

INFORMATION

Conference: "Food Security in Vietnam: situation, policies and prospects"

On 06/28/2012, in Hanoi, Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD) in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) organized a conference with the theme: *"Food security in Vietnam: situation, policies and prospects."* The workshop was attended by leading researchers, experts on food in domestic and international

In the past 25 years, Vietnam's rice production has grown very strong and stable. Nevertheless, the policy is not cause Vietnamese rice development is not sustainable and the rice-farmers are still in difficult. In the context of the general restructuring of the economy, the rice sector needs strategic changes to adapt to the new situation and improve the lives of farmers.

At the conference, the concept "rice is political items" was first time mentioned. Experience in other countries shows that, the higher the standard of living, the stronger power of the farmer's, then pressure of farmers to the government stronger. In Vietnam, rice is the political commodity because it is the staple food of the people and it creates jobs for about 10 million households nationwide

After 20 years of participation in rice-export, Vietnam has yet to improve income for rice growers. According to Dr. Đặng Kim Sơn, Director of the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development,

the main reason is due to shortcomings in policy implementation (procurement of rice for temporary storage, twisted from the bank support to companies then into the hands of farmers) has led to much reduced efficiency. To implement and enforce policies effectively, the policy-making process needs to have a voice of farmers. Another predictability challenge is also given for Vietnam's rice industry. It is within the next 10 years the world may face with food-excess crisis and this will impact not small to major rice exporting countries like Vietnam

According to the participants, for sustainable food security development, Vietnam government should change target from food security to livelihood and support for rice farmers. Besides, Vietnam should learn from international experience to build a transparent system to minimize excessive fluctuation in food prices, especially need to clearly define the commercial target with the task of social responsibility implementation of some companies today. In particular, focus on the flexible approach to planning and use of land; implement strategy to support farmers; strengthen multi-sectoral strategy to address issues of food security at household level, at the same time significantly reduce malnutrition in children; separate systems, strategies for "sociality" and "commercial" rice export.

End of the seminar, experts agree that, to address food security and guarantee

income for farmers, increase rice production is not a fundamental solution. International experience shows that the creation of a transparent and equal playing field for all actors in the rice export business will give more practical results.

TV.

Scientific Conference "Festival - Awareness, values and management solution"

Recently, in Hanoi, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism combines with National Council for Cultural Heritage organized a scientific seminar "*Festival - Awareness, values and management solution.*" Attending the workshop were representatives from the various ministries, departments, agencies and the management board of monuments nationwide as well as scientists, managers representing the Cultural Heritage council, Folk Cultural Association of Vietnam Institute for Folklore Studies of Vietnam... 30 speeches sent to the Conference Board. The workshop conducted discussion in three sub-committees: 1/ Theory, awareness and approach to festival; 2/ The historical, cultural and social values of the festival; and 3/ Festival management solution.

At the seminar, the participants and agreed that, among intangible cultural heritage forms, festival is considered one of the typical type of heritage, is both entertaining activities and a form of folk performance contains historical and artistic values. According to statistics, there are 7,966 festivals in Vietnam; including 7,039 folk festivals, 332

historical festivals, and 544 religious festivals, 10 festivals imported from abroad and other festivals. In recent years, the number of festivals all over the country is growing. The national traditional festivals are reconstructed more and more. Some previous festivals only within the village are extended to region scale. Some regional festival expanded to national scale. The number of festivals organized by the State is also on the rise, many of which (festival) are international festivals. However, besides the positive side has been achieved, there are still many limitations and problems requiring absolute and prompt solution to put the festival management into order.

Explosion of contemporary festival is a phenomenon that has been becoming a "movement", "syndrome", "spread effects" throughout the South to the North, signs of boredom by excessiveness, monotony, lack of professionalism, lack of artistic creativity, less attractive, less socio-economic efficiency, low response from people... Society, the less the response of the people ... Some local market economy is not strong, low purchasing power, small tourism infrastructure, amateur service quality, while the festival of culture and tourism need high investment capital, and this lead to the incommensurate socio-economic effects. There are changes in subject of festival from mountain to plain. Previously, in the traditional village festivals, local people are really the subject of the festival. Local communities are eager to practice for months to look forward to participating sustain a certain job, or play a role in organizing the festival. The

village festivals all are managed by the village patriarch and village management council. But now, most of the festivals in the countryside, mountain or plain are led closely by governments at all levels. In many plain, the organizers hire the events company, art groups to make plan, schedule, program and service... The people, the subject of festival, by accident, play an active role as sightseer.

The seminar agrees that:

- It is necessary to have a sociality forecast of festival today. Through which to see what festival does need to invest to preserve; festival does not reflect the characteristics of the ethnic, hybrid, loss of identity should be removed, refused to permit the organization; Besides, we should investigate, survey to reckon up completely, accurately contemporary festivals in the country. On that basis, classify the existing festivals and evaluate positiveness, negativeness, limitations, political, economic, cultural, social effectiveness of each specific festival.; Ministry of Culture , Sports and Tourism should actively advise the Government to amend the previous regulations, define criteria, classification, hierarchy, scale, form, frequency to hold revolutionary historical events during the year.

