

INFORMATION

Symposium: One hundred years of research and training of social sciences and humanity in Vietnam

On the occasion of celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Indochina University (1906-2006), the predecessor of Hanoi-based National University (HNU), on 27 April 2006, the University of Social Sciences and Humanity organized a symposium on *"One hundred years of research and training of social sciences and humanity in Vietnam"* with a view to explore, examine and assess achievements recorded in research and training of social sciences and humanity over the last century, to draw out lessons and experiences necessary for the development road section ahead.

Attendants at the event included Professor Vu Minh Giang - Deputy Director of HNU and representatives for faculties and departments of HNU; the University of Social Sciences and Humanity; Dr. Andrew Hardy, Director of the Far Eastern Institute of France in Hanoi; Mr. Pierrel Muler, the representative for the association of Francophone universities in the Asia-Pacific region; representatives from the Commission for Education and Science of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, institutes; generations of teachers and students, domestic and foreign scientists; and, representatives for the mass media from Hanoi and at the central level.

In his introductory speech, Rector of the University of Social Sciences and Humanity, Nguyen Van Khanh, described an overall picture of the formulation and development of Indochina University - the

first ever university had been built in line with the European university model in Vietnam the University of Literature Studies and the University of Social Sciences and Humanity. He emphasized, to take the lead as a locomotive in the training and research of social sciences and humanity in Vietnam, the University of Social Sciences and Humanity had been heading to the building of a research institution, which would be equivalent to the level of advanced universities in the region and the world by the 2020s of this century. Excluding some papers presented at the plenary session, other papers were classified and presented at the two following panels: 1. Research and training of social sciences and humanity from Indochina University to the University of Literature Studies; and 2. Research and training of social sciences and humanity from the University of Literature Studies to the University of Social Sciences and Humanity. Presentations of scholars looked back the development path and reviewed the research and training of every social science and humanity; praised the role, significance, importance as well as the strategic training of social sciences and humanity in Vietnam over the last one hundred years; at the same time, affirmed that these are the foundations and justifications, on which social sciences and humanity training institutions are based to seek for solutions to improve the training quality of this important science in the coming time.

With a view to help participants at the Symposium to have further concrete information about a place deemed as the predecessor and a member of the present

HNU, Professor Dinh Xuan Lam presented his paper on the Indochina Teacher Training College (ITTC), which trained eminent educators and researchers of national culture. He contended that ITTC had contributed a great deal, especially in terms of human resource, to the formulation and development of social sciences and humanity of the University of Social Sciences and Humanity. Associate Professor Le Mau Han in his presentation "Thinking of the position, potential and capability of training and research of the University of Social Sciences and Humanity" reaffirmed the potential and capability of scientific research and training of the University of Social Sciences and Humanity, considering them as sustained values, which in turn become spiritual, traditional and scientific thrones for the present and future generations to promote development to a new height.

Apart from the above papers, participants also listened to a paper presented by Professor Nguyen Canh Toan, former Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education and Training, pertaining to opportunities and challenges of the tertiary education in Vietnam in the twenty-first century.

HIỀN LY

Seminar: The conversion of state enterprises in Vietnam

An international scientific seminar with the theme of "The conversion of state enterprises in Vietnam" was organized in Hanoi on March 28th 2006 by the University of Social Sciences and Humanity (the Hanoi National University) in combination with Konrad-Adenauer Institution of the Federal Republic of Germany. The participants in the seminar

comprised the representatives of school leaders, the Head of Konrad-Adenauer Institute, Mr. Willibold Frehner, many scientists and managers coming from institutes, universities and state organs such as the Central Economic Committee, the Committee of reform and development of state enterprises, the Vietnam Chamber of trade and industry. The seminar concentrated to two main themes: the international experiences in the conversion of state enterprises, the reality and solution for the conversion of state enterprises in Vietnam.

Analyzing the real state of renewing and developing state enterprises as well as challenges in privatizing Vietnamese state enterprises, the reports asserted that the renewal of state enterprises was one of the focuses and the field of sensitive and difficult reform of the process of converting from the centralized planned economy to the market economy. This was not only the economic problem but also the ideological, political, social and psychological matter. Therefore the reform had to be relying on two contents of reforming the scope of state enterprise and the institution.

