

**UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM VIET NAM**  
**DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 4**

# Culture and Development in Viet Nam



Ha Noi  
December 2003

## **The Mission of the United Nations in Viet Nam**

The United Nations, in partnership with the government and people of Viet Nam, works to ensure that all Vietnamese people enjoy an increasingly healthy and prosperous life with greater human dignity and expanded choices. Collectively and through its individual agencies, the United Nations cares and creates opportunities for the poor and most vulnerable, and for youth, to whom the future belongs.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter and Millennium Declaration, the United Nations advances the principles of equality and social justice, while providing impartial advice, technical expertise, access to global knowledge and local experience to meet Viet Nam's development challenges.

# Culture and Development in Viet Nam

Ha Noi, December 2003

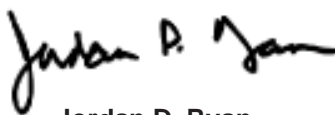
## **FOREWORD BY THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR**

As Viet Nam continues along its ambitious development path, the issue of sustainability has been an abiding concern of the United Nations system at work here. The focus on sustainability naturally turned, in the first instance, on issues of economic and financial sustainability as the country emerged from being a centrally planned economy with the adoption of *doi moi*. But with the macroeconomic conditions relatively stable, the United Nations has urged the government to pay attention to other dimensions of sustainability, especially in the social and environmental fields.

Prepared by a team of experts commissioned by UNESCO, this important paper argues that an additional element must be considered in the effort to ensure sustainability: culture. The role and impact of culture and its link to development must be regarded as central elements in the move toward sustainability. For Viet Nam to enjoy an even brighter future, it needs to harness the dynamism of its cultural diversity.

Viet Nam also needs to confront various cultural challenges, which require new approaches to the sharing of and openness to information and knowledge. The importance of open dialogue with diverse cultural communities and the overarching value of participatory decision-making are central features of this United Nations Country Team paper.

All of us in the United Nations Country Team are pleased to present this discussion paper as part of our on-going efforts to raise issues vital to Viet Nam. And as this paper so rightly points out, culture is key to the nation's future.



**Jordan D. Ryan**  
UN Resident Coordinator

## ***Acknowledgements***

The preparation of this paper was led by the UNESCO Ha Noi Office based on the contributions from the following team of experts; Professor Pham Xuan Nam<sup>1</sup> prepared the Vietnamese framework for the document based on interviews with national experts; Professor Amareswar Galla<sup>2</sup> conducted a desk audit of all available documentation and interviewed the national and international experts including the United Nations and other heads of agencies in Ha Noi. Professor William Logan added the material based on his research in Ha Noi.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Slatis, a former staff member of UNESCO Office Ha Noi, compiled and edited these contributions into the present Discussion Paper with comments from the UN Country Team in Viet Nam.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Professor Pham Xuan Nam is former Vice Director of the National Centre for Social Sciences of Viet Nam and Vice President of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO. He is author of the book *Culture in Development, A View from Viet Nam* published in 1997, and *Culture for Development* in 1998.
  - <sup>2</sup> Professor Amareswar Galla is Principal Technical Adviser on the feasibility of the Ha Long Ecomuseum Development, a project piloting culture and heritage in sustainable development. He has also developed a five-year action plan for the protection and promotion of Hoi An World Heritage Area and prepared the *UNESCO Guidebook for the Participation of Young People in Heritage Conservation*. He is currently working on the Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre project in Ha Long Bay. He is the Professor and Director of Studies of Sustainable Heritage Development Programs in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University who gave the plenary address to the UNESCO Stockholm +5 meeting in May 2003 to follow up on the Stockholm Action Plan and the Final Report of the World Commission for Culture and Development entitled *Our Creative Diversity*.
  - <sup>3</sup> William Logan added material on Ha Noi to the final document prepared by Professors Nam and Galla. He holds the UNESCO Chair of Heritage and Urbanism at Deakin University, Melbourne, and is currently President of Australia ICOMOS and Chair of the Australian ministerial advisory committee, the National Cultural Heritage Forum. His latest books are *Ha Noi: Biography of a City* (2000) and *The Disappearing 'Asian' City: Protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a Globalizing World* (2002).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	i
Glossary of Terms .....	ii
1. LOCAL CHALLENGES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT .....	1
1.1 Culture as a key factor in development .....	2
1.2 An international cultural framework to support national policies .....	4
1.3 Culture in national policies .....	7
1.4 Current cultural policies: 'State and people develop culture together' .....	8
1.5 Culture and development challenges in Viet Nam .....	9
1.6 Illustrating the role of culture in the development response .....	11
2. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION .....	18
2.1 Developing national cultural policies .....	18
2.2 Constraints to the effective use of cultural resources .....	19
2.3 Integration of cultural policies into the development agenda .....	20
3. CONCLUSION .....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	24
Published .....	24
Unpublished .....	25
APPENDIX I: Status of Ratification of Key Conventions and Agreements of a Standard-setting Nature in the Area of Culture in Viet Nam .....	26

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEMP	Committee for Ethnic Minority People
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CPRGS	The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
CPV	Communist Party of Viet Nam
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoCI	Ministry of Culture and Information
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLISA	Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs
MONDIACULT	World Conference on Cultural Policies
MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology
MoT	Ministry of Transportation
SRV	Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
TRAFFIC	The wildlife trade-monitoring network
UDCD	Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WDCD	United Nations World Decade for Cultural Diversity
WIPO	The World Intellectual Property Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund For Nature

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both a driving force and goal for development, culture is a key factor impacting on every stage of the development process. For development to be relevant and responsive, due attention will have to be paid to both the tangible and the intangible dimensions of culture. The aim is to make development efforts culturally sensitive, and to fully exploit the positive potentials of culture in propelling and accelerating development, while avoiding any negative cultural factors. At the same time, one must be wary of the potentials of certain development models in eroding cultural identities, reducing cultural diversity, and inducing irretrievable losses to the national and local cultural heritage.

Within these premises, the role of culture for development is first explored in this Discussion Paper in terms of the ramifications of a series of international declarations and landmark conferences, including the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. From the international context, the focus is shifted to the recognition of culture in the national policies of Viet Nam, starting from the initiation of the *doi moi* process up until today. It is argued that in order to successfully address the many development challenges in Viet Nam, the role of culture must be fully recognized, and issues of cultural identity and diversity thoroughly assessed and accommodated in policy interventions.

Through six examples illustrating the cultural approach in a number of different development sectors in Viet Nam, a framework for action towards this end takes shape. Leaning on strategy development applied in the region and noting the constraints to the effective use of resources, some suggestions are advanced for introducing cultural policy considerations into the development agenda. The key strategy directions are the gradual merging of cultural and socio-economic objectives; recognition of the specific cultural characteristics of the population for social issues; use of indigenous cultural resources for socio-economic development; promotion of knowledge sharing and exchange; as well as the application of culture to strengthen cultural identities and diversity, and to contribute to sustainable social and economic development.

