

## **VIETNAM - CEDAW : “Only genuine and concrete measures will improve the respect for women’s rights”**

PARIS, 12 February 2007 (FIDH & VCHR) - **FIDH** and the **Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR)** welcome the recent adoption by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee), of Concluding comments on Vietnam.

Last month, the body of experts examined the State report of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning the implementation of the CEDAW Convention in the country. Representatives of the VCHR presented on that occasion an alternative report stressing the key issues of concern in relation to women’s rights in Vietnam. Those concerns are largely reflected in the UN Concluding comments.

*“A number of laws have been adopted over the past few years in Vietnam in order to advance the equality between women and men, and to eliminate discrimination based on gender. However, as stressed by the CEDAW Committee, their impact in practice has hardly ever been assessed”*, said Vo Van Ai, President of VCHR and Vice-president of FIDH.

The UN experts deplore the *“persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes, including the preference for male offspring, regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and society at large”*. They stress that awareness raising and public educational campaigns are needed in order to eliminate such stereotypes.

Although representation of women in Parliament is relatively satisfactory, the CEDAW Committee regrets the underrepresentation of women in appointed public decision-making bodies.

The persistence of trafficking in women and girls and the exploitation of prostitution are issues of concern for the Committee. It recommends that Vietnam *“facilitate the reintegration into society of women and girls who are victims of exploitation and trafficking, including children born to Vietnamese women abroad, by ensuring that they are neither criminalized nor penalized”*. The authorities should also prosecute and punish traffickers and ensure the protection of the human rights of trafficked women and girls.

The UN experts also regret women’s limited access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, the *“use of abortion as a method of family planning”* and the increase in HIV/AIDS infections among women. They are equally concerned about the high

proportion of girls' drop out of school and request Vietnam to address effectively the obstacles that prevent girls from continuing their education, such as family responsibilities and the cost of education.

*“We hope that, as requested by the UN body, the Vietnamese authorities will submit the UN concluding comments to all relevant ministries and to Parliament so as to ensure their full implementation, and will translate the CEDAW Convention in the ethnic minority languages”,* said Sidiki Kaba, President of FIDH. *“Only genuine and concrete measures, and full implementation of the UN recommendations, will improve the respect for women’s rights in Vietnam”,* he concluded.

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## **Vietnam Committee on Human Rights Shadow Report**

### **CEDAW Committee Concluding Comments**