

INFORMATION

High-level Forum on Management of Social Transformation of ASEAN countries “Societal vulnerability: Social integration challenges in the context of environmental change”

Recently, in Hanoi, VASS, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, UNESCO Office in Hanoi, the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO and the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme under UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector have coordinated to organize the High-level Forum on Management of Social Transformation of ASEAN countries with the subject “Societal vulnerability: Social integration challenges in the context of environmental change”. Attending the Forum were representatives from ministries, agencies and professionals, academics, researchers from institutions, research institutes, domestic and overseas schools.

At the Forum, delegates said that the ASEAN countries are those in extremely vulnerable region to climate change impacts, by a large proportion of the population and economic activities concentrated in coastal areas; the subsistence is primarily based on agriculture; heavily dependent on natural resources and forests; high poverty levels. Haiyan storm in the Philippines, droughts, forest fires in Indonesia, floods in Vietnam show that ASEAN countries are facing with the challenge of increasingly severe climate change, if not tackled properly, it will create social vulnerability, increasing poverty, unemployment which make a large part of

agricultural workers to switch jobs. These were common challenges addressed by delegates at the Forum.

The Forum created a space for dialogue in order to develop policies to deal with the social upheavals caused by environmental challenges and make recommendations to the Government level to address these challenges.

Representatives of ASEAN countries shared their national experiences in dealing with poverty, unemployment and social problems arising from environmental change. Delegates said that ASEAN countries have their own strategies appropriate to the development level and resources of each country to deal with these problems. However, ASEAN should cooperate more closely and have overall national and regional strategies to create effective mechanisms and policies addressing the challenges. Therefore, the general cooperation of the ASEAN countries in management of social challenges is very important.

At the end of Forum, delegates recommended, towards resolving the impact of environmental change with the social integration of communities, that it should timely give out policies and actions, conduct research activities in the subarea, to build an consistent social policy framework. At the same time, urge all governmental levels to reconsider the established policy framework to assist people to cope better against environmental changes. ASEAN governments should pay more attention and further do the intergation of social and

ethical aspects into environmental policies as well as to strengthen the role of social sciences in addressing the challenges of social integration in the context of environmental change.

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Vietnam Development Report 2014

Recently, in Hanoi, *Vietnam Development Report 2014* - the annual publication of the World Bank, has been announced. The Vietnam Development Report 2014, entitled "Raising Vietnam's Skills: Preparing the workforce for a modern market economy".

The report pointed out that education has played a vital role in Vietnam's development success stories in the past 20 years. Rapid economic growth in Vietnam in 1990 was primarily from increased labor productivity as a result of the workforce shift from a low productivity agriculture to non-agriculture sectors with higher productivity. Currently, Vietnam's economy began industrialization and modernization. The poverty rate has very impressively declined. Thanks to these results, the education has played a role in facilitation. Vietnam has worked hard to expand access to education for everyone and ensure the quality of education through the minimum quality standards. These have contributed to

the prestige of Vietnam to a younger and better educated workforce.

With the majority of the workforce who is capable of reading and writing, the current challenge of Vietnam is how to train the graduates from the textbook learners to become those with critical thinking and know how to solve problems, who are fully equipped to acquire the technical skills from universities, vocational schools and throughout their working lives.

The analysis from the report showed that the process of economy modernization will lead to a shift of demand for labor, shift from jobs with mainly simple craft today to the off-craft jobs which require more skills; shift from jobs with mainly manipulation, routine tasks to non-routine tasks. And those new jobs always require new skills.

The last part of the report consists of some recommendations to build the workforce for a modern market economy in Vietnam, of which specifies three steps including: Step 1: Improve school readiness through early childhood development education. Step 2: Build awareness background and behavior in general education. Step 3: Develop technical skills appropriate to jobs through a better connected system among employers, students and universities, and vocational schools.

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