In concluding the paper, it is noted that for such strategic directions to take effect, specific interventions and operational changes will be needed in order to alter the development trajectory towards greater sustainability of the country's economy, environment and society. It is emphasized that the development of culture should progress side-by-side with economic and social development and environmental protection in Viet Nam.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Conservation*: All measures and processes of looking after a place or social practices and representations so as to retain their cultural significance and preserve them from neglect, destruction or exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

*Cultural goods*: Consumer goods that ‘convey ideas, symbols and ways of life’, which inform or entertain, and contribute to build collective identity and influence cultural practices. These include, among other cultural offerings, books, magazines, multimedia products, software, films, videos, crafts and fashion design.<sup>5</sup>

*Cultural resource*: The result of humanity’s interaction with or intervention in the natural world and its natural resources, referring to not only the arts, letters and heritage, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

*Cultural services*: ‘Activities aimed at satisfying cultural interests or needs’; they include the provision and promotion of cultural performances and events, cultural information and preservation (libraries, documentation centres, museums etc.) offered either free of charge or on a commercial basis.<sup>7</sup>

*Cultural tourism*: Various forms of tourism that include cultural services, and ranging from experiencing culture in ethnic minority communities relatively untouched by modern lifestyles to tours of past or mainstream cultural sites.<sup>8</sup>

*Intangible heritage*: The practices and representations—together with their necessary knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artefacts and places—that are recognized as such by communities and individuals. This heritage is constantly recreated by communities and provide them with a sense of continuity and identity, and include domains such as social practices and rituals, performing arts and knowledge and practices about nature.<sup>9</sup>

*Tangible heritage*: The material products with historical, cultural or scientific value, including historical-cultural sites, scenic landscapes, relics, antiquities and national treasures.<sup>10</sup> The division between the tangible and intangible is a conceptual one, as they both constitute a part of the cultural heritage and need to be approached holistically in their conservation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Aplin 2002 and *Glossary for Intangible Heritage prepared by an International Meeting of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage*, UNESCO 2002.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO 2000.

<sup>6</sup> *Our Creative Diversity*, Final Report of the World Commission for Culture and Development, UNESCO, Paris, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Aplin 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Based on definition included in *Glossary for Intangible Heritage prepared by an International Meeting of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage*, UNESCO 2002.

## 1. LOCAL CHALLENGES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

*'For survival and for the purpose of life, mankind created and invented languages, script, ethics, laws, science, religion, literature, art, daily tools for clothing, food, dwelling, and made use of them. All of those creations and inventions constitute culture'*

**President Ho Chi Minh**

There is a growing awareness that culture is not only a driving force and goal of development but also a key factor influencing every step in the development process. Experience over the past decades across continents has shown that development approaches, which take full account of national and local culture, often have a higher chance of success and sustainability. Such development efforts are more relevant and responsive to needs and benefits from broader community mobilization, support and participation. It is therefore essential to make development efforts culturally sensitive, and to fully exploit the positive potentials of culture in propelling and accelerating development, while avoiding any negative cultural factors. At the same time, one should be wary of the potentials of certain development models in eroding cultural identities, reducing cultural diversity, and inducing irretrievable losses to the national and local cultural heritage.

Culture has both tangible as well as intangible dimensions (see Glossary), and increasing attention is being given to identifying, inventorying, and preserving both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Following the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, the world community has adopted at the UNESCO General Conference in 2003, an International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Similarly, development also has its tangible and intangible facets. Many people tend to perceive, plan, implement and measure development in terms of kilometers of roads and number of bridges, hospitals, schools, etc. However, there is a growing recognition that it is equally important to pay attention to the intangible aspects of development, by forming appropriate attitudes, knowledge, capacities, commitment and culture among people in the local communities. These are key determinants of the sustainability of development processes and results in which culture has been shown to play a determinant role. Adopting a holistic approach to development by including both tangible and intangible cultural dimensions as both factors and outcomes will be a critical requirement.

How can Viet Nam best draw on its rich culture to contribute to its growth and development that will not only minimize cultural losses but also further enhance

the culture of the nation and of its people? This paper intends to contribute in a small way to this ongoing reflection in Viet Nam by analysing the interactions between culture and development, and seeking to bring them together into a single, holistic, and mutually supportive perspective.

### 1.1. Culture as a key factor in development

Culture is not an optional side benefit of development; it is central to people's participation especially among disadvantaged and poorer population groups. It is human energy, solidarity and creativity that are rooted in history, language and living traditions, which determines and propels development. Ideas about dignity, hope and the future are articulated by different population groups in terms of highly specific idioms of value, meaning and beliefs. The values embodied in a particular culture also provide the building blocks of a sense of identity and belonging, mould attitudes towards family life, work and consumption, guide political behaviour, and inspire collective action. Cultural heritage as well as cultural goods and services enrich communities in ways that cannot be readily measured quantitatively. Development must bear these in mind so as to be both relevant and sustainable.

A historic turning point in the recognition of the role of culture in development was the World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT) convened by UNESCO in Mexico City in 1982. This conference laid down the initial working definition of culture that has subsequently informed the work in this area until the recent Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (see box). The conference also led to the United Nations World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD; 1988-1997) which, together with the debates at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), greatly improved our understanding of the interaction between cultural factors and the development process and stimulated many concrete initiatives around the world.

*'Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs'.*

**Definition of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in 2001**

During this period, the United Nations, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) adopted the concept of 'human development'. This concept envisages the enlarging of people's capabilities and life choices through the development process. It is recognized that human

development needs to be measured in terms of a broad set of human capacities, ranging from political, economic and social participation to the opportunities that an individual has to be healthy, educated, productive and creative and to enjoy a sense of cultural identity, amongst other benefits. By expanding life choices, development increases people's awareness and influences their preferences, including those in culture. In a globalizing world, development opens up multiple opportunities for people, especially youth, to access and to adopt other cultures. In principle, this brings about cultural cross-fertilization and enrichment but the actual impact on a national or local culture is ultimately defined by the strength and dynamics of that exchange.

In the first of a series of international conferences, which initiated the still evolving process of bringing culture to the heart of the policy making agenda, it was noted that *'the diversity of national cultures, their uniqueness and originality are an essential basis for human progress and the development of world culture'*<sup>11</sup> Soon thereafter, this view was affirmed and expanded by inviting states *'to determine their economic and social objectives within a wider cultural context and to reassert those values which contribute towards realizing a human society.'*<sup>12</sup>

The World Commission on Culture and Development<sup>13</sup>, the Inter-governmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, Sweden, 1998), and the *World Culture Report* advocate and reinforce the concept that sustainable development and the maintenance of local cultures go hand in hand. Indeed, the Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development adopted by the Stockholm Conference urged the Member States to: *'design and establish cultural policies or review existing ones in such a way that they become one of the key components of endogenous and sustainable development; [to] promote to this end the integration of cultural policies into development policies, in particular as regards their interaction with social and economic policies.'*<sup>14</sup> Endogenous and sustainable development, in turn, is dependent on a community's sense of identity, ownership and social cohesion, and without these, the grassroots support for development will be weak and inefficient.

---

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Resolution adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional, Administrative and Financial Aspects of Cultural Policies, Venice, Italy, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> Declaration of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Asia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1973.

<sup>13</sup> The independent World Commission on Culture and Development, chaired by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former Secretary General of the United Nations, was created during the WDCD, and completed its work in 1995.

<sup>14</sup> 'Policy Objectives Recommended to Member States' of the Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development, adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference of Cultural Policies for Development. (Final Report CLT-98/Conf.210/5).

## 1.2. An international cultural framework to support national policies

Where the World Decade for Cultural Development and the work of the above-mentioned Commissions and Conferences have played an instrumental role for reaching a common understanding of the role of culture in development, there are a set of specific legal instruments that guide and oblige signatory countries to review and harmonize their policies in culture according to these commitments. These key documents set the international framework for the establishment of an articulated cultural policy for development, and also benefit the Government of Viet Nam in its policy development.

