

Presented by
Sr. Lt. General NGUYEN VAN DUOC
President and Head of Delegation of the Veterans Association of Vietnam
at the 19th VECONAC General Assembly
(Phnom Penh, December 8-12, 2019)

H.E. General KUN KIM, President of the Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries,
Distinguished guests and delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Veterans Association of Vietnam (VAVN) and in my own name, I would like to convey our warmest greetings to H.E. General Kun Kim, President of the Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries (VECONAC) and all the Vice Presidents of VECONAC, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests, delegates, and observers. I also avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to H.E. Mr. President and members of the Cambodian Veterans Association for the cordial and thoughtful welcome and for the invitation given to us to attend the 19th General Assembly and visit your beautiful and friendly country of Cambodia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to give a briefing on the new development of VAVN since December 2018 when the 18th VECONAC General Assembly was convened. At this point, I would like to authorize Sr. Colonel Tran Ngoc Dan, Head of Foreign Relations Department, VAVN to deliver the speech.

In 2019, the VAVN solemnly commemorated the 30th Anniversary of its Founding Day and organized the National Congress which assessed the achievements of the "Patriotic Emulation Movement" in the period 2014-2019 and put forward the guidelines for emulation in the period 2019-2024. Through the Commemoration Ceremony and the National Congress, the VAVN units from the central level down to grass-roots have reconfirmed the rising role of the VAVN as a solid mainstay of the Government and the people, proven to be a force which is "Faithful, United, Exemplary, Innovative" as lauded by the Vietnam Communist Party and highly appreciated by the society. The Commemoration Ceremony and the National Emulation Congress convened in early December 2019 were attended by many high-ranking Leaders of the Party and the Government. H.E. Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc on this occasion conferred the VAVN for the second time the Honor of Labor, First Class. Tens of organizations and hundreds of individuals were commended and rewarded by the Government, Ministries, Branches and the VAVN. These rewards demonstrated the

high appraisal and great encouragement to the VAVN, pervading the fine image of the veterans of "Uncle Ho's Soldiers" in the Vietnamese society.

Last year, the organization of the VAVN was further consolidated and developed. Beside 63 cities and provinces, at present, 47 Ministries and Branches of the central level have set up veterans organizations, raising the number of membership to 2.92 million people.

The veterans have promoted the movement of helping each other to alleviate poverty, develop economy, raise living standard and participate in social economic programs in their localities. Throughout the VAVN, there are 8,700 businesses, 1,562 cooperatives, 2,300 working teams, 75,890 farms, household farms and household service businesses (in comparison of 74,637 units in 2018) owned by the veterans, providing 604,000 jobs. The VAVN at different levels have rebuilt 16,600 dilapidated houses and helped 20,800 veterans households to get rid of poorness. The Business Association of Vietnam Veterans (BAVs) has established its representative in 48 provinces, (01 province more than last year). Over passed years, the VAVN explored, managed and spent effectively a fund raised from loans worth of VND 32 trillion to help the veterans to develop their economies, creating 5.25 million jobs for the veterans and their children. The veterans businesses and cooperatives have always fulfilled their tax duty, protected the environment and joined in great number of charity activities.

The VAVN at different levels have actively participated in movements, programs and campaigns in the localities, such as " The entire people are united in building the cultural life in communities" or " The entire country joins hands in building new rural areas" initiated by the Vietnam Fatherland Front. Many veterans donated land to build roads, schools etc...The total donation comprised of VND 1,534 billions, 4.7 million square meters of land, 8,500 kilometers of rural roads, 23,000 bridges, 7,100 cultural houses and 2.7 million working days. Efforts in coordinating with Ministries and Branches to implement National Programs and Targets such as the looking for and recovery of the remains of fallen soldiers, the keeping of traffic order and safety, the maintenance of foodstuff safety, the protection of environment and the reduction of plastic waste.. have been vigorously stepped up.

The VAVN have organized training courses in implementing Protocol 157/2016/NĐ-CP on the amendment of Protocol 150, providing guidelines for the execution of new policies more beneficent to the veterans in terms of medical insurance, social allowances... ..

The mobilization and uniting of ex-servicemen have been carried out better than previous years. At the moment, there are 36,330 clubs having membership of 1,6 million ex-servicemen.

The coordination with the Youth Organization in educating the young generation patriotism, the determination to work for the country and the community... has continued gaining momentum.

The People's Foreign Relations work has been actively carried out. The relations with the veterans associations of the three neighboring countries have been strongly promoted, e.g. the signing of the Agreement of Cooperation with the Cambodian Veterans Association in March 2019; helping 05 members of the Lao National Veterans Federation to improve their capability in Vietnamese language; sending a delegation to China. In 2019, the VAVN received 27 foreign delegations totaling 681 veteran guests visiting, exchanging experience, coordinating efforts to solve war aftermath by exchanging martyr's dossiers and strengthening cooperation... Among them, we have received the delegation led by Lt General Bryan Fenton, Senior Military Advisor of the United States Defense Secretary, the delegation led by the Spouse of the United States Defense Secretary Mark Esper to visit the Friendship Village, the delegation by the Director of Policy, US Indian-Pacific Command. We also have welcomed a number of delegations from the Veterans Associations from China, Republic of Korea, Russia... We are too glad to welcome you all to visit us.

In the general perspective, the VAVN have successfully achieved the missions set for the year 2019. The VAVN have been actively making contributions to the celebration of 75th anniversary of the National Day (Sep 2, 1945 - Sep 2, 2020), the 45th anniversary of the Liberation of South Vietnam leading to the national reunification (April 1975 - April 2020), the 25th anniversary of the joining of ASEAN, and lastly, been ready to receive the role of President of VECONAC and Chairmanship of the 20th VECONAC General Assembly. We surely will have great pleasure to welcome you to Hanoi.

To conclude my speech, I would like to wish the 19th General Assembly a fine success. My wish of good health, happiness and prosperity to you all.

Thank you for your attention!