008-2009, and chaired the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2010.

7. Yet, like other middle-income countries that have achieved rapid growth and reduced poverty, Viet Nam faces a number of challenges. The Socio-economic Development Strategy, 2011-2020, and an independent analysis by the United Nations acknowledged these challenges. The transformation of the national economic structure has highlighted the need to achieve better quality, sustainable growth and ensure a balance between economic growth and social, human and sustainable

development goals so that all citizens, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, can benefit from the development process.

8. Viet Nam has high and persistent poverty rates among some population groups. In 2008, the poverty rate among ethnic minorities was 50.3 per cent, compared to 8.9 per cent for the Kinh/Hoa majority. The 2010 Millennium Development Goals report pointed out that Viet Nam faces a number of emerging challenges, including urban poverty and poverty among migrants. The multidimensional nature of poverty in Viet Nam requires new approaches to reduce and measure poverty. According to the 2008 Viet Nam Household and Living Standards Survey, the monetary child poverty rate was 20.7 per cent, and the multidimensional child poverty rate was 28.9 per cent.

9. The country is undergoing a demographic transformation. The working-age population is peaking, offering a ‘demographic bonus’, accompanied by the ageing of the population and a rapidly increasing sex ratio at birth. According to the 2009 census, that ratio was 110 boys to 100 girls.

10. Viet Nam faces the challenge of ensuring inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth, and generating decent, better-paid jobs for people of working age, including the hundreds of thousands of labour market entrants seeking work each year. These challenges will require increased skills and productivity, and a regionally balanced approach to development that will provide access to employment opportunities for people where they live.

11. Another emerging challenge in Viet Nam is its vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. Natural and climatic stresses are increasing, and the country faces a rapid increase in energy demand, greenhouse gas emissions, and associated pollution and costs. Sustainable development and an effective response to climate change require efforts to reduce environmental degradation, as well as scaled-up ‘green’ production and the promotion of energy-efficient, sustainable business models and economic development. There is a need for effective disaster-risk management and reduction efforts to make sectors, regions, communities, households and individuals resilient to environmental stresses and hazards.

12. The Socio-economic Development Strategy and Plan identifies the need to develop a highly skilled population and to ensure access to social services and social security for all Vietnamese people. A more progressive and inclusive social protection system is needed. Such a system could serve as the foundation for future economic growth and prosperity by providing universal protection for all citizens when they experience crises – be they environmental, economic, health-related or personal.

13. A universal approach to social protection must replace the current, complex system of social protection programmes in order to address persistent poverty and emerging forms of vulnerability and disadvantage, and equip the country to manage and respond to rapid socio-economic and demographic change. With over one third of the population under 19 years of age, the country must improve the health and education of all children and adolescents, particularly boys and girls living in persistent poverty, and those belonging to ethnic minority groups.

14. The system of social services, including basic services such as health and education, needs to rapidly modernize and evolve to meet changing needs and expectations, and to ensure equitable access to high-quality services for all citizens.

Disparities persist in accessing essential services, such as health and education, among regions and population groups. By 2015, Viet Nam will achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals at the national level. However, some groups, including migrants, ethnic minorities and the poor, lag behind. The commercialization and privatization of social services, limited accountability and oversight, and inefficient public investment have undermined equitable access to services for all people, and have exacerbated inequalities and disparities.

15. While Viet Nam has made progress towards achieving gender equality and ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, disparities remain, including at the subnational level and in rural and remote areas. Gender inequality persists, including in the labour market, where women are concentrated in the informal sector, and in decision-making, where women are less well represented, particularly at the local level. Gender inequality also exists in households, where a strong preference for sons and domestic violence reinforce gender relations and norms. A 2010 General Statistics Office survey found that domestic violence affects a third of women in Viet Nam during their lifetimes.

16. Concerted action by all stakeholders, together with increased awareness and capacity of rights holders and duty bearers, is required to realize gender-equality commitments. Greater investment is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for all people. Viet Nam lags behind in its efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6 (on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), and Millennium Development Goal 7 (on ensuring environmental sustainability).

17. Viet Nam is a country in transition, engaged in a process of institutional reform. The Socio-economic Development Strategy acknowledges the importance of reform in governance. Viet Nam needs modern institutions that are able to respond to and manage the complex challenges and changes the country will face in the next five to 10 years. Continued reform and modernization of policy development processes; stronger and more effective national and subnational institutions; enhanced parliamentary development and oversight; more determined, informed and focused efforts to combat corruption; and greater participation by all stakeholders and citizens in policymaking, planning and monitoring performance at all levels are required.