First, the Millennium Declaration<sup>15</sup> ratified at the UN Millennium Summit (New York, N.Y., USA, 2000) by 189 Member States committed them to reach its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The MDGs for Viet Nam,<sup>16</sup> with their specific targets and indicators, provide a road map to poverty and hunger reduction, universal education, improved health, environmental sustainability, freedom, justice and equity for all. The successful achievement of these goals is in many ways contingent on a keen awareness of the force of culture in the development process, as well as enhancing culture through development. A well articulated cultural policy, taking into account these principles, should contribute to MDGs.

Second, in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992), the crucial role of culture for sustainable development was recognized in emphasizing '*cultural considerations*' in the implementation of programmes in a number of areas, e.g. human settlements, health and population activities. It calls specific attention to disadvantaged groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, stipulating '*Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.*'<sup>17</sup> In addition, Agenda 21 is relevant for heritage conservation and tourism, urging municipalities to: '*Improve the urban environment ... through the participation of local communities in ... the protection and/or rehabilitation*

---

<sup>15</sup> UN Resolution A/RES/55/2.

<sup>16</sup> The United Nations in Viet Nam: *Millennium Development Goals: Bringing the MDGs Closer to the People*, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Principle 22 in Annex I: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, of Resolution 1 adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

*of older buildings, historic precincts and other cultural artifacts.’ and to ‘Promote the formulation of environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programmes’<sup>18</sup>.*

Third, the relationship between sustainable development and cultural diversity is expressed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted unanimously at the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference (Paris, France, 2001).<sup>19</sup> The Declaration proclaims the principles for cultural diversity and its preservation in 12 Articles, in which cultural diversity is conceived as ‘*a source of exchange, innovation, creativity, [and it] is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations*’.<sup>20</sup> The translation of cultural diversity to cultural pluralism, in turn, builds on the axiom that ‘*Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity*’. Furthermore, a prerequisite for cultural diversity are cultural rights, which are an integral part of human rights and include, *inter alia*, free flow of information, entitlement to quality education that fully respect cultural identities and equal access for all to this diversity.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the Declaration underlines the importance of heritage as a wellspring of creativity that needs to be preserved and enhanced in all its forms as to foster diversity. Cultural policies take on the role as catalysts of this creativity, and hence each Member State is invited to define its cultural policies and to implement them with a view to maintain and enhance the cultural diversity for sustainable development.<sup>22</sup>

The implementation of the Declaration is based on the commitment by the UNESCO Member States to take 20 specific steps towards achieving key objectives, most notably the advancement of principles, standards and practices supportive of cultural diversity on national level; clarifying the content of cultural

---

<sup>18</sup> Article 7.20 (b) and 7.20 (e), respectively, of Promoting sustainable human settlement development, in Annex II: Agenda 21 of Resolution 1 adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

<sup>19</sup> Further to this Declaration, a Convention on Cultural Diversity is being prepared by the International Network on Cultural Policy, which would provide a legally binding instrument creating rights and responsibilities for all Member States and legitimizing their right to maintain or establish national cultural policies. It has recently been reviewed by a group of Ministers of Culture, which will submit it to the Director-General of UNESCO later this year.

<sup>20</sup> Article 1: ‘Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity’, of the *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 7 and 9.

rights as an indivisible part of human rights; formulating policies and strategies for the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage; ensuring protection of copyright while upholding a public right to culture; as well as developing cultural policies in accordance with the international obligations incumbent upon each State.<sup>23</sup>

Fourth, the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002) reiterated the crucial role of culture for sustainable development as expressed in Agenda 21 and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. In relation to the former, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls States to: '*Promote the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in decision and policy making concerning the use of their traditional knowledge*'<sup>24</sup> and to '*Provide access to agricultural resources for people living in poverty, especially women and indigenous communities, and promote, as appropriate, land tenure arrangements that recognize and protect indigenous and common property resource management systems*'.<sup>25</sup> In relation to the latter, the premise for Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is expressed in '*Peace, security, stability and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, as well as respect for cultural diversity, are essential for achieving sustainable development and ensuring that sustainable development benefits all*'.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the Declarations adopted over the last decade, there is a set of conventions and agreements of a standard-setting nature that legally bind Member States after they have been ratified and entered into force. These legal instruments are also in place in the area of culture, and provide important tools for the harmonizing of national legislation to be on a par with international standards. Relevant in the context of this paper, 14 of these conventions and agreements have been listed, including their status of ratification in Viet Nam, and are found in Appendix I.

Finally, a key issue along with cultural diversity, is the protection of intangible heritage. UNESCO is currently working on the mentioned international convention to protect the oral and intangible heritage. This future convention will diminish

---

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from the *Main Lines of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, Objectives 2, 4, 13, 16 and 18, respectively.

<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 44 (l), IV. Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, in the Annex of Resolution 2: Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199/20)

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 7 (h), II. Poverty Eradication

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 5, I. Introduction



the risk of impoverishment of cultural diversity and standardization that results from the gradual loss of the oral and intangible heritage in several parts of the world. In addition to international mechanisms for technical and financial cooperation, it is foreseen that the convention will stipulate the creation of local and national management bodies, legal initiatives, educational programmes and measures for identification, recording and documentation of intangible heritage.

By adopting these declarations and signing, ratifying and acceding to UN conventions and agreements, Viet Nam sends a signal to the international community of its current stand in relation to culture and related policies. The recommendations and obligations stipulated by these documents have bearing on domestic pressing issues such as sustainable tourism, cultural resource management and equal opportunity of access to ethnic and cultural minorities. Within this framework, it is thus possible to find answers for a philosophy, strategy and actions that meet the specific development situation and requirements of Viet Nam.

### 1.3. Culture in national policies

The rapid societal transformation the Vietnamese society is currently undergoing has its roots in the *doi moi* reforms, which were launched by the Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) in 1986, a year before the start of the WDCD. A number of measures were seen as providing essential 'road clearing': significant changes in the way of thinking about economic progress and social structures, and the country officially embraced global integration as a process that would provide important opportunities for national productivity. Other changes included enforcing the rule of law, and putting people at the centre of all development policies and plans.

Cultural factors have and continue to play a central role in this reform agenda. Viet Nam places high value on the international declarations and normative initiatives of the United Nations, led by UNESCO, in this regard.<sup>27</sup> Through the country's recognition of and active participation in WDCD, its main objectives<sup>28</sup> were taken into consideration in the resolution of the Fifth Conference of the Central Committee of CPV, on the 'building of a progressive culture with the character of the Vietnamese nation'. The resolution was concretized into detailed policy measures and action programmes of different related ministries, sectors and organizations.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Nam 1998.

<sup>28</sup> The four main objectives of WDCD are: Acknowledging the cultural dimension of development; Affirming and enriching cultural identities; Broadening participation in cultural life; and Promoting international cultural cooperation (UN Resolution A/RES/41/187).

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mr. Nguyen Duy Nien, Minister of Foreign Affairs



Parallel to the principal drive for economic reform and growth, Viet Nam strives to meet the WDCD objectives, where policies formulated recognize the cultural factors in development.<sup>30</sup> Toward this end, the research work of Vietnamese scientists and practitioners has aimed at clarifying the concept and role of culture, particularly its contribution to national socio-economic development, along with the country's integration into the international community. The fruits of their efforts are seen in the great number of books written about Vietnamese culture in recent years.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the debate in Viet Nam is no longer *whether* culture matters; the principal challenge now is to see clearly *how* it matters.

