

ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

SITUATION OF WOMEN – OVERVIEW

Viet Nam has undergone a socio-economic transformation over the past quarter century, rising to a middle income country. Today it continues to develop rapidly, becoming more integrated with the global economy and undergoing significant regulatory and structural changes. The poverty rate has been declining steadily and Viet Nam is poised to achieve six of the eight Millennium Development Goals, including MDG 3 on gender equality. Despite these signs of progress, Vietnamese women confront challenges fueled by poverty, discrimination, and lack of education and economic opportunities.

Poverty – Areas of poverty remain among the ethnic minority communities living in the highlands, which constitute two-thirds of Vietnamese territory. These communities make up 14% of the population, and more than half still live below the poverty line.ⁱ Rapid urbanization and migration from rural to urban areas in recent years has resulted in growing numbers of urban poor, particularly among migrants. Women are vulnerable to poverty due to their absence from decision-making at the village level, their limited access to resources, and ongoing discrimination and restricted rights based on deep-seated patriarchal customs.

Employment – Despite the high overall employment rate of women, a majority of women are concentrated in informal, vulnerable types of employment— 53% of all employed women work as unpaid family labourers compared with 32% of men.ⁱⁱ Women in the informal sector do not receive protections or benefits, and have lower wages and have limited access to skills development and training. Women's ability to engage in paid employment is hampered by their traditional responsibilities in the home for care-giving and domestic work.

Migration – Viet Nam is a source country for migrants, and current trends indicate a rise in migration, especially to neighboring countries such as Lao PDR, China and Cambodia. Women tend to migrate at an earlier age than men, and the number of internal female migrants is increasing—the number of women moving to urban areas and industrial zones exceeds the number of men. At the same time, women send a higher proportion of their income home in the form of remittances than men do (17% compared to 10%)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Violence against women – According to data from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women released in 2010^{iv}, one in three, or 32%, of ever-married women report that they have suffered physical or sexual violence from their husbands at some time in their lives. Over half of women, 58%, experience physical, mental and sexual violence during their life. This study provides a solid evidence base on the extent of domestic violence.^v Furthermore, almost two-thirds of women believe it is acceptable for men to beat their wives. Domestic violence survivors face barriers accessing justice. Other crimes of violence remain underreported, with one reason for failure of victims to come forward being that the Penal Code takes into account whether the victim was able to defend herself, instead of whether she was able to give consent.^{vi}

UN WOMEN IN VIET NAM

The goal of UN Women's presence in Viet Nam is to support national partners to implement their commitments and priorities for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women works to provide critical support in the following areas:

Strengthening women's response to climate change – UN Women supports the Viet Nam Women's Union to

strengthen the role of women at a commune level in the decision making process on climate change and natural disaster reduction and management actions in Phu Yen and Binh Dinh provinces. This includes trainings for local women and female leaders at a community level on disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management focusing on floods and typhoon preparedness and increasing female representation on the Flood and Storm Control Committees at commune and provincial levels.

Increasing economic empowerment of women and those most excluded – UN Women enhances the capacity of government and other agencies to ensure women migrants' rights and entitlements are protected through improved, gender-sensitive recruitment practices, provision of comprehensive services to promote their economic and social welfare, and greater awareness of women migrants. The Project focuses on ensuring the rights of female migrants moving abroad by developing national policy and labour recruitment services.

Preventing violence against women and girls and expanding access to victim/survivor services – UN Women works with the Da Nang Youth Union in 'Engaging Men and Boys in gender equality and prevention of gender based violence' project that focuses on capacity building for the Da Nang Youth Union in raising awareness and promoting actions toward ending violence against women and girls. Activities include after school discussion groups for boys on gender related issues such as masculinity, gender equality and practices for harmonized relationships.

National planning and budgeting to promote stronger institutional accountability to gender equality commitments – UN-Government Joint Programme on Gender Equality is a three-year programme, involving 12 UN agencies. With UN Women support, national and provincial authorities, institutions and other duty bearers have improved capacity to effectively implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

Capacity development for Department of Gender Equality/MOLISA to mainstream gender into the development and implementation of policies and laws – UN Women assisted the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) as the State Management Agency on Gender Equality Law to develop and implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality and the National Programme in 2010. In 2011 UN Women supported MOLISA in developing the state guidelines for the line ministries and provinces on the development of Plan of Actions on Gender Equality. UN Women and MOLISA is partnering with Central Party on People's mobilization, CSO, Viet Nam General Federation of Labour and CSO to organize high-level policy dialogues to promote the accountability for the implementation of the National

Strategy on Gender Equality with the participation of 235 staff at the national and provincial level.

Promoting gender responsive laws in compliance with CEDAW – UN Women is providing technical and financial assistance to the Committee on Social Affairs and the Women's Caucus of the National Assembly in the process of verifying gender mainstreaming in draft new laws and revised laws. In 2011, it supported reviews of the Law on Trade Union, the Law on University Education and the Law on Advertising activities.

Gender and HIV – UN Women and UNAIDS jointly supported a gender analysis of the national HIV response in 2010. The results were used to provide gender mainstreaming inputs into the development of the new national strategy on HIV/AIDS. In 2011, UN Women and UNAIDS conducted an in-depth analysis of the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam on domestic violence against women and HIV knowledge/behaviors in Viet Nam.

ⁱ *Achieving the MDGs with Equity: MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*, UNDP Viet Nam, 2010.

ⁱⁱ *Viet Nam Employment Trends 2009*, Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, European Union and International Labor Organization (2009), Viet Nam.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Factsheet: Gender Equality in Viet Nam*, UN Viet Nam, March 2010.

^{iv} The General Statistics Office and the United Nations

^v *Results of the First Nationwide Family Survey*, UNICEF 2009, Viet Nam.

^{vi} See *Factsheet: Gender Equality in Viet Nam*, UN Viet Nam, March 2010.