18. The Socio-economic Development Strategy, 2011-2020, states the need to enhance capacity and establish mechanisms for people to exercise and master their right to direct democracy, so as to promote vigorously all creative capabilities and guarantee a high degree of consensus in society, thereby generating a driving force for national development. The Strategy seeks to strengthen the participation of all citizens to ensure better, more effective and more accountable and transparent governance, so that all Vietnamese people have a say in the decisions that affect them and fully realize their choices and capabilities.

19. A more supportive regulatory environment is required for greater engagement of political, social, professional and mass organizations in decision-making processes, service delivery and policy dialogue. The rule of law needs to be strengthened, so that all people, institutions and entities are accountable to laws that are equally enforced and independently adjudicated. There is also a need to ensure access to justice for all citizens, in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, who rely on the law to protect them from stigma and disadvantage. This, together

with increased engagement by the Government in implementing human rights treaties, will also contribute towards strengthening the rule of law.

### **III. Past cooperation and lessons learned**

20. This section outlines past cooperation and lessons learned under the ‘delivering as one’ initiative piloted in Viet Nam. The One Plan, 2006-2011, embodied the commitment of United Nations organizations in Viet Nam to ‘delivering as one’. It was led by the Government and had the support of the donor community. The One Plan, 2006-2011, which included 14 participating organizations, provided an overarching programmatic framework for the work of the United Nations in Viet Nam. The One Plan management plan defined the coordination mechanisms that supported and implemented the Plan.

21. An independent, country-led evaluation conducted in 2010 found that the United Nations in Viet Nam had made impressive progress towards ‘delivering as one’ over the period of the One Plan, 2006-2011. The evaluation noted a shift towards high-quality policy work and the establishment of United Nations-Government programme coordination groups to coordinate the implementation of the Plan. The evaluation found that the programme coordination groups created an opportunity for improved performance. Cross-cutting issues, especially those related to gender, human rights and HIV, received increased attention.

22. According to the evaluation, the policy dialogue and advocacy role of the United Nations has been strengthened, in line with the role of the United Nations in supporting the implementation of international norms and standards. One leader, the vision and ambition of the United Nations country team, and the support of one communications team contributed to this strengthening.

23. Additional achievements include the tripartite governance structure developed in Viet Nam, which has been effective in ensuring reform led by the Government and in engaging donors. The One Plan fund has enabled a more flexible allocation of funds at the country level. The United Nations has also sought to harmonize business practices. Once built, the ‘green’ One United Nations house in Ha Noi will demonstrate the commitment of the United Nations to ‘delivering as one’, ensuring environmental sustainability and addressing climate change.

24. The independent, country-led evaluation identified the need to build on achievements and demonstrate a more explicit approach to reform by: (a) harmonizing the next One Plan with national planning cycles; (b) identifying the comparative advantages of United Nations organizations; and (c) adopting a more systematic approach to policy work, together with a more explicit justification for service-delivery work and support to policy implementation.

25. The evaluation also identified sustainability concerns, including those related to providing resources for the One Plan and ensuring the empowerment of the Resident Coordinator as one leader; demonstrating efficiencies and cost effectiveness, as well as development results; improving harmonization of business practices; and ensuring the sustainability of the one communications team.

26. Lessons learned from developing and implementing the One Plan, 2006-2011, highlighted in the evaluation, have influenced the development of the One Plan,

2012-2016, as well as its content. The new One Plan represents a departure from the previous One Plan, which was based on the country cooperation plans and frameworks of individual organizations. The new One Plan represents a single framework for participating United Nations organizations in Viet Nam and a joint programme of work, based on the comparative advantages of participating organizations.

27. The One Plan represents the joint priorities and focus areas of the United Nations in Viet Nam. It signifies a shift towards high-quality policy work designed to support the Government in addressing and managing the challenges associated with middle-income country status, and emphasizes high-quality technical assistance, capacity development at national and subnational levels, and the United Nations role in convening stakeholders and expanding partnerships.

28. The Government and the United Nations developed the plan jointly from an overall conceptual framework. It includes jointly identified focus areas, outcomes, outputs and indicators. The programming documents of participating United Nations organizations are based on the draft One Plan.