#### 1.4. Current cultural policies: 'State and people develop culture together'

The socio-economic development measures and targets for 2003, as approved by the National Assembly of Viet Nam, include the provision '*to strive for successful implementation of national pilot cultural programmes; increase investment for activity that boosts cultural and art creativity; reorganize with a view to improve quality of cultural service establishments; [and] widen the national campaign to promote culture lifestyles, especially at grassroots level*'.<sup>32</sup>

The Government cabinet recently reviewed a 10 year development programme for culture with a broad ranging vision for cultural development. The programme seeks to strengthen Vietnamese culture, enable citizens to participate in cultural activities, build a healthy environment while maintaining and promoting cultural heritage and creating new cultural values. It was reaffirmed that culture is considered as the spiritual foundation of the society, and both the target for and driving force of socio economic development. In this programme, cultural development is considered a long term revolutionary cause of the entire people, which aims at achieving an advanced culture imbued with national identity, patriotism and national unity, and promoting the spirit of independence and self reliance in building a socialist Viet Nam.<sup>33</sup> This programme was submitted by

<sup>30</sup> Nam 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Some key publications include: Pham Xuan Nam (1997) *Culture and Development: A View from Viet Nam*. Social Science Publishing House; Nguyen Duy Quy, Ho Ton Trinh, Pham Xuan Nam (1996) (eds.): *Culture in Development and Globalization*. Ha Noi; Hoang Trinh (1996) *Issues on Culture and Development*. National Politics Publishing House; Thanh Duy (1996) *Culture in Development of Vietnamese Society*. Social Science Publishing House; Pham Xuan Nam (1996): *Culture and Business*. Social Science Publishing House; and Dinh Quang (1995) *Culture and Art in Social and Human Development*. National Politics Publishing House.

<sup>32</sup> Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Resolution #14/2002/QH11) *Socio-Economic Development Targets for 2003*, adopted by the National Assembly on 16 December 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Cabinet meeting 30 November 2002, reported by Viet Nam News Service 6 December 2002.

Ministry of Culture and Information (MoCI) for approval by the Prime Minister in the spring of 2003.

In relation to economic growth and poverty reduction, the role of culture has been acknowledged by the Government of Viet Nam and embedded in its strategies. For example, *The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy* (CPRGS) recognizes that major policies and measures to develop sectors and industries to promote poverty reduction and sustainable growth must also recognize culture, and in support of these actions to: '*Develop an advanced culture, strong national identity*' and '*preserve and restore our tangible and intangible cultural heritage to serve as a foundation for cultural exchanges among communities and regions throughout the nation as well as in the international arenas*'.<sup>34</sup>

### **1.5. Culture and development challenges in Viet Nam**

There are a number of characteristics specific to Viet Nam, which have a bearing on its current development challenges and indeed its opportunities from a cultural policy point of view. Key issues can be summarized as follows:

- Poverty remains a major problem in rural areas and, as noted previously, especially among ethnic minority groups in remote mountainous areas, although overall poverty in Viet Nam is declining.<sup>35</sup>
- HIV is prevalent in the country and HCMC and Quang Ninh province are especially affected. Effective policies against the spread of the epidemic are difficult to devise without recognizing its cultural dimension and the role of culture in attitudinal and behaviour changes for corresponding health programmes.
- Various forms of tangible and intangible heritage resources are under threat from increasing tourism, rapid urbanization, as well as human activities and natural deterioration and disasters. In addition, indigenous knowledge systems, such as traditional medicine, as well as endemic gene pools, which are both an integral part of the Vietnamese heritage, are of growing concern as they are being explored and exploited.
- Rapid economic growth with increased production and consumption are of particular concern in shifting a country towards sustainable development.

---

<sup>34</sup> Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2002.

<sup>35</sup> In 1990, 60% of households were in poverty, falling to 29% in 2002, while the poverty food rate fell from 30% to 12% over the same period. Today, ethnic minorities account for some 30% of those living in poverty while they make up 14% the total population.

Responsive policies can be devised if the culture underpinning consumption attitudes and patterns are taken readily into account at an early stage.

- Use of ICT for development is low<sup>36</sup>, with consequences on economic growth and on disparities between rural and urban areas, and particularly hitting the poorest segments of the population. Bridging the digital divide poses a cultural challenge as it requires a new approach to sharing of and openness to information and knowledge. Also applications of ICT to cultural resource management remain unexplored.
- Viet Nam's culturally diverse population, with 54 ethnic groups, each with its own cultural identity and concerns, impacts directly on all development policies. These identities and characteristics complement and sometimes overlap each other. And while they enrich the cultural diversity in Viet Nam, they also influence the directions of national unity, equality, community transactions and communications across the country.
- The population age distribution is bottom heavy, with a large number of young people entering the labour force each year. They have to be provided with productive work opportunities and where such are unavailable social rejection and alienation emerge, which are strong undercurrents in the present socio-cultural changes taking place.

When addressing these challenges, it is crucial to recognize there may be cultural expressions and practices that are not necessarily conducive to socio-economic development, for example in relation to health and hygiene, gender roles, or beliefs. The preservation and promotion of culture in general, and cultural diversity in particular, therefore require a thorough assessment and an open dialogue with the concerned communities in determining the kind of cultural characteristics and norms to be adopted in the development process. However, the choice is not dichotomic but rather a part of a continuous process of mutual enrichment and reconciliation of requirements for socio-economic development and cultural preservation. In this process, an over-arching value is a participatory decision-making on the kind of the culture each community wants to live in, with adequate opportunity for the expression of minority positions.<sup>37</sup> The challenge lies in how these expressions and practices are interpreted and valued, and how policies in Viet Nam will ensure that they are respected in accordance with international standards, declarations and conventions.

---

<sup>36</sup> The Networked Readiness Index developed by The Centre for International Development of Harvard University reflects the degree of use of ICT in 75 countries. Viet Nam is number 74.

<sup>37</sup> Sen March 2002.

## 1.6. Illustrating the role of culture in the development response in Viet Nam

In the following a set of six brief examples that highlight how culture can play a significant part in development in Viet Nam are presented.<sup>38</sup> The examples are by no measure exhaustive, and rather illustrate in a concrete way the role and contribution of culture in the process of development.

### *Example 1. Building Healthy Communities*

There are about 70,000 communes in Viet Nam where poverty is a major issue still to be addressed. The maintenance of healthy communities has, of course, a direct bearing on the economic output and financial status of the country as a whole. Some of the concerns centre on water supply and communicable diseases such as Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS, which need a holistic approach to prevention. Additional issues addressed concern the provision of traditional medicine, hygiene and schooling for children.

In the development of reproductive and health care services, the role of culture in facilitating attitudinal and behaviour changes on the part of both the clients and the service providers, as well as informal community leaders, is recognized and a number of behavioural change communication programmes are being piloted. The advocacy of such strategies is primarily through social marketing, but can include the mobilization of Vietnamese mass organizations, such as the Viet Nam Youth Federation and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and their respective provincial and local branches. These grass root organizations could be enlisted to facilitate teaching and learning of life skills through schooling and peer education in different contexts. The mobilization of individuals requires wider and more persuasive adult education programming. Community mobilization targeting both client and service providers is also needed to encourage people to expect the right to better service.

