

**VUFO-NGO RESOURCE CENTRE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2007**

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## **Abbreviations**

CG:	Consultative Group
E-list:	Email list
E-newsletter:	Email newsletter
GoV:	Government of Vietnam
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO RC:	VUFO-NGO Resource Centre
PIT:	Personal Income Tax
VUFO:	Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations
WG:	Working Group

## **1. Introduction by the Managing Co-Director**

In 2007, the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre (NGO RC) continued to carry out its regular activities, including organising the INGO Forum meetings, facilitating NGO RC Working Groups, maintaining the website, email lists and library, sending out the fortnightly e-newsletter to members, and printing the annual INGO Directory.

In addition to this, the NGO RC continued to play an important role in the overall relationship between INGOs and the Vietnamese and donor communities by organising or supporting a range of meetings and consultation processes for government agencies, donors and local organisations. This has included facilitating INGO input for the Consultative Group (CG) Meetings, coordinating an assessment of NGO involvement in the Vietnam Development Report 2007, and participating as a member of the Partnership Group for Aid Effectiveness (PGAE), the Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP) team in Vietnam and the Global Campaign for Education alliance etc.

Furthermore, two new working groups under the NGO RC were established in 2007 – the Community-based Tourism Network (CBTN), the Eye Care Working Group (EWG) and the NGO Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) initiated.

Throughout the year, the NGO RC informed its members about all the activities being conducted through our revised and elaborated website, e-newsletters, meetings and INGO Forums. To provide the members and users of the NGO RC with a complete overview of NGO RC activities in 2007, we have prepared this draft annual report, which will also serve as a foundation for developing the NGO RC Activity Plan for 2007, the strategic orientation for the centre, and the fund-raising plan for 2008-10.

We would like to thank all our members for their continuing support and participation in activities organised by the NGO RC in 2007. We look forward to further developing and improving the NGO RC's work in 2008 to better meet the needs of our members and reflect the ever-changing nature of development in Vietnam.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the INGOs and individuals that have supported the NGO RC during the last year.

On behalf of the NGO Resource Centre team.

Sincerely,

Trine Glue Doan

Managing Co-Director

VUFO-NGO Resource Centre

## 2. The Year in Review

### 2.1 Information Services

#### Email Newsletter

In 2007, the NGO RC continued to prepare and send out the e-newsletter twice a month, and in all 24 e-newsletters were sent out throughout the year. The e-newsletter has a basic plain-text format and uses no pictures or tables for easy online access. It aims to provide an overview of the activities of the NGO RC, its members and friends, other local and international organisations, upcoming meetings and events, ongoing campaigns and initiatives, library arrivals, agency personnel and address announcements, training opportunities and current vacancies. If you are interested in subscribing to the newsletter, please visit the following link <http://mailman.ngocentre.org.vn/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/newsletter>.

#### Email Lists

The NGO RC manages a ranges of different email lists, including the e-newsletter, opportunities, email lists of the NGO RC members and the different working groups, the e-list of the People's Participation Working Group, etc. The table below provides an overview of the different email lists, the number of organisations/individuals signed up, and the year of establishment. Participation in the lists is unrestricted, except the members e-list.

	<b>Name of e-mail list</b>	<b>Number of organisations/individuals signed up to list</b>	<b>Year of establishment/year for NGO RC to start managing the list</b>
	Agent Orange WG	246	2006
	Avian Influenza	159	2005
	Child Rights WG	99	2006
	Creative Development WG	241	2006
	Development Libraries WG	128	2006
	Disability WG	513	2006
	Disaster Management WG	198	2005
	HIV/AIDS WG	646	2005
	International NGOs in Ho Chi Minh City	149	2006
	NGO RC Members	247	2006
	NGO RC Newsletter	868*	2006
	Admin WG	146	2006
	Ethnic Minority WG	213	2005
	Landmines WG	66	2006
	Microfinance WG	296	2005
	Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management WG	122	2006
	Opportunities	1698	2006
	People's Participation WG	275	2006
	Water and Sanitation WG Vietnam	145	2005

	Wildlife Trade WG	194	2006
	Community-based Tourism Network	62	2007

If you wish to sign up to a mailing list, please visit the Mailing List section of the NGO RC website at <http://mailman.ngocentre.org.vn/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo>.

