

CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES FOR GROWTH IN ORDER TO REDUCE POVERTY

**Opening speech by H.E. Minister Le Huy Ngo
At the fifth Plenary Meeting of the International Support Group (ISG)
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
Hanoi 7th June 2002**

*Ambassadors, Chief Representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Once a year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has great honor to receive the participants who are representatives of donors, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, relevant Ministries and agencies of Vietnam at the Plenary meeting of the International Support Group (ISG) – a forum for policy dialogue for the cause of Vietnam's agriculture and rural development.

This year, we would like to set aside this forum mainly for the implementation of the Poverty reduction Strategy recently approved by the Prime Minister on 21st May 2002. The Ministry proposes the topic *Rural development for growth and poverty reduction*. Focusing on this topic, we hope to receive your precious ideas and suggestions for the agriculture and rural development sector regarding realization of the ideas introduced and discussed at the mid-term meeting of Donors' Consultative Group (the CG meeting) held 24th May 2002 in Ho Chi Minh City.

Growth, poverty reduction and rural development is now a burning issue of the nation. In order to deal with it comprehensively, new facilities, methods and a specific mechanism for most appropriate mobilization and allocation of national resources are needed. Your ideas contributing to the follow-up implementation steps of MARD will be respectfully acknowledged.

We are aware that the efforts for *growth and poverty reduction* should be placed in the context of international economic integration, progressing at a very high speed. The affects of the integration to poor farmers, to production and exports of agro-products should surely be evaluated and taken into serious and thorough consideration before an orientation for policy and strategy can be built, due to the fact that, in human aspects, farmers are the ones of most vulnerability; in terms of market, agro-forestry products are the ones most sensitively affected by the integration process.

I do hope that the relevant agencies of MARD, under the coordination of this forum, will, in the time to come, be able to submit the international community a specific action Programme regarding the above-mentioned issues of the agriculture and rural development sector.

*Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Agriculture and rural development is deeply progressing nation-wide. The important policies proposed by MARD and approved by the Prime Minister such as “Shift of agriculture and rural structure”, “Policy regarding agriculture and rural industrialization and modernization”, “Action program on international economic integration of the agriculture and rural development sector” ... are currently the core tasks of the sector and also the major keys in terms of policy in service of growth and poverty reduction. The Government of Vietnam commits to mobilize talented people and material power in order to meet the objectives. I hope that the donors, international organizations will be together with us in supporting technical and financial assistance through development programs/projects. In the process of supporting growth in order to improve the life of the poor, the efforts being made by partners should be coordinated and oriented for best effectiveness. Main activities should therefore be: development of rural infrastructure in service of poverty reduction, receipt of new techniques and technologies and transferring them to farmers, promotion of agro-forestry extension particularly at grassroots levels.

Over the past time, the model of ISG process of the Ministry has been recognized by donors as a good model. MARD has in coordination with the donor community consolidated the ISG: development of management information system (MIS) with a view to create sources of information of the development activities for sharing among the stakeholders; Thematic Ad-hoc Group 1 (*TAG 1 on Agro-economic integration and policy*), Thematic Ad-hoc Group 2 (*TAG 2 on Support Water Resources Management*), 5-Million Hectare Reforestation Partnership – 5MHRP) have carried out many activities with the participation of most donors, related national and international agencies; the regular operation of ISG has created a convenient environment for donors as well as for Vietnamese agencies in experience exchange, information sharing, joint discussing policy issues based on the increasingly improved source of information.

*Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

I would like to thank you very much for your great favour to agriculture and rural development. I would like to give you the forum to express opinions, ideas, listen and learn from each other.

Thank you very much for your attention.