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Written Statement of the World Peace Council (WPC) regarding the Universal Periodical Review of Human Rights in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

To the attention of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)

### **To whom it may concern**

The WPC supports the just causes of the peoples and their right to define and determine their fortunes since its foundation in 1949. Throughout the history of the Vietnamese people in the 20th century, we have witnessed the consecutive colonial and aggressive invasion and occupation of Vietnam by foreign imperialist forces and the struggle of the people of Viet Nam for its liberation and national sovereignty, based on the democratic wishes of its people and reflected in the constitutions of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Based also on our recent visit to Vietnam in November 2017 during which we held our Executive Committee Meeting in its capital Hanoi, we were able to see and observe with more than 30 Organizations from respective number of countries, the significant progress Vietnam and its people are having.

The defense of the Human Rights is a basic principle of the WPC, part of its character and constitution. As an International Non-governmental Organisation with Consultative status at the UN, accredited to the Human Rights Council in Geneva we want to stress on the following facts and aspects:

The Constitution (adopted in 2013) with 11 chapters and 120 articles, reserves Chapter II with 36 provisions on fundamental rights and obligations of citizens and ensures people's equal rights in all political, economic, social areas as well as before the law; the right to freedom of religion and belief; the right to freedom of movement and residence within Viet Nam; the right to complain and denounce; right to work, study and enjoy health care... regardless of their sex, social status, belief, religion. The improvement of the legal system on human rights, civil rights was harmoniously and implemented through programs on the establishment of laws and ordinances as well as policies toward the implementation of these legal documents.

The State of Viet Nam attaches importance to the guarantee of the right to State and society management directly and indirectly through the selection of their representatives. Viet Nam's very high election turnout at the elections for the XIV National Assembly shows that the people are very well aware of their right and are exercising massively their rights and their role in selecting their representatives of the National Assembly.

The right to petition and complain of the people is respected and protected. The handling of people's petitions and complaints has improved a great deal. The law also provides for the compensation of material and mental losses of petitioners.

The right to form associations/ organisations was defined in the 2013 Constitution. By December 2016, there are more than 52.500 associations/ organisations representing people from all walks of life including youth, women, workers, farmers, people with disabilities, scientists, professors, workers, including the Vietnam Peace Committee.

Vietnam has improved and broadened educational and training programs in human rights for employees working at government agencies. Many seminars and workshops have been organized with the participation of representatives from a wide range of ministries, research and training centres, such as Human rights research institute (at the Ho Chi Minh academy for politics and public administration), Legal Department of the Hanoi National University, etc. Classes on human rights issues are also conducted on a frequent basis. These efforts have provided the employees working at government agencies with basic knowledge on human rights. Vietnam has also enhanced education on human rights for local officials to improve awareness, capability and efficiency in handling human rights issues at local level.

Vietnam is a multi-religion country with all the major religions in the world (Buddhism, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim). The consistent policy of Vietnam is to respect and facilitate the exercise of the right to freedom of religion and belief by all the people, uphold the solidarity and harmony among religions, guarantee the equality and non-discrimination as well as protect activities of religious groups by law. The country has the second biggest Catholic community in Southeast-Asia. 95% of all the people have belief (including 22.3 million being followers of religions, accounting for 1/5 of the population); there are 25 thousand of worshipping places.

The Vietnamese people have access to 75 international television channels, including CNN, BBC, Bloomberg, Australia Network, and those from France, Germany, Italia, Korea and China... All the big news organs are accessible to Vietnamese, including Reuters, BBC, AP, AFP, CNN, Kyodo, The Economist and Financial Times. The Voice of Viet Nam (VOV) Radio Station broadcasts throughout 99.5% of Viet Nam's territory and many other countries via satellite. Today, the VOV reaches more than 90% of all households in Viet Nam.

By December 2017, there are 849 news organs with 1,111 printed newspapers (compared to 1,084 in 2013); 196 press offices and e-magazines; 67 radio and television stations with 182 channels; 01 national news agency, 196 e-newspapers and thousands of e-portals on the Internet. Vietnam has 18,000 registered journalists Facebook, Twitter and other networks have become very popular among Vietnamese, especially the younger generation. Currently, there are 58 million

Facebook accounts in Vietnam, 28.35 percent of Vietnamese households have access to the Internet, with 50 million users (compared to 30.8 million in 2013).

The democratic nature and transparency of the State is strengthened through the critiques from the press, media and feedbacks of all the people. Viet Nam's press and media have become a forum for exchanges regarding the supervision of the State's activities, thus contributing greatly to the fight against corruption and wrongdoings in Viet Nam.

Vietnam is party of almost all core international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); International Convention on the Elimination of Radical Discrimination (CERD); Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Vietnam is the second country in the world and the first in Asia to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The country has also ratified 17 conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), including those related to gender equality, rights of the child.

Last but not least we want to emphasize on the huge efforts Viet Nam is doing for the victims of the toxic "Agent Orange" which was used by the USA against the Vietnamese people during their war and which is resulting till today in health consequences for the new generations of newborns and children. The state of Viet Nam is dealing with the consequences of crimes against its people, by taking care of the human and social rights of the victims and their families, without giving up the legal struggle for compensation of the victims at US courts.

In conclusion the WPC strongly recommends the positive approval of the achievements and records of Vietnam in the field of Human Rights at the UPR in Geneva. Vietnam is fulfilling the international standards at highest rank.

On behalf of the Secretariat of WPC

Athens, 9th July 2018

  
Socorro Gomes  
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