## Website

The website continues to be a key piece of electronic infrastructure for the NGO RC and performs a vital role in the centre's information sharing and cooperation facilitation activities.

In 2007, the website was re-launched using Drupal Open Source software, meaning that the content management system powering the website is no longer a static 'product' that the centre has bought from a private company. Instead, it is a free, continually evolving piece of electronic infrastructure that is supported by a community of more than 250,000 volunteer Drupal programmers around the world, who form part of global community of active participants that constantly try to refine and improve the system with new features and better performance.

Following the re-launch, the website saw a significant increase in visits, and traffic continues to grow at a rapid rate. Currently, the site experiences between 500-900 unique visitors per day and 2,000-5,000 page views. Overall average time on the site per visit is 5.30 minutes and 41 per cent of traffic are new visitors. Since October 2007, there have been 18,023 visits and 99,278 page views.

As part of the website upgrade, significant improvements were made to the Directory Listing and Library sections of the site. See below for more details.

In 2008, the NGO RC will continue to improve the content and functionality of the site, including re-launching the Vietnamese section of the site, expanding Vietnamese content and adding new features to assist our members, partners and friends in their development work in Vietnam.

## Newsbrief

The NGO RC has been offering a Weekly Newsbrief service to members for the last seven years. This service is prepared by an external agency and consists of English language news summaries of articles appearing in the Vietnamese press that are of general interest to INGOs. Sixteen members were subscribed for receiving the weekly Newsbrief service in 2007.

For more information, please visit the following link <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/39>.

## Library

In 2007, the NGO RC continued the process of updating the resources available in the NGO RC Library, focusing on coordinating with other development libraries in Hanoi and increasing the number, scope and range of INGO reports and studies available.

As part of the website re-launch, the NGO RC Library database was integrated into the website, providing users with an easy-to-use and efficient method of searching the centre's resources online. In 2008, the NGO RC plans to expand the Library's content further by establishing and strengthening its relationships with other development-related institutions, and the through the introduction of soft-copy materials that can be accessed through our website.

## **Annual INGO Directory**

In 2007, the INGO Directory included information on more than 450 organisations. As in previous years, the Directory was printed in English (700 copies) and Vietnamese (500 copies), and distributed free of charge to our members. The English version was available for VND150,000 for non-member NGOs and VND180,000 for non-NGOs, while the Vietnamese version could be purchased for VND100,000.

As part of the website re-launch, the contents of the NGO RC INGO Directory were integrated into the website in 2007, providing users with much more in-depth online access to the Directory's contents. This will be further expanded in 2008 to include more extensive information on our members, as well as their staff. However, due to privacy concerns, this information will only be available to members of the NGO RC. The NGO RC will also explore enabling INGOs to update their own information independently in 2008 to ensure the most accurate listing of information.

## **2.2. Coordination, Dialogue & Advocacy**

The NGO RC works to increase awareness and clarify the roles of INGOs in the changing development context of Vietnam, and to improve coordination, dialogue and relationships between INGOs and government institutions, local NGOs, donors and other development actors. The centre acts as an entry point for interaction between different development actors and the INGO community on development programmes, strategies and policies. In addition, the NGO RC conducts periodical consultations and studies of emerging development issues in Vietnam. In 2007, the various activities of the NGO RC relating to coordination, dialogue and advocacy included:

- λ INGO Forum
- λ NGO RC Working Groups
- λ Consultative Group Meeting
- λ Consultations
- λ Partnerships and Networks
- λ Vietnam Development Report & Poverty Reduction Support Credit 6
- λ Campaigns
- λ Community-based Disaster Management System

### **INGO Forum**

The INGO Forum Meetings are normally held on a bi-monthly basis, however, during 2007 only three meetings were held due to the fact that meetings were organised in relation to the need for specific consultations and/or discussion of issues, rather than in accordance with a bi-monthly schedule. Attendance for the meetings varied between 35 and 60, while meetings concerning consultations on national policies etc. saw more participants.