The importance of cultural factors in improving community health and well-being is stressed by UN agencies in Viet Nam. A concrete example is a UNAIDS/ UNESCO interdisciplinary project on the culturally appropriate approach to HIV/ AIDS prevention, care and support. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has become a threat to development and what needs to be advocated more is culturally sensitive and grounded approach and methods for effective prevention, care and support measure. In Viet Nam, two research studies were conducted to find out cultural references and resources that affect prevention, care and support. These studies revealed powerful characteristics in Vietnamese culture, based on which intervention strategy and action programmes can be drawn.

---

<sup>38</sup> The following examples are based on the consultations with UN agencies in Ha Noi.

### *Example 2. Rehabilitating Historic Urban Centres*

Urban change and development in any country must be undertaken within the context set by the unique values that form the cultural heritage of that country and its cities. The built environment of Viet Nam's towns and cities is a major tourist attraction because it reflects Vietnamese cultural and political history and because it provides the frame for cultural life today.<sup>39</sup> Viet Nam's current urban master plan, which was approved by the Government of Viet Nam in 1998, lists eight directions for urban development in the period to 2020, one of which is to combine the '*rehabilitation of old works with construction of new ones, respecting and preserving cultural identity and national traditions*'.<sup>40</sup>

Examples of the above can be seen in Ha Noi, where a particularly significant shift in attitudes towards protecting cultural heritage during the process of urban development can be seen. Special planning regulations have been introduced to control the height of new buildings around Hoan Kiem Lake and in the Ancient Quarter, and the latter has its own management board,<sup>41</sup> which principal task include planning and recommendations about the quarter, conduct research and studies, analyse various requests for and issue permits. A historic 'tube house'<sup>42</sup> has been meticulously restored to illustrate the original concept of the house and establish a genuine heritage house, open not only for the general public but specifically for consultation and technical support to the citizens living in the quarter. In Hue, cultural tourism based on the Nguyen dynasty heritage is now seen as a major source of revenue and an international cultural festival is held every two years. In Hoi An, not only has tourism and the inclusion on the World Heritage List supported the physical renewal of the heritage buildings, but also contributed to the creation of new employment in tourism management, hotel and restaurant services, and the production and sale of traditional handicrafts as tourist souvenirs. The historic built environments of other towns can also be used to support the expansion of the Vietnamese tourism industry beyond its current geographical foci.

### *Example 3. Cultural Tourism*

The economic dimension of culture is becoming well understood in Viet Nam in the realms of tourism<sup>43</sup>, and it is already important to both regional and local

---

<sup>39</sup> Logan 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Planning and Investment 2002: 66.

<sup>41</sup> Logan 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Tube house, or 'compartment house', has its name from the long corridor, 'tube', which is usually visible from the street and that links the rooms and the yards of the house together.

<sup>43</sup> Viet Nam was host to 2.63 million foreign and 13 million domestic tourists in year 2002, with total industry revenues amounting to VND 23.5 trillion (US\$1.5 billion). The Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism aims to welcome 2.8 million foreign visitors and 14 million domestic tourists in year 2003, achieving VND 25 trillion in revenue (Viet Nam News 10 Jan. 2003).

economies in terms of income and employment generation. International tourism, especially cultural tourism based on Viet Nam's cultural assets, has been highly successful during the 1990s. Tapping into the global heritage conservation system, Viet Nam has been successful in having inscribed Ha Long Bay, Hue, Hoi An and the Cham remains at My Son on the World Heritage List. The inclusion of the areas on the World Heritage List has given further impetus to cultural tourism, to associated arts and crafts, and to local development. The proposal to list Ha Noi's Ancient Quarter and citadel, together with the nearby Co Loa citadel, will provide much new publicity for Viet Nam as a tourist destination. In addition, there are currently more than 2,700 cultural heritage sites and monuments inscribed on the National Heritage List.

Domestic tourism is also growing and the revised national tourism strategy for 2001-2010 suggests policies geared towards this market segment, including publicizing local festivals and sporting events, developing local excursions and circuits, and encouraging provincial tourist exchanges.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, tourism expansion, if well managed, can lead to growth in other sectors such as arts and crafts, food, beverages, transportation, employment, social impacts, health and environment. The *Viet Nam Agenda 21: An Action Programme to shift Viet Nam towards Sustainable Development*<sup>45</sup>, supported by UNDP and Denmark, recognizes the need for policies and projects to protect and rehabilitate Viet Nam's historical and cultural relics, firstly the cultural World Heritage Areas such as Hue, Hoi An, and My Son, along with the nation's natural World Heritage Area and other highly valued natural environments. The protection of local cultural resources and community fabric is of utmost importance to ensure that the very basis of the tourism industry is not destroyed by too many tourists visiting fragile heritage sites. For instance, one solution is to allow for tourism growth while spreading the impact of tourist numbers, such as in recent advertising campaigns that have highlighted the cultural route from Hue through the central coastal zone to Nha Trang.

A shift in the tourism paradigm towards sustainable tourism development requires a community development process by which communities can recognise, interpret and manage their own cultural and environmental wealth, and actively participate in the protection and enhancement of these resources. In order to achieve this shift, there is a need for demonstration projects, for example, through volunteerism in integrated heritage preservation and tourism development.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism et. al. 2001.

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Planning and Investment 2002.

<sup>46</sup> UN Volunteers (UNV) has with the technical assistance of UNESCO successfully implemented projects in Asia where local communities are engaged in heritage conservation.

#### *Example 4. Developing Cultural Goods and Services*

Closely related to tourism is the cultural heritage embodied in artefacts and represented in intangible features, as well as the creative skills that produce them. The markets for cultural goods and services are increasing rapidly and becoming globalized,<sup>47</sup> and these commodities also make an important contribution to national, regional and local economic development. The Vietnamese growth rate has been high<sup>48</sup>, too, given its start from a very low base in the early 1990s. Domestically the trade is linked to sales to tourists, both international and domestic. Much internationally negotiated trade in cultural goods from Viet Nam is in response to overseas Vietnamese demand but there is also a growing number of handicrafts being shipped by agents in Viet Nam.

According to the *World Culture Report*, cultural enterprises producing these artefacts are generally underdeveloped in spite of the widespread distribution of cultural resources from which they benefit, and as such they constitute one of the few economic sectors that countries have not fully engaged. Yet the premises of this activity are favourable for economic development: The enterprises tend to be rurally based, engage women as producers, require relatively little capital investment and generate high employment rates. However, to successfully employ cultural enterprises in the fight against poverty, an explicit strategy focussing on this sector comprehensively must be deployed.

In order to bridge this strategy gap, the UN and other international organisations active in the area of cultural goods and services have explored the available options for augmenting economic opportunities for local artisans in craft in Asia and the Pacific region as well as in Viet Nam. Main objectives include identifying and reviving traditional products of craft producers, improving the quality of crafts as well as innovating and developing new ones with respect to the traditional techniques and its role in production. It is imperative to prepare producers to meet the demands of these emerging markets to enable them to fully benefit from the economic potential that this sector harbours. Furthermore, it is important that such producer groups, often involving ethnic minorities and women, are informed about e.g. fair labour costs and product pricing, so that the economic benefit of their work will return to themselves and their communities.

Cultural services tap into the heritage by providing cultural performances and events, cultural information and preservation. Such cultural expressions are at the heart of many important industries, which today are powerful engines of

---

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO 2000.

