

STATEMENT BY H.E MR. HA KIM NGOC,
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, HEAD OF THE VIETNAMESE
DELEGATION AT THE 70th COMMISSION SESSION

(7th August 2014, Bangkok)

(23)

Viet Nam

Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmao, Prime Minister of Timor Leste,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Vietnamese Delegation, I would like to express appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat and Thailand for excellent arrangements of the 70th Commission Session. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Shamshad Akhtar on her appointment as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and the tenth Executive Secretary of ESCAP. I am confident that under her able leadership, the Commission will be guided towards further success.

Mr. Chairman,

I share the view that it is the right time to deliberate on the topic of *regional connectivity for shared prosperity*. Asia-Pacific is an important driving force of global economic growth with increasing regional and international connectivity and linkages. To sustain this momentum and address rising challenges, it is important to make full use of all regional connectivity linkages and ensure all countries and communities to equally benefit from enhanced regional growth and connectivity.

I appreciate the ESCAP Secretariat in preparing a very comprehensive report with helpful policy recommendations on the topic. I would like to share the following observations:

First, peace and stability are pre-requisite to development and integration of every nation and the whole region. To deepen regional economic connectivity and linkages, we need to consolidate peaceful and stable environment, including making efforts to ensure free and safe maritime transportation and navigation in the Asia Pacific. In this regard, it is increasingly imperative to settle maritime disputes in the region by peaceful means with full respect for international law and regional commitments.

Second, regional economic connectivity and integration initiatives have blossomed across Asia-Pacific in recent years, notably the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA) and the ASEAN Community. To best translate these initiatives into tangible benefits for all, more political will and resources are required for enhanced connectivity capacity. Beside infrastructure connectivity, governments should accelerate reform, strengthen institutional capacity and make all people and communities well-prepared for integration. In this regard, inclusive policies are needed to facilitate social groups' better access to shared benefits from

integration and connectivity.

Third, strengthening regional cooperation is crucial to regional connectivity. We highly value ESCAP to promote connectivity as an integral component of regional integration through such key projects as Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway, Asia-Pacific Energy Security Cooperation Framework, etc. We expect ESCAP in coordination with development partners to continue practical support to ASEAN countries to close development gap, implement the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and promote the ASEAN connectivity with the rest of the Asia-Pacific.

Mr. Chairman,

In parallel with economic reform, Viet Nam has consistently enhanced international integration and aligned ourselves with regional connectivity. We are actively working with regional countries in building up the ASEAN Community by 2015, stepping up negotiations on regional free trade agreements (FTA), including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). As a Mekong riparian country, Viet Nam supports enhanced Mekong sub-regional cooperation. Last April, we hosted the 2nd Summit of the Mekong River Commission with adoption of the Ho Chi Minh City Declaration that includes practical measures to promote sustainable development of the Mekong Basin.

We emphasize the role of regional cooperation organizations, particularly ESCAP, in forging an Asia-Pacific region of peace, stability and prosperity. We expect ESCAP to continue supporting Viet Nam in economic integration towards sustainable and inclusive growth, developing our connectivity with the region through economic corridors, for example, the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) and the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC). For our part, we will continue our strong cooperation with ESCAP and other members towards the shared goals of the region.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank you for your excellent job as the chair of this important session, especially your very relaxing chairmanship today. I wish you all good health and success.

Thank you for your kind attention./.