

# Women2030 Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice



## Vietnam

Prepared by Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED)

### Country Background

In recent years, Vietnam has made progress towards reducing poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality.<sup>1</sup> Despite improvements in its macro-indicators of development over the past decade, gains have not been equitable and significant, and development needs remain. Liberalisation of the economy under a neoliberal economic agenda is resulting in higher levels of inequality and harsher conditions for workers in the region. Patriarchal norms devalue the status and capacities of women, exacerbate violence and discrimination against them, limit their access to opportunities and resources, and exclude them from decision-making processes. Women account for about 40 per cent of employees in the public sector, but very few are in leadership positions<sup>2</sup>. Women are still mostly found in unskilled and untrained labour-intensive sectors, and earn an average 33 per cent less than men.<sup>3</sup> Women's unpaid care work goes unrecognised and unrewarded, keeping them subordinate and restrained in their choices. Climate change also holds major implications for the nation's development,<sup>4</sup> and women stand disproportionately vulnerable to climate change and disasters, largely due to their lack of socioeconomic power and higher susceptibility to poverty.

### Architecture for SDGs Implementation

In May 2017, the SDGs were officially nationalised in Vietnam's National Plan for Implementation of the Agenda 2030.<sup>5</sup> Vietnam also affirmed that sustainable development would be prioritised in the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2021-2030, Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025, and its National Development Plans. In the National Plan of Action for implementation of the Agenda 2030 and SDGs, Vietnam has assigned specific responsibilities and coordination to governmental agencies, organisations and communities. CSOs are offered a role in the coordinating, planning, and monitoring processes in a group with UN agencies and other social organisations and associations. While CSOs play a significant role in aiding the implementation of relevant programmes and initiatives, they still face obstacles to their substantive participation in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.<sup>6</sup> Another issue that remains is a significant lack of awareness regarding the SDGs among Vietnamese citizens. Funding for the implementation of Agenda 2030 is to come principally from the State, Official Development Assistance, and the private sector.<sup>7</sup>

**Country population:**  
95.54 million (2017)

**GDP per capita:**  
2,343.125 USD (2017)

**Palma ratio:**  
1.4 (2017)

**UNDP Gender Inequality Index Value:**  
0.304 (2017)

**UNDP Gender Inequality Index Rank:**  
67 (2017)

**Government budget expenditure:**

**Military Expenditure:**  
4.9 Billion USD (2.2% of GDP)<sup>1</sup> (2017)

**Education Expenditure:**  
5.65% of GDP<sup>2</sup> (2013)

**Health Expenditure:**  
5.65% of GDP<sup>3</sup> (2015)

1 Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/vietnam/military-expenditure>

2 World Bank, Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP), Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=VN>

3 World Bank, Current health expenditure, Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?locations=UA-VN>

✓ **Are CSOs included in the mechanisms for developing the national plan and implementation of the SDGs?**

✓ **Are women's rights organisations included in the mechanisms for developing the national plan and implementation of the SDGs?**

✓ **Is the information/ data accessible?**

1 UNDP, Vietnam Country Report, 15 Years Achieving the Viet Nam Millennium Development Goals. Retrieved from <http://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/library/mdg/country-report-mdg-2015.html>

2 Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments. Retrieved from <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

3 Oxfam, Gender Equality: The competitive edge of business, 2018. Retrieved from <https://vietnam.oxfam.org/latest-stories/gender-equality-competitive-edge-business>

4 Vietnam is also ranked 6th in the world in terms of countries most threatened by climate change. See Global Climate Risk Index, (2018). GermanWatch. Retrieved from <https://www.germanwatch.org/en/cr/>

5 Vietnamese Government, Retrieved from [http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class\\_id=2&\\_page=1&mode=detail&document\\_id=189713](http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=2&_page=1&mode=detail&document_id=189713),

6 MSD, Report on Roles and Contribution of social organisations in the implementation SDGs, Hanoi, 2018, Retrieved from <http://msdvietnam.org/en/author/msdvietnam/>

7 Ministry of Planning and Investment – National Voluntary report on implementation SDGs 2018

## Women's Priorities: Findings on selected targets and/or indicators

While important progress towards achieving the SDGs has been made in Vietnam, much work remains in advancing development policies that reflect and respond to the needs of women and other marginalised groups. The current status of the government of Vietnam in implementing Goals 5 and 8 is presented as follows:



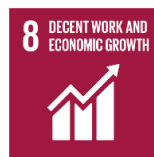
### Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Girls

By 2014, there had been no significant change in literacy rates or school enrolment rates for boys and girls.

Women's participation in non-agricultural employment has grown sharply, especially in rural areas. But women's earnings are still lower than men's because women remain relegated to low-wage, low-skilled labour.

With regards to gender discrimination, there is an unbalanced sex ratio at birth, with 110 boys being born for every 100 girls. Gender-based violence is rampant, and approximately 6 in 10 women have experienced physical, sexual, or mental violence by their partner. Women spend an average of 5 hours per day on unpaid care work, 2-2.5 hours more than men.<sup>1</sup>

There remain serious inequalities in the provision of health services for rural women and ethnic minorities due to poverty, lack of accessible medical facilities, language barriers, among others.



### Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Income inequality in the country has risen dramatically in the last two decades, and today, most new wealth created in the nation is channelled to the wealthy and the private sector.<sup>2</sup>

The Labour Code 2012 stipulated that minimum wages must meet the minimum living needs of workers and their families.<sup>3</sup> However, according to the 2018 report of Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), regional minimum wages only meet 50%-60% of the minimum living standard requirements of workers.<sup>4</sup>

Women, ethnic minorities, smallholder farmers, and migrant workers comprise a majority of the nation's poor, as they are disproportionately denied access to public services and productive resources, remain excluded from political decision-making processes, and face widespread discrimination.

The right to a safe and healthy working environment is yet to be protected. Ensuring safety of workers is one of the most important aspects of this goal. However, national indicators do not cover all the aspects of labour safety, especially in specific industries such as electronics industry.<sup>5</sup>

1 AAV, Research report 'For a house to become a home', 2016

2 Oxfam Việt Nam, Report on policy research: Closing the gap and inequality in Vietnam, 2017

3 Labor Code 2012, Article 90-91

4 MOLISA – Report on the implementation of Labor Code on 31 January 2018, was posted in Website of MOLISA. Retrieved from <http://duthaovanban.molisa.gov.vn/detail.aspx?tab=2&vid=580>

5 CGFFED-IPEN, Research report: The stories of female workers in electronics industry in Vietnam 2017

## Recommendations

In order to achieve meaningful implementation of Goals 5 and 8, the government of Vietnam must:

- Accelerate the completion and issuance of a national indicator system in consultation with civil society in order to monitor the national action programme for Agenda 2030 and SDGs;
- Develop and implement a national awareness-building campaign to increase knowledge on non-discrimination and equality in order to better foster equal opportunities for all (particularly workers in the formal and informal sectors) and national anti-discrimination legislation;
- Develop and implement a public awareness campaign centred on sustainable development, Agenda 2030, and the SDGs, focusing on enhancing awareness and participation of women, young people, ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups; and
- Create an enabling environment for CSOs to participate in and monitor the implementation of the SDGs. This should be reflected through specific indicators in order to implement the National Action Plan for Agenda 2030 and SDGs.



Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED) is a non-profit organisation in Vietnam since 1993. CGFED has focused on action research and advocacy with the desire to promote gender equality based on freedom, diversity and human rights for individuals and community. The organisation has contributed to influencing national policy making as well as individual behaviours for social justice and respect of human rights irrespective of age, health status, race, gender and social class.

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