In 2008, the NGO RC plans to consider changing the INGO Forum meetings from a bi-monthly to quarterly basis, taking into account the need for specific consultations, to ensure the interest and relevance of the events is maintained. For more information, please visit the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/205>.

## **2007 Meetings**

### **INGO Forum Meeting - Friday, March 2**

NGO RC UPDATE: a. Briefing on the NGO RC plan for 2007 by Trine Glue Doan, including comments on options for funding b. INGO participation in the PRSC.

AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE: UNDP Avian Influenza Donor Coordination Specialist David Payne provided an update on the AI Partnership Agreement, the AI Green Book and recent outbreaks.

GCAP VIETNAM: The Fatherland Front and the GCAP team provided a brief review of GCAP Vietnam 2006 and discussed plans for GCAP 2007, which was followed by a discussion of INGO involvement in GCAP 2007.

### **INGO Forum Meeting - Friday, May 25**

WELCOME – by Managing Co-Director Trine Glue Doan

ONE UN REFORM INITIATIVE – Introduction and progress update on One UN Reform Initiative, and perspectives for INGO relations with the UN, by UN Resident Coordinator Mr. John Hendra, followed by discussion.

MID-TERM CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING – Discussion of INGO statements for this year's CG meeting agenda including: Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the SEDP, Results of anti-corruption efforts, WTO, Off-track MDGs and emerging development challenges (water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and Road Safety, and Aid Effectiveness/Harmonisation).

CALL FOR INGO NOMINATIONS – call for two INGO nominations for the NGO Resource Centre Steering Committee.

AOB

### **INGO Forum Meeting - Friday, September 28**

WELCOME – by the Managing Co-Director

#### **DEVELOPMENT REPORTS & AID MONITORING**

Briefing on the Aid Monitoring Group (AMG) initiative and the 'Consultation meeting on World Bank (WB) conditionality' organised by the AMG on September 12

Brief presentation of 'Evaluation of NGO involvement in the Vietnam Development Report (VDR 2007) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Credits (PRSC 2006-10)'

Exploration of NGO involvement in the Vietnam Development Report 2008 led by the World Bank

NGO involvement in the Poverty Assessment 2008 carried out by VASS

#### **NEW INGO REPRESENTATIVES for the STEERING COMMITTEE & CG MEETING**

Formal confirmation of the new INGO representative candidates and self-introduction on their background and focus in the NGO RC Steering Committee and the Consultative Group Meeting, respectively.



## **Working Groups**

The scope and range of the Working Groups (WG) have grown within the past year in terms of both number and activities. There are now 17 Working Groups in total:

- 1 Administrative WG
- 2 Agent Orange WG
- 3 Child Rights WG
- 4 Community-based Tourism Network
- 5 Development Information WG
- 6 Disability WG
- 7 Disaster Management WG
- 8 Ethnic Minority WG
- 9 Eye Care WG
- 10 HIV/AIDS Technical WG
- 11 HCM City INGO Discussion Group
- 12 Landmine WG
- 13 Microfinance WG
- 14 NGO Climate Change WG
- 15 Sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resource Management WG
- 16 Wildlife Trade WG
- 17 Water Supply & Sanitation WG

In 2007, the Community-based Tourism Network, and Eye Care WG were established and a NGO Climate Change WGs initiated, all of which have already held several meetings and have finished, or are in the process of finalising their terms of reference.