<sup>48</sup> According to the Viet Nam Ministry of Trade, the country's handicraft industry aims to post an export turnover of US\$600 million in 2003 and 1 billion by 2005 (AsiaPulse 31 Dec. 2002).



economic growth, particularly in the emerging knowledge economy and related to intellectual property rights. Art schools and history, literature and cognate departments in universities play an important role in maintaining and transmitting knowledge about skills of these intangible and tangible forms of cultural heritage, thus also supporting such enterprises. Museums are important collection and interpretation institutions as well as manifestations of cultural wealth. The Viet Nam Museum of Ethnology in Ha Noi, for example, demonstrates a new governmental concern for protecting cultural heritage not only for its own sake and as a source of education and inspiration for the people, but also as an economic asset linked with tourism and the development of a world-class urban environment that will attract foreign investment into other economic activities. There is considerable scope for the revitalization of other museums around Viet Nam.

#### *Example 5. Cultural and Economic Development among Ethnic Minorities*

While the ethnic diversity of Viet Nam provides a multitude of economic development opportunities for the country, the policy formulation in this area must take into account specific characteristics of the concerned communities. Many of the ethnic minorities have played an important role in the formation and development of the overall cultural features of the nation, and today constitute a precious but sensitive cultural resource.<sup>49</sup> For example, the minority ethnic groups of Hoang Lien mountain range in the north and the Central Highlands plateau are well visited and tourists bring revenue to the communities but there is limited scope for tourism expansion without destroying the fragile fabric of the ethnic minorities' life and its tourist value along with it.<sup>50</sup> In this respect, the policy of encouraging '*village tourism in more remote areas*' that is recommended in the *Revised Tourism Development Plan 2001-2010*<sup>51</sup> should advance gradually, in the light of studies on socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism.<sup>52</sup> Since much of this heritage is intangible it needs particularly sensitive approaches towards its management and protection.<sup>53</sup>

However, the vulnerability of the economic and social patterns of these ethnic minorities is also a function of their poverty. In Viet Nam, poverty is relatively higher among ethnic minorities than in that of the total population, and they suffer from inadequate infrastructure and a remoteness to basic services.<sup>54</sup> In addition, their heritage is also threatened by a perception that their traditional

---

<sup>49</sup> Interview with To Ngoc Thanh, Secretary-General, Association of Vietnamese Folklorists

<sup>50</sup> Logan 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism et al. 2001

<sup>52</sup> SRV State Committee for Sciences et al. 1991.

<sup>53</sup> Salemink (ed.) 2001.

<sup>54</sup> UNDP 2002.



lifestyle is backward, with ensuing social exclusion and little access to socio-economic decision-making processes that effect their lives. For example, massive relocations of minority populations have taken place or are envisaged due to the construction of hydroelectric power plants, which have had and will have direct consequences on land-use, traditional livelihood and culture of both the people relocated and the fellow inhabitants in their new living environment.

The Poverty Task Force, a government-donor forum for dialogue and consultation on poverty reduction, recommends in its recent report that priority be given to three specific targets as part of the main goal of eradicating poverty and preserving the culture and diversity of ethnic minorities:<sup>55</sup>

- Preserve and develop ethnic minority languages and promote bilingual literacy in areas where there are high concentrations of minority people;
- Ensure that individual and collective land-use rights for all land-use types have been allocated to the majority of ethnic mountainous people;
- Increase the proportion of government personnel of ethnic origin closer to the proportion in the national population.

These targets bring together cultural, political and economic factors, underlining the message of this Discussion Paper, that successful development depends on an understanding of culture and incorporation of the cultural factor in all policy-making, planning and project implementation.

#### *Example 6. Building a Culture of Peace*

It is important to highlight the role culture plays in building solidarity and equality, sustaining tolerance and unity, and respecting rights, freedom and peace, which are all prerequisites for sustainable development. These are characteristics of a culture of peace, which rejects violence and prevents conflicts by tackling their root causes and solving problems through education, dialogue and cooperation among individuals, groups and nations.<sup>56</sup> Thus, a culture of peace can be considered both a means and an end.

A culture of peace is crucial in the wake of the rapid urbanization that Viet Nam, together with many other countries in the region, are currently undergoing. Urban populations of differing origins living in and moving into cities transform them to meeting places where nationalities, cultures, beliefs and behaviours jostle together. The challenge is to design overall plans that are in line with economy, environment and culture. Therefore, cities need to prepare policies to

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> UN Resolution A/RES/53/243.

accommodate the needs of the population and see to it that they evolve into places where the principles of a culture of peace become a daily reality.

In this context, it is worth noting that the municipality of Ha Noi was awarded the UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize in 1998/99 for its exemplary actions against exclusion and in support of the dialogue between communities as well as for its environmental activities. UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize, which is awarded biannually, pays tribute to the initiatives of municipalities which have succeeded in strengthening social cohesion, improving living conditions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and developing genuine urban harmony. Contributing to the creation of a culture of peace underscore issues immediately linked to values of freedom, justice, solidarity, and the right to peace.

## 2. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

When formulating policies in the area of culture, it is important to realize that these policies will have an impact both horizontally, on other national policies, and vertically, on regional activities in the area of culture. Thus, national action in the culture sector becomes a part of national actions for development. This in turn plays out at regional and global levels. It is in the national interest to devise policies that are well integrated with, and supportive of, national cultural development, contributing to a concerted global and regional effort that promotes culture in development, within the framework of relevant international resolutions.

### 2. 1. Developing national cultural policies

From the examples presented above, it is apparent that culture-based methodologies are relevant when addressing challenges not only within the domain of culture itself, but for development in general. UNESCO has devised a strategic framework for culture-based intervention in the region<sup>57</sup> that could provide support and inform the policy formulation process by placing the national development challenges in an international context:

National challenge	Key words from examples used (in section I)	Strategy Development	International commitment & conventions
Poverty rates above national average among ethnic minorities and in remote areas. Work opportunities needed for young people.	Ex. 3: cultural tourism, economic opportunities, community development. Ex. 4: cultural enterprises, low capital investment, creativity, emerging markets, ethnic minorities. Ex. 5: economic development, land-use, ethnic characteristics.	Promote income generation from local cultural resources.	MDG #1, UDCD, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
High HIV/AIDS prevalence and attitudinal and behavioural change.	Ex.1: cultural references and resources, holistic approach, behavioural change.	Develop culturally sensitive strategies to combat HIV/AIDS transmission.	MDG #6,

<sup>57</sup> Adapted from UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) for the Asia and Pacific region, 2002.