29. The process for developing the Plan was participatory, and involved key stakeholders from the Government, donor organizations and political, social, professional and mass organizations. These stakeholders were fully engaged in the development of focus areas, outcomes and outputs.

30. The Plan was also based on an in-depth analysis that included: (a) an independent, joint country analysis commissioned by the United Nations and a like-minded donor group in Viet Nam; (b) the independent, country-led evaluation; and (c) United Nations analytical work that outlined the development challenges Viet Nam will face over the period of the One Plan. The Plan identifies the key interventions of the United Nations in Viet Nam during the next five years, in response to the national priorities established in the Socio-economic Development Strategy, 2011-2020, and the draft Socio-economic Development Plan, 2011-2015.

#### **IV. Proposed programme**

31. Because Viet Nam is a middle-income country, it requires best-practice, high-quality policy advice on how to respond to the challenges associated with its middle-income status, including widening inequalities and disparities, and persistent poverty in specific regions and population groups. The United Nations is well placed to provide such policy advice and access to international best practices, and to help the Government bridge the policy-implementation gap. For example, the United Nations can assist in conducting targeted policy research, pilot innovative interventions and responses that can be scaled up, and present costed policy options to decision makers.

32. As a result of the global financial crisis, overseas development assistance is declining, and Viet Nam's shift to middle-income country status will result in adjustments in future aid. Some donors have indicated that they intend to scale down or end their assistance. However, Viet Nam would benefit from ongoing support from development partners if it is to continue to progress and address the challenges associated with middle-income country status. Although the United Nations contributed less than 1.5 per cent of the estimated \$7.9 billion in aid pledged to Viet

Nam in 2010, it is uniquely placed to help the Government leverage resources, using its convening power and normative role to ensure that resources are utilized effectively and in the interests of Vietnamese citizens.

33. Within this context, the United Nations, in collaboration with the Government, development partners and political, social, professional and mass organizations, has identified the following comparative advantages, which it seeks to maximize over the period of the One Plan. This also entails continued strategic engagement with multilateral organizations to deliver complementary roles, including in the areas of economic transformation and institutional reform, social protection, sustainable development and participatory governance. The United Nations in Viet Nam will:

(a) Use its convening power to bring together stakeholders and provide coordination, including on critical cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, HIV, climate change and human rights-based approaches to development;

(b) Provide policy advice, in particular on strategic issues and in line with international norms and standards, including support to integrate those norms and standards into national legislative and policy frameworks and monitor their implementation and impact on beneficiaries. The United Nations will draw on the collective global assets of the United Nations system to provide technical expertise and promote the exchange of knowledge based on international best practices. It will also support innovative approaches to human and social development issues and the implementation of global normative standards;

(c) Advocate and help to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are heard, and issues related to inequality are addressed in national policy processes. .

(d) Facilitate a multisectoral approach and help the Government to coordinate its response to complex issues such as climate change, social protection, sustainable development, a multidimensional approach to poverty reduction, HIV, governance and gender equality, all of which require a cross-agency approach;

(e) Maximize the comparative advantages and added value it offers as a multilateral organization that is ‘delivering as one’, capitalizing on a multidimensional approach to support the Government on cross-government, multisectoral issues and challenges over the coming years, as well as to support improved coordination and coherence between the Government and stakeholders in response to these challenges.

34. During the period covered by the One Plan, the United Nations will work with the Government and people of Viet Nam to ensure a balance between economic, human and sustainable development objectives. It will help the Government achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth, access to high-quality, essential services and social protection, and enhanced governance and participation. The draft common country programme document is aligned with the focus areas and outcomes of the One Plan. Using their comparative advantages and working within their mandates, the three organizations will work with the Government to develop programmes to respond to these outcomes.

35. In the area of inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth (focus area one), the United Nations will focus on the following outcomes by 2016:

(a) Outcome 1.1: Key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centred, 'green' and evidence-based socio-economic development policies to ensure the quality of growth in Viet Nam as a middle-income country;

(b) Outcome 1.2: Institutions create opportunities for decent work for people of working age, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, to benefit from the process of socio-economic transformation;

(c) Outcome 1.3: Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, have established and monitor multisectoral strategies, mechanisms and resources to support the implementation of relevant multilateral agreements and effectively address climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster-risk management;

(d) Outcome 1.4: Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, implement and monitor laws, policies and programmes for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management, and to implement commitments under international conventions.