- The festival itself has cultural and political precise characteristic through its symbols and ceremonies. Therefore, the intervention of the State must be very careful otherwise it will be counterproductive. The State agencies involve in the festival organization as supportive role rather than as organizers of the festival;

- Currently, in the community, except elderly who has folk cultural understanding, almost representatives of the local community are not aware of the activities to practice and teach heritage and festivals. Therefore, for the community to be active in organizing the festival, it required propaganda, increase awareness, understanding of local culture associated with the festival in the community. To do so, the cultural management authorities need to develop cultural heritage education programs for the community, in collaboration with planning of media agencies to propagandize knowledge to help people understand correctly cultural values, direct to proper goals, behavior in the festivities;

- Need to create harmonious relations between state and communities in organizing and managing of the festival to promote the best subjective role of the community, not undermine national festival, but increase popularity.

HÒA AN

Public Administration Reform and Anti – Corruption. A series of policy discussion papers

This policy research paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the legal frameworks of anti-corruption (AC) laws and sanctioning and enforcement practices in five jurisdictions (Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and South Africa). The purpose is to identify lessons that Vietnam can learn in reforming its AC laws (ACLs).

Most jurisdictions that have adopted a special-purpose ACL have included in it details of the nature of the crimes, penalties for those crimes and special

measures to recover the proceeds of corruption. Three of the five jurisdictions in this study have adopted harsh and extraordinary measures to facilitate recovery of 'illicit assets'. These have been applied with good effect. Close coordination between criminal investigations and disciplining of public officials is a feature of the successful jurisdictions, with strict codes-of-conduct rigorously applied providing an important supplement to the criminal proceedings.

Establishment of a powerful, stand-alone ACA with extraordinary powers for criminal investigations is the practice in all but one of the jurisdictions. Whether or not the enforcement machinery is focused on a stand-alone ACA, independence and impartiality of the enforcement and sanctioning processes are critical features. The underlying purpose of independence – impartial and fearless pursuit of corruption – rests on a much wider, more generalized set of political norms and conventions about non-interference by the political executive in law enforcement and judicial affairs more broadly. Transparency of the process enhances the adherence to these norms.

Viet Nam's ACL deals in large measure with preventive and administrative matters. It is limited in scope and purpose and does not cover the main issues that need addressing in order to resolve problems in AC sanctioning and enforcement.

The definition and coverage of corruption in the ACL 2005 and in the Criminal Code makes it limited to the public sector only. Moreover, the

definition of corruption limits to acts committed by only the position holders, so excluding such act as giving a bribe out of the concept. The element of 'consequence' and 'quantifiable value' in most offences creates unnecessary difficulties for application. The fact that 'illicit enrichment' has not been criminalized as crime and special measures for recovery of illicit assets are not paid attention. Sanctions (criminal and disciplinary) for corruption is not set out in the ACL.

The enforcement system in Viet Nam is fragmented and poorly coordinated. There are multiple agencies sharing overlapping responsibilities. Criminal investigation and administrative inspection get in each other's way. Political intervention and obstruction at all levels are commonly reported.

The laws and regulation on AC investigation and prosecution in Viet Nam have not sought to ensure 'independence' in the sense that was observed in the overseas cases.

In short, the analysis of the possible lessons for Vietnam focuses on the amendment of Viet Nam's AC legal framework, but the conclusions look beyond this process to recommend wider institutional and legal reforms. The findings and recommendations can be grouped in three main headings, with specific near and short term policy initiatives as follows.

1. On AC Laws and Regulations

In redrafting and reviewing AC related legislation, including the ACL and the Criminal Code (the term 'Criminal Code' is used in this document rather

than ‘Penal Code’), it is necessary to develop comprehensive and thorough AC legislation that defines clearly that corruption is dangerous for the society and clarifies that all forms of corruption are criminal acts. A consistent list of all forms of corrupt acts needs to be included in revised legislation together with other necessary regulations (e.g. illicit enrichment, bribery in the private sector, bribery that involves international civil servants as provided for in the United Nations Convention on Anti-corruption - UNCAC) as well as the liability of legal persons. A set of administrative and criminal sanctions needs to be associated with such crimes in the revised legislation in addition to a set of requirements for accountability by AC agencies and organisations.

Such AC legislation should also cover special measures to combat corruption, including special investigation authorities; to prevent obstruction of judicial activities in investigation and sanctioning corruption; to protect whistle-blowers and informants; and to recover ‘illicit assets’ from corruption.

2. On Sanctions and Enforcement

In restructuring the investigation and prosecution system, the mandates of responsible agencies should be clarified so as to concentrate the required authority, competency and resources.

The roles of the State Audit and the investigation system need to be unified to make a stronger corruption detection system that covers the whole society rather than just the public sector.

It will be necessary to concentrate and differentiate the respective roles of

agencies, and to strengthen the core criminal investigation functions in a specialized agency.

3. On Institutional Arrangements: Independence and Accountability

There should be regulations in the ACL or relevant legislation to ensure ‘independence’ in the sense that was observed in the overseas cases.

For criminal investigation and prosecution of (in particular) the most serious cases of corruption, there is a need in Viet Nam to strengthen the AC investigation and prosecution agencies, to ensure their impartiality so far as is feasible and to institute effective oversight and supervision in order to prevent abuses.

Special investigative powers and resources should be devoted to AC enforcement work in a specialized unit that is subject to transparent accountability processes.

There is a good case, drawing on some of the overseas cases, to explore the appointment of judges specialized in corruption cases within the framework of the existing court system.

With formal oversight and accountability in the hands of the National Assembly, it will help reduce the incidence of political ‘micro-intervention’ in investigation, prosecution and handling corruption.

The upcoming revision of the 1992 Constitution provides an opportunity to consider options to strengthen the basis on which institutions engaged in AC enforcement are able to act effectively without fear or favour.

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