National challenge	Key words from examples used (in section I)	Strategy Development	International commitment & conventions
Sharing of and openness to information and knowledge. Increased use of ICT in resource management.	Ex. 2: cultural heritage conservation, urban development.	Facilitate access to ICT for use in cultural resource management.	MDG #7, Agenda 21, Copyright Conventions
Sustainability of cultural resource management, e.g. in national tourism and environment policies.	Ex. 2: urban development. Ex. 3: tourism, spreading impact, heritage conservation. Ex. 5: ethnic minority communes, land-use.	Promote sustainable management of cultural and ecological resources.	MDG #7, Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, CITES Convention, Heritage Conventions
Protecting the cultural diversity of ethnic groups. Conservation and management of national heritage.	Ex. 4: heritage conservation and institutions. Ex. 5: ethnic minorities, access to information	Protect traditional local culture and values in response to globalization.	MDG #8, Agenda 21, Heritage and Copyright Conventions
Strengthening social cohesion and weakening tension between different segments of the population.	Ex. 5: ethnic minorities, land-use rights, access to policy making. Ex. 6: culture of peace, urbanization, cultural diversity.	Promote skills in resolution of culture-based conflicts.	UDCD, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, 1989 Convention

## 2.2. Constraints to the effective use of cultural resources

Few government organizations and budget appropriations related to culture are justified on the basis of the collective benefits that cultural projects provide. For example, cultural heritage conservation often takes lower priority than other social needs such as healthcare and provision of housing, even though a small investment in culture could—when appropriately devised—be essential to these very areas of development. Therefore, it is imperative that national, provincial and local governments accept that the development process is multi-faceted and that policies need to be formulated and actions implemented on a number of fronts simultaneously, including those related to culture if we are to reap the

full benefits of sustainable development.<sup>58</sup> Government expenditure on culture is unlikely to increase unless there is a radical change in attitudes and until this attitude shift is translated into political will.

Further, a major problem in many countries and funding organizations is the bureaucratic divide between the people in the cultural field (creators, custodians, researchers, technicians, educators and transmitters of the cultural heritage and cultural life) and those responsible for economic and financial policy-making. Policy makers and civil servants in the economic domain are sometimes reluctant to admit that the estimation of culture involves a wide range of values of which economic values are but a single dimension, whereas the culture administration often do not sufficiently appreciate the role that economic factors play in the enhancement of culture and cultural heritage. Many ministries, departments and agencies responsible for cultural affairs devote their attention mainly to cultural heritage and to a subsidized arts sector, without addressing cultural production, exchange and consumption as major economic activities in their own right. Hence, organizations—beginning from a central government level—will need to take a more pro-active and inclusive stance with regard to the cultural industries and trade, and to activities arising from this mutually beneficial field of interaction.

Finally, administrative challenges include the arbitrary and insufficiently recognized interconnections between subsidized, commercial and voluntary cultural activities. This has bearings on the incubation and inadequacy of public private partnerships for investment in cultural resources and the involvement of civil society in their use. Few countries have collected statistics on such measurable cultural phenomena as the performance of the creative industries, their rates of growth and the impact of initiatives taken to encourage them. In addition, the basic frameworks critical to develop monitoring indicators of cultural well-being in its broadest sense are lacking or insufficient. Much work remains to be done in this field.

### **2.3. Integration of cultural policies into the development agenda**

Drawing upon analyses of the international and Vietnamese experience, the following broad strategy directions and specific interventions can be presented.

#### *Strategic directions:*

1. *Cultural policies* should seek to combine socio-economic objectives with cultural goals in its policies, strategies, plans and projects, recognizing the

---

<sup>58</sup> Logan (ed.) 2002

need to provide and extend livelihood and *income generation opportunities*, especially in rural areas, for ethnic minorities and young people. Such should be based on *local cultural resources* and their effective management, and be geared towards strengthening *cultural diversity*.

2. *Policy makers* should take into account the cultural characteristics of Vietnamese society and its diverse communities, including *cultural determinants* such as ethnicity, age, gender, wealth and geographical distribution, and use this knowledge to inform *development interventions* in general, and *strategies* to combat issues such as HIV/AIDS and drug use, in particular.
3. *Development policies* should seek to best utilise *cultural resources* and overcome cultural barriers such as linguistic differences, to promote knowledge sharing and exchange among communities by means of ICTs, and develop a business environment based on open access to and sharing of information and expertise.
4. Policy makers should appreciate that *cultural characteristics* determine the outcome of economic, social and environmental policies, strategies, plans and projects, and recognize that their informed management is an *essential foundation of sustainable development*. This is also particularly so for the growth of the tourist industry in Viet Nam.
5. Based on *international declarations and conventions*, and following *best practices* from around the world, the natural and cultural heritage of Viet Nam should be preserved and drawn upon in order to strengthen national and local cultures and thereby contribute to *sustainable social and economic development*. This should not be seen as a cost, but a long-term investment.
6. *Development policies* should take into account the use of cultural resources as a record of *national achievements*, and integrate culture as a means to strengthen a sense of *identity and belonging*; guide *social and economic behaviour* and inspire *collaborative action* for greater human development of *all* citizens in Viet Nam.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In the building of the nation, President Ho asserted that culture plays a role in developing the politics, economics and social norms of a country. Thus, he emphasized that culture has a crucial position, which cannot be separated from these areas but always remain 'within' them.<sup>59</sup>

This is exactly the purpose of the culture in development debate; to raise culture as an equal 'pillar' of development alongside with economic development, social development and environmental protection<sup>60</sup>, and to both inform and act as a resource for development activities in other areas. Cultural factors should therefore be incorporated within the economic and social sector plans, administrative reforms and legislative strategies being undertaken by the Vietnamese government, non-government organizations and private sector developers, be they national or foreign.

The policy directions and interventions that such choices will entail, in turn, demand operational changes in areas such as investments, taxation, development indicators and accountability measures. The function of such actions and policies would alter the development trajectory towards greater sustainability of the country's economy, environment and society. Such an approach also advances the essence and spirit of Vietnamese culture in face of globalization and increased international interdependence. As pointed out by Mr Nguyen Khanh, former Vice Prime Minister,

*'Nowadays, the Vietnamese people understand that for fast and sustainable development, rapid development of Viet Nam into an equal, democratic and civilized society, it is necessary to build a progressive culture with the colour of the Viet Nam nation, linking it to the economy, preserving national culture, and, at the same time, strengthening cultural exchanges with other nations in the world.'*

Many forecasts see development in the twenty-first century driven by knowledge and access to information playing an increasing role in the process of economic development. While knowledge and information are transforming the nature of economies, education is the tool, which allows culture to be developed, diversified and communicated, and consequently makes it possible to innovate, create

---

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Vu Khieu, Former Dep. Director of NCSSH

<sup>60</sup> Given the importance of cultural diversity in achieving sustainable development, it was suggested during the World Summit on Sustainable Development that culture should be added as a 'fourth pillar' to the development paradigm.

and sustain that process of holistic development. Viet Nam is still in the early stages of industrialization, modernization and wealth generation for the people. The challenge that presents itself is how to successfully combine these prerequisites for national prosperity with existing endogenous cultural resources and exogenous development interventions.