36. In the area of access to quality essential services and social protection (focus area two), the United Nations will focus on the following outcomes by 2016:

(a) Outcome 2.1: A more effective national social protection system provides increased coverage, quality, and equitable access for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(b) Outcome 2.2: Increased quality and effective management of a comprehensive national health system, including health promotion and health protection, with a focus on ensuring more equitable access for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(c) Outcome 2.3: Increased quality and effective management of education and training systems, and increased access to pre-primary, primary and continuing education, particularly for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(d) Outcome 2.4: National and subnational institutions, in partnership with communities, more actively address inequalities through the implementation and monitoring of laws, policies and programmes that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and an effective and sustainable response to HIV, reducing stigma and discrimination.

37. In the area of enhancing governance and participation (focus area three), the United Nations will focus on the following outcomes by 2016:

(a) Outcome 3.1: Elected bodies are better able to formulate laws, oversee the performance of state agencies and represent the aspirations of the Vietnamese people, especially women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(b) Outcome 3.2: All citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, benefit from strengthened legal and judicial reform and increased access to justice, enhanced capacity of legal and judicial professionals, and

strengthened national legal frameworks to support the implementation of international conventions ratified by Viet Nam;

(c) Outcome 3.3: Improved performance of public-sector institutions at national and subnational levels, through enhanced coordination, accountability, transparency and anti-corruption efforts, will reduce disparities and ensure access to public services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(d) Outcome 3.4: Political, social, professional and mass organizations participate effectively in policy discussions and decision-making processes for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

38. The United Nations will provide high-quality policy advice and support to the Government, using its convening role and ensuring coordination on cross-sectoral issues and challenges. The United Nations will take a policy-oriented, targeted approach to reduce inequalities and disparities, including disparities in wealth, in access to opportunities and services, and among different regions and socio-economic groups, focusing on those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

39. The United Nations will integrate a human rights-based approach into all programming, and will promote gender equality, women's empowerment and culturally appropriate programming in its interventions. The United Nations will take a cross-sectoral approach to development challenges, and will continue its support for government efforts to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation.

40. The total indicative budget for the One Plan is \$478.655 million, of which \$90.243 million is from regular resources. The aggregated indicative budget of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF is \$253.51 million, of which \$84.715 million is from regular resources and \$168.795 million is from other resources.

## **V. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation**

41. During the period covered by the One Plan, 2012-2016, the United Nations in Viet Nam will further refine the programme management practices developed during the previous One Plan. The tripartite governance structure of the One Plan highlights the way the United Nations works in partnership with the Government and the donor community. This structure will provide continued leadership and oversight for the next One Plan.

42. In line with the Paris Declaration and the Hanoi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness, the three organizations have agreed to support the objective of the national implementation modality as agreed in the harmonized programme and project management guidelines. The Government and the United Nations will define coordination mechanisms and management arrangements in line with the One Plan 2012-2016. The details of programme management are being developed in chapter V of the draft One Plan, 2012-2016, in consultation with the Government and donors. Risk management will be addressed through established procedures, including a macro assessment of the public financial management system in Viet Nam as well as micro assessments of implementing partners, as outlined in the One Plan. Resources will be mobilized at the country level under the oversight and management of the One Plan Fund Mobilization and Allocation Committee, using agreed criteria to prioritize and allocate funds. The One Plan describes how the One Plan will be

implemented, including partnership arrangements and the respective responsibilities of the Government and the United Nations.

43. The United Nations in Viet Nam is committed to strengthening management for results and will make greater use of evaluations to measure the impact of supported programmes in Viet Nam. The Government and the United Nations have developed a robust results framework for the One Plan, whereby results can be clearly attributed to United Nations interventions. The independent, country-led evaluation provides a baseline for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the 'delivering as one' initiative in Viet Nam.

44. During the period covered by the One Plan, the United Nations will further strengthen its capacity and develop additional tools and methods to report on the impact of its policy advice and advocacy. The United Nations is committed to evaluating the results of the One Plan, and has established a joint evaluation framework and monitoring and evaluation calendar for the period 2012-2016. A detailed monitoring and evaluation matrix is included as an annex to the One Plan.