The delegates participating in the seminar put forward their remarks to evaluate the achievements and weak points of the process of renewing and the course of equalization of state enterprises in the past in a general way. At the same time they indicated the real problems to be solved in the next period of time. The common idea of many delegates was that until now we have had no concrete and unified criteria to define the decisive role of the state economy and to assess the effect of the state enterprises, so we have not yet appropriately observed the effect of policies and measures of the reform of state enterprises and the continued

orientations. The seminar also exchanged ideas and pointed out that the main reason for the privatization in the past going behind schedule was owing to the bad organization of implementing the policy. In addition the market economy in Vietnam was still on the incipient level; the stock market was budding; the transaction limited; the remnant of planned centralized mechanism of budget subsidies partially existed, the administration of deploying privatization was slow and embarrassed; the process of privatization was complicated.

On the basis of analyzing the working effect, the real state of renewal and development of state enterprises in Vietnam, comparing and drawing out lessons of experience in the conversion of state enterprises in preceding countries such as Japan, China and Germany... the delegates assumed that in order to have the correct and effective line and policy of reforming state enterprises, it was necessary to renew the thought and theory of the socialist market economic institution, the conception of ownership system, clearly define the role and position of state enterprises in the socialist-oriented market economy... It was necessary to carry out some important solutions in the conversion of state enterprises in Vietnam at present; first of all it was to classify, arrange and readjust the structure of the sector of state enterprises, privatize state enterprises, convert state enterprises into parent companies-subsidiary companies, change state enterprises into limited liability companies of one member, renew the management mechanism of state enterprises, reform the power of ownership of state enterprises...

Discussing the furtherance of privatization of state enterprises in the future, the

majority of delegates ideas laid emphasis on the combination of propaganda and persuasion with application of administrative measures to state enterprises in the category of privatization. They advocated the development and perfection of elements of the market economy, especially the stock market, the modification and addition to some stipulations of privatization of state enterprises, the establishment of the system of inspection and supervision of the setting of price for state enterprises ... At the end of the seminar, the delegates were unanimous to assume that this seminar was a new step of progress in the program of long-term research between the University of Social Sciences and Humanity and Konrad-Adenauer Institute, contributing to assessing the real state, prospect and the work which Vietnam had to do in joining the WTO.

MINH XUÂN

Seminar: Poverty reduction and Human development in Vietnam: Urgent report

On June 29th 2006, a Seminar entitled "Poverty reduction and Human development in Vietnam: urgent report" took place in Hanoi by the combined organization of the United Nations Development Committee, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and the World Bank.

The participants in the Seminar comprised representatives of the Ministry of Plan and Investment, the Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs, the National Committee, the University of National Economy, Huế University of Economy, Thái Nguyên and Vinh Universities, local services and branches such as Cao Bằng,

Son La, Lạng Sơn, Hà Giang... leaders of various departments in the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and other people concerned. This was the third consulting seminar to gather ideas for the report after two others organized in Đà Nẵng and Hồ Chí Minh City at the beginning of the year.

The contents of seminar included two parts. In the first one the report "Poverty and reduction of poverty in Vietnam in 1993-2004 period" was read and discussed. In the second one the report "The human development in Vietnam in 1993-2004 period; what could be seen by the data?" was read and discussed.