The incorporation of culture within the development agenda must be a fundamental element in Viet Nam's economic growth and poverty reduction strategies of today and tomorrow. Culture has much to contribute to development and to promoting the well-being of the Vietnamese nation and its people.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Published**

- Aplin, G. (2002) *Heritage: Identification, Conservation, and Management*, Oxford University Press, Singapore.
- Galla, A. (1993) *From Consultation to Negotiation: The Nature of Community Empowerment*, Cultural Diversity Based on Cultural Grounding III, Global Network for Cultural Equity, New York.
- Galla, A. (1995) 'Authenticity: rethinking heritage diversity in a pluralistic framework', *Nara Convention on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention*. World Heritage Bureau, UNESCO, Paris, pp. 315–322.
- Galla, A. (2001) *UNESCO Guidebook for the Participation of Young People in Heritage Conservation*, UNESCO, Ha Noi.
- Galla, A. (2002) 'Culture and Heritage in Development, Ha Long Ecomuseum, A Case Study from Viet Nam, *Humanities Research*, Vol. IX. No.1, pp.63-76.
- Galla, A. (2002) 'Heritage and Tourism in Sustainable Development, Ha Long Bay Case Study', *Cultural Heritage, Man and Tourism*, University Liege, Belgium and UNESCO, pp.135-146.
- Lask, T (ed.) (2002) *Cultural Heritage, Man and Tourism*, Proceedings of the Asia-Europe Seminar On Cultural Heritage, Man And Tourism, Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 5-7 November 2001, University Liege, Belgium and UNESCO, Paris.
- Logan, W. S. (1998) 'Sustainable cultural heritage tourism in Vietnamese cities: the case of Ha Noi'. *Journal of Viet Nam Studies*. Vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 32-40.
- Logan, W. S. (2000) *Ha Noi: Biography of a City*, UNSW Press, Sydney; U. Washington Press, Seattle; Select Publishing, Singapore.
- Logan, W. S. (ed.) (2002) *The Disappearing 'Asian' City: Protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a Globalizing World*, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong.
- Pham Xuan Nam (1998) *Culture for Development*, National Politics Publishing House, Ha Noi.
- Salemink, O. (ed.) (2001) *Viet Nam's Cultural Diversity: Approaches to Preservation*. UNESCO Publishing, Mayenne.
- Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (2002) *The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS)*, Ha Noi.
- Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Law #28/2001/QH10) *Law on Cultural Heritage*.
- Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Resolution #14/2002/QH11) *Socio-Economic Development Targets for 2003*.

SRV State Committee for Sciences et al. (1991) *Viet Nam National Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development 1991 2000: Framework for Action*, Ha Noi (UNDP VIE/89/021).

United Nations in Viet Nam (2002) *Millennium Development Goals: Bringing the MDGs Closer to the People*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ha Noi.

UNDP (2002) *Localizing Millennium Development Goals for Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam: Promoting Ethnic Minority Development. Strategies for Achieving the Viet Nam Goals*, Poverty Task Force Report, Ha Noi.

UNESCO (2000) *Culture, Trade and Globalization. Questions and Answers*. UNESCO; Sector for Culture; Division of Creativity, Cultural Industries and Copyright, Lassay-les-Châteaux, April.

UNESCO (2002) *Glossary for Intangible Heritage*, prepared by an International Meeting of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage, The Hague.

UNESCO (2002) *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: A Document for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa*, Cultural Diversity Series No.1. Paris.

### **Unpublished**

Ministry of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam (2002) *Viet Nam Agenda 21: An Action Programme to Shift Viet Nam towards Sustainable Development. First Draft*. Unpublished report, Ha Noi, May.

Galla, A, (2001) *Ha Long Bay Ecomuseum Feasibility Study*, UNESCO, Hanoi.

Galla, A, (2002) *Hoi An: Five Year Developmental Plan*, UNESCO, Hanoi.

Sen, A. (2002) *How Does Culture Matter?* Unpublished article. Trinity College, Cambridge, March.

UNESCO (2002) *Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) for the Asia and Pacific region*. Unpublished strategy plan, July.

Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism, UNDP and World Tourism Organization (2001) *Revised Tourism Development Plan 2001-2010. Summary Plan and Action Programme, Volume I*. Unpublished report (UNDP VIE/00/012). Ha Noi, April.

**APPENDIX I:****Status of Ratification of Key Conventions and Agreements of a Standard-setting Nature in the Area of Culture in Viet Nam** (Status dates indicated in table)

S: signing R: ratification A: accession

<b>International Legal Instrument</b>	<b>Signing Ratification Accession</b>	<b>Government Focal Point</b>	<b>Lead Agency in Viet Nam</b>	<b>Convention &amp; Treaty Bodies</b>	<b>Notes &amp; Reservations</b>
1948 Agreement for Facilitating the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character (Beirut, 10/12/1948).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 12/03/2001)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	
1950 Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (Florence, 17/06/1950; Nairobi Protocol, 1976).	Florence 01/06/1952 deposit (Republic of Viet Nam, later Rep. of South VN)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	Vietnamese Government has not yet made known its position regarding any succession after the reunification of the country (Status as of 05/10/2001).
1952 Universal Copyright Convention (Geneva 06/09/1952, Geneva protocol 1952; Paris Revisions, 24/07/ 1971, Paris protocols 1971).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI, with support from MoJ, MoST and MoT (National Office of Industrial Property)	UNESCO	UNESCO	In the action plan for the development of the legal system to the year 2010, Vietnamese Government intends to study and implement the Convention.
1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 14/05/1954; The Hague Protocols 1954 and 1999).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	

<b>International Legal Instrument</b>	<b>Signing Ratification Accession</b>	<b>Government Focal Point</b>	<b>Lead Agency in Viet Nam</b>	<b>Convention &amp; Treaty Bodies</b>	<b>Notes &amp; Reservations</b>
1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 14/11/1970).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 09/12/2002)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	Vietnamese Government has expressed interest in becoming party to the Convention.
1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16/11/1972).	19/10/1987 S and R (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	
1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (Washington, D.C. 03/03/1973; Bonn Amendment 1979, Gaborone Amendment 1983).	20/01/1994 A (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MARD	FFI WW FTRAFFIC	UNEP	Gaborone Amendment 1983 not accepted. (Status as of 04/11/2002)
1979 Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration (Lisbon 1979).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI, with support from MoJ, MoST and MoT (National Office of Industrial Property)		Administered by WIPO	
1979 Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Orig. convention Berne 1886, latest Revision Paris 28/09/1979)	Not S, R, A (Status as at 28/04/2003)	MoCI, with support from MoJ, MoST and MoT (National Office of Industrial Property)	UNESCO	Administered by WIPO	Vietnamese Government is preparing the country's accession to the

International Legal Instrument	Signing Ratification Accession	Government Focal Point	Lead Agency in Viet Nam	Convention & Treaty Bodies	Notes & Reservations
					Convention in the action plan for the development of the legal system and as a part of the Bilateral Trade Agreement with USA.
1989 Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (Geneva, 27/06/1989)	Not R (Status as of 30/06/2002)	MoLISA and CEMP			ILO has promoted the policies of the Convention with authorities in Viet Nam.
1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 24/06/1995).	Not S, R, A (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI	UNESCO	Convention by UNIDROIT	Vietnamese Government is preparing the country's accession to the Treaty as a part of the Bilateral Trade Agreement with USA.
1996 Copyright Treaty (Geneva, 1996)	Not party to Treaty (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI, with support from MoJ, MoST and MoT (National Office of Industrial Property)	UNESCO	Administered by WIPO	Convention enters into force three months after being ratified by 20 States.Vietnamese Government has expressed interest in becoming party to the Convention.
2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Paris, 02/11/2001).	Not R (Status as of 28/04/2003)	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	Vietnamese Government has expressed interest in becoming party to the Convention.
Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (forthcoming)	N/A	MoCI	UNESCO	UNESCO	

Disclaimer: The status of ratification presented in this table is indicative and does not reflect the complete legal ramifications of the Conventions.

*Cover photo: Diễm Đàm  
Graphic Design: Đặng Hữu Cự / UN Viet Nam*



Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator  
25-29 Phan Boi Chau, Ha Noi - Viet Nam  
Tel: (84 4) 942 1495  
Fax: (84 4) 942 2267  
E-mail: [registry@undp.org.vn](mailto:registry@undp.org.vn)  
UN Viet Nam Web site: [www.un.org.vn](http://www.un.org.vn)