

**THE SPEECH OF H.E. NGUYEN MINH TRIET,
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM**

**(OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 10TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASEAN
LAW ASSOCIATION IN HANOI, 15TH OCTOBER 2009)**

- H.E. Surin Pitsunwan, the Secretary-General of ASEAN
- Participants, representatives from law organizations and association of ASEAN countries,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

On the great and warm atmosphere of the 10th General Assembly of the ASEAN Law Association organized in Hanoi, I am very pleased to welcome all of you as lawyers and participants representing international organizations as well as Vietnamese lawyers to this Conference.

On behalf of the host country, on this occasion, I would like to send you best wishes in the spirit of friendship, uniform and consolidation.

I also would like to wish you enjoyable days of working in Vietnam.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is glad to realize that, after 40 years of establishment of ASEAN, on 20th November, 2007 the ASEAN Charter has been concluded by the leaders of ten ASEAN Member States in Singapore, and then ratified by the Parliaments of all ASEAN countries for implementation. The Charter is a legal-political document built up on a common interest and independence between ASEAN Member States; closed in geographical areas with common objectives; and consolidated by One Vision, One Identity and One Caring and Shared Community. The Charter creates a legal framework for ASEAN Member States to reach lasting peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress; to promote our vital interests, ideals and aspirations; and to respect principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms based on consensus and unity in diversity.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am very happy to recognize that, since the enactment of the ASEAN Charter within nearly 2 years, this is the first time the members of the ASEAN Law Association, colleagues and distinguished guests convincing here to discuss about legal issues as provided in the Charter. I have been informed by the leaders of Vietnam Law Association that many concerned issues such as: Impacts of the ASEAN Charter on the Legal Education System of ASEAN Countries; the Assessment of Development Progress and Resolution for Legal Issues under ASEAN Charter's Impacts; the Role of Investment

Law on the Promotion of Social –Economic Development; the Experiences and Lessons on the Implementation of Judicial Reform; and Implementation of International Arbitral Awards in ASEAN Countries would be in place for discussion in this Conference.

Each topic of foresaid contents is crucial for each country and ASEAN community. We consider them as important issues and share concerns with ASEAN lawyers on the discussion of those issues. The discussed contents in the General Assembly Conference would make clarifications on legal values, which are the basis of our community and be a fundamental ground for institutional and legal reform in each ASEAN Member State. I strongly believe that the Conference of the General Assembly would be a good opportunity for us to strengthen our understandings, contributing to develop ASEAN as a “sharing community, respecting the friendship and cooperation” provided in the ASEAN Charter.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is great to inform you that, through many years, during the implementation of innovating policies, the Vietnam’s Legal and Judicial System have undergone many fundamental changes. At the beginning, September 2nd 1945, the State of Vietnam always takes into account of implementing and developing democracy and social equality in parallel with economic growth and improvement of citizens’ spirits and materials. Developing the State Rule of Law for citizens in Vietnam has naturally become an objective trend and a constitutional principle, showing the combination between State rule of law and owned characteristics in Vietnam. Legal and administrative as well as judicial reforms continue to be developed in conjunction with the historical values of rule of law. Those values are to respect human rights, to ensure the rights of citizens in planned policies and legal issues, inspecting and examining the State organs; to strengthen democracy, public and transparency of the performance of the State organs; to ensure assignments and cooperation between legislative, executive and judicial bodies; to ensure the independence of judicial activities; to implement the proceeding principles such as participation of the jury in trial, fair proceedings, etc. There are also many efforts to educate and train lawyers, prosecutors, executors and the jury on the issues of self responsibilities and moral conducts. In many years, the general policies of Vietnam towards to concerned groups and legal advisory are supported by the legal organs and lawyer associations, especially legal aid for the poor, ethnic people, remote areas and vulnerable people such as women, children and disable person, etc. We plan to implement legal aid policies by responsibilities of state management and judicial organs as well as through solutions of socializing those activities in order to mobilize social resources and potentiality so that it could ensure the access of citizens to information, policy, law and justice. Those plans and practical efforts are suitable with the demands and willing of Vietnamese citizens and in line with the development of a society based on transparency, stability, consensus and consolidation. Those efforts are in compliance with the ASEAN Charter and the principles of “democracy, the rule of law and good governance”.

Nevertheless, we also find out that the achievements and efforts of reforming are just the beginning stage on a long road of improving socialist rule of law. The central demands that could be foreseeable are requirements of consolidating and developing democracy of citizens, building up effective and efficient State organs that are responsible before citizens and supervised by them. With the development of the Socialist-oriented market economy, the issues of ensuring social security, jobs, alleviation of poverty, environmental protection and public health care, etc, are always appeared on the lists of discussion of policy-makers and legislators.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Vietnam Lawyer Association is a social-political and professional organization of those have been doing and working in legal area. The members of the Association are lawyers, legal experts, judges and prosecutors. The Vietnam Lawyer Association was established right after the years of Vietnam having gained independence. During periods of struggling for independence and uniformity of Vietnam, the Vietnam Lawyer Association has made great contributions towards to political and legal aspects.

For the period of developing the State's rule of law and international economic integration, the Association have done and doing its best efforts to complete its role. Through activities of performing legal development, legal and judicial reforms, supervision of law implementation, legal training and education, consultancy, legal aid, appointments of judges and prosecutors, the Vietnam Lawyer Association has proved its role as an important organization of building up the Oriented Socialist State of rule of law in Vietnam.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

“Narrowing the gaps of developments in ASEAN through cooperation and assistance each other” is crucial objectives provided by the ASEAN Charter. I wish and believe that ASEAN lawyers, within spirit of friendship and openness, would discuss and share experiences and find out solutions contributing to effective implementation of those objectives. By ASEAN Charter, we could reach to newly higher stage and period.

I wish you good health, happiness and the success of 10th General Assembly Conference of the ASEAN Lawyer Association!

Thank you