On behalf of the group of compilers, Dr Nguyễn Thắng (The Center of Analysis and Forecast - the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) presented the report "Poverty and reduction of poverty in Vietnam in 1993-2004 period". The delegates discussed ebulliently and put forward a lot of exact and important ideas. According to Doctor, Associate Prof. Mai Văn Xuân (Hue University of Economy), the report was very clear with data of high convincing quality, bringing forward a picture of poverty reduction along the time, at the same time the report could put forward some warnings. However this was the first report chiefly undertaken by the Vietnamese side (previous reports had been carried out by the World Bank), so it could not avoid restrictions: the language of the report carried high academic character, the reference documents were chiefly taken from foreign sources; therefore the broad dissemination to various localities would be difficult. Many delegates assumed that the report lacked interpretations and analyses to each item of data and concrete conclusions about the poor group of people belonging to ethnic minorities; the report has not been able to

put forward effective solutions of poverty reduction towards this area. Some others assumed that the report had not reckoned with the seamy side when the purchase index had been taken to survey; according to them it was necessary to add other indices for the investigation of education and public health service... According to Mr. Triệu Sơn Lầy (the Ethnic Minority Committee - Lạng Sơn Province), at the contemporary time the measures of poverty reduction were only a makeshift solution. The policy of poverty reduction had only stopped at the village, in the mountainous area many villages were still 100% poor. It was necessary to intensify strategic and sustainable solutions. The communal competence should be raised; reasonable attention should be paid to education and training which was considered to be the main key in the process of poverty reduction. In particular the danger of returning to poverty was a very great challenge to the process of poverty reduction in Vietnam. The report had to analyze this change in order to have concrete orientations in the following period. Finally all the delegates were unanimous that the report had to study the effect of joining the WTO on the poor, especially on the areas of ethnic minorities with a view to putting forward concrete forecasts by detailed data, creating the initiative during the process of integration. On behalf of the group of compilers, Dr Võ Trí Thành (the Central Economic Management Institute - the Ministry of Planning and Investment) presented a report entitled "The human development in Vietnam in 1999-2004: What can we see by the data?" This report was considered to be a part in an adequate reports with the theme "The Vietnamese human development and the international economic integration" which would be

completed in the following period.

In order to supply a panorama of human development in Vietnam in 1999-2004 period, the report (comprised three parts) presented some changes and the main tendency by comparing the human development indexes including the Human Development Index and the synthetic Human Poverty Index, some aspects of the Gender Development Index such as the ratio difference of school entry between male and female in the 1999-2004 period. The first part concentrated on the analysis of the Human Development Index and the Human Poverty Index at the national level with some comparisons of carrying out in Vietnam with that in other countries in South East Asia and Asia. The second part compared the achievements and problems in the human development in provinces by different criteria from which some observations on the relations between one index and the other were drawn. The third part summed up main results and defined great problems to be explained in the adequate Report on Human Development. Although this report was a draft, according to delegates, it had managed to inherit great achievements of the Report on Human Development in 2001; it had guaranteed the scientific character in the data and norms. However, according to Associate Prof., Doctor, Lê Bộ Lĩnh (the Institute of South - East Asian Studies - the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences), the report lacked the analysis of factors affecting the human development and the interpretation of data. It was necessary to add more analyses of the assessment of expenditure of families for education. Doctor, Associate Prof. Trần Đình Thiên (the Institute of Economy - the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) assumed that the clear definition of the

portrait of human development in each locality as well as the classification of localities with concrete norms and exact comments would have positive influences upon the process of human development there. With the annual increase of the gross domestic product (GDP) was relatively high and the rank of human development index of Vietnam in the world had not changed much, was it true that we were lagging behind? This was also the idea of many delegates. The hierarchy of human development of some provinces (6 provinces in North Vietnam, 1 province in Central Vietnam) was high while these were poor provinces. On the contrary, some provinces in South Vietnam had had low hierarchy of human development, while these were rich ones... The report had to make this matter clear. According to Doctor Trịnh Kim Ngọc (the Human Institute - the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) the reported indexes were not general; they had not dealt with the aspect of the source of manpower and the educational orientation. The same as the above report, local delegates assumed that the reports were still heavily tilted on theory and had academic character; they were short of concrete measures. The delegates noticed that while making reports, analyses and interpretations, attention should be paid to the elements of areas and regions in order to put forward suitable measures and policies, creating the social environment for each man to develop his personal competence and the opportunity to become equal beneficiaries between man and man.

The seminar was unanimous that the ideas, which were received, would help both groups of compilers continue to correct in order to bring forward perfect reports in the future.

VŨ HOÀ