

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Chairman of the National Committee for AIDS, Drugs and Prostitution Prevention and Control,

Leaders of the Office of the Government, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs,

Leader of the People's Committee of Hai Phong,

Ambassadors and distinguished representatives of international organization,

Ladies and gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to be in Hai Phong and great honor to be with you today at this National Committee meeting to review the 2011 activities and the 2012 work plan on HIV, drugs and sex work prevention and control.

I would like to begin by congratulating the Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc for his leadership as the new Chair of the National Committee. I would like to thank representatives of different line ministries, political, social, professional and mass organizations and advisory group for sharing their analysis and highlighting the achievements of the National Committee in 2011. I would also like to highlight a few:

1. The strong political leadership and commitment of Viet Nam in 2011 UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS and for signing the 'Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV/AIDS'.

- 2.

A new National Strategy for HIV/AIDS prevention and control has been developed in a very participatory manner with involvement of all key stakeholders including people living with HIV and people at higher risk of HIV infection. The strategy is aligned with the global target of

Getting to Zero: Zero new infections, Zero discrimination, Zero AIDS-related deaths, and it gives stronger attention to people at higher risk of infection and the needs of people living with HIV.

3.

Evidence informed harm reduction interventions for people who inject drugs including needle and syringe programmes and Methadone Maintenance Therapy have been significantly scaled up. The national Methadone Maintenance programme, piloted in Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong in 2008, has been expanded to 11 provinces and treats more than 7,500 people in 41 clinics. At the end of 2011, 57,633 adults and 3,261 children were receiving ART in Viet Nam. ART coverage is now 53% in adults and 83% in children.

4.

National strategy on drug prevention and control in Viet Nam to 2020 with vision to 2030 has been approved, providing strategic framework to develop national target programme on drug control for the period 2012-2015. It was, indeed, a timely document given the overall negative trend with the increase in illicit drug trafficking and related crime in Viet Nam over the last years.

These achievements are noteworthy, and on behalf of the United Nations I would like to commend you on this excellent progress.

Whilst significant successes are noted, we also see threats to continued progress and achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 6, as well as opportunities for Viet Nam to improve its response.

In order to accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goal 6, it is critical that AIDS response is supported by the right set of policies, interventions, adequate funding and strong political commitment. As outlined in the MDG Acceleration Framework, Viet Nam must urgently identify strategic interventions, barriers to implementing these interventions effectively, determine solutions and plan for implementation. This will require strong multi-sectoral coordination and partnership with development partners as well as civil society.

Declining resources could threaten further progress the HIV response. Due to Viet Nam's

excellent economic performance, the country has now reached middle income country status. As a result of these achievements, international donors have begun reducing their support for the HIV response in the country and will continue to withdraw funding in the coming years.

A recent study undertaken by Viet Nam Administration of AIDS Control of the Ministry of Health found that international resources fund 73% of HIV activities in Viet Nam. The reduction in international support therefore has significant implications for the HIV response in Viet Nam.

The global financial crisis has also impacted the availability of funds. The Global Fund, which has been an important source of funding for the HIV response in Viet Nam has been deeply affected by the global financial situation, and it will be more difficult for Viet Nam to access these funds than in previous years.

Sustainability of the HIV response therefore requires urgent attention and action. Viet Nam must focus efforts on mobilizing greater domestic resources and using those resources more effectively in order to avoid reversing progress in the HIV response made thus far.

Same approach applies to all issues under the authority of the National Committee.

The United Nations in Viet Nam particularly encourages the National Committee to focus on six priorities in 2012:

- Conduct, as recommended by members of the Advisory Group, a deeper and wider assessment of the issues and impact of 05/06 centres on the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and to explore all evidence-based alternatives including expansion of community-based efforts;
- Ensure that through implementation of the new National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control for the period 2011-2020, comprehensive and evidence-based programs for key populations at higher risk of infection, including men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, sex workers, and their intimate partners, and children living with and affected by HIV are scaled up;
- Ensure that HIV prevention is combined with drug demand reduction and drug-related harm reduction to sustain effective and efficient HIV response;
- Ensure that different sectors involved in the national response to HIV and illicit drugs issues such as the health, social affairs and public security sectors use coherent policies and

complement each other in evidence-based programs to curb the spread of HIV;

- Mobilize alternative and local resources to compensate the decreasing external funds for HIV and drug issues in Viet Nam and to sustain the national responses.
- Launch a robust public awareness and information campaign that reaches out to all areas including remote areas and to vulnerable groups.

The United Nations in Viet Nam has just finalized a new One UN Plan for 2012-2016 which includes specific outcomes in relation to our support to HIV/AIDS issues and the UN system very much looks forward to continuing our partnership with the National Committee as well as other external partners in supporting Viet Nam's efforts to reach Zero new infections, Zero discrimination, and Zero AIDS-related deaths, as well as in supporting communities to become free of drugs and related crime.

We look forward to our continued collaboration in supporting inclusive and sustainable response to HIV and in contributing to the prosperity of all people in Viet Nam.

I wish good health and happiness to all the participants in this meeting.

Thank you.