There is a great variety in how often the different WGs organise meetings and the number of participants at each event. In addition, some WGs have established thematic subgroups focussing on specific areas. For more information, please visit the Working Group section of the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/93>.

The level of activity in a working group partly depends on its structure and organisation, as it appears that WGs with a dynamic collaborative core group organise meetings more frequently and with more diversity in topics. For more detailed information on the activities of each working group, please review the report, which is available in English and Vietnamese, entitled International NGO Partnerships for Development 2007 on the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/93>.

To address the issue of very varying mandate, organisations, and level of activity the NGO RC plans to carry out a 'Review of mandate, effectiveness, and impact of the working groups and NGO RC support' in 2008. Additional funds have to be raised for this exercise.

Meanwhile, the NGO RC plans to work with less active groups to review the terms of reference and continue to develop activities to ensure more regular and productive meetings. Work will also be carried out to support the growth and development of the new WGs established in 2007.

The NGO RC will also continue to facilitate the establishment of Working Groups based in HCM City under the INGO Discussion Group. This is a part of a process of promoting access to forums for INGOs and other groups not based in Hanoi. Additional funds have to be raised to support this set of activities.

### **Consultative Group Meeting**

Four INGO representatives to the Consultative Group (CG) are elected at the INGO Forum for a two-year period. The current INGO representatives are:

- 1 Kim N. B. Ninh, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation (TAF);
- 2 Phan Van Ngoc, Country Director, ActionAid Vietnam (AAV);
- 3 Steve Price-Thomas, Country Director, Oxfam Great Britain (OGB); and
- 4 Jez Stoner, Save The Children United Kingdom (Save the Children UK).

Prior to their term expiring in 2007, two previous INGO representatives – SNV's Andy Wehkemp and Plan's Deepali Khanna – took part in the 2007 Mid-year CG Meeting held in June with Steve-Price Thomas and Jez Stoner, while all four of the current representatives listed above took part in the formal Year-end CG Meeting between government and donors in December in Hanoi. The NGO RC Managing Co-Director participated in both meetings.

INGO have one seat at the round table, which was shared by the four INGOs representatives by dividing up their attendance at different sessions. The INGO representatives participated actively in all meetings by making comments at most of the sessions. They also obtained clear recognition of points raised by the INGO community in relation to some of the issues discussed by donors and government. Prior to both CG meetings, the NGO RC organised meetings to gather comments and feedback on the specific CG agenda. It also initiated and coordinated the production of an INGO Statement in order to obtain collaborative input on issues raised by INGOs through the representatives at the CG meetings.

A printed INGO Statement was prepared and distributed at the Year-end Meeting. In addition, the NGO RC, with input from most WGs, printed a report entitled International NGO Partnerships for Development 2007, which was also distributed at the Year-end CG Meeting. To read these documents, please visit the CG Meeting section of the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/73>.

Other INGOs also displayed and distributed publications at both meetings.

In 2008, the NGO RC plans to continue the preparation process for these events and expand it to be more inclusive in order to mobilise input from a greater range of NGOs, WGs and networks. In addition, by promoting the display of NGO publications at the meetings, the NGO RC hopes to increase the 'visibility' of NGO work in Vietnam.

### **Consultations**

#### **Consultation on DFID's Country Assistance Plan (CAP) 2007-2011**

In 2007, the NGO RC also facilitated NGO consultation on the Department for International Development's (DFID) Vietnam Country Assistance Plan (CAP), as part of DFID's multi-stakeholder consultation process. A document, entitled NGO Feedback on the Draft CAP, was prepared by the NGO RC based on inputs

from the wider NGO community, which included a wide range of I/NGOs, the PPM-GTA, the Civil Society Inclusion in Food Security and Poverty Elimination Network (CIFPEN), the Gender and Community Development Network (GENCOM Net) etc.

### **National Consultation Workshop on Civil Society Organisations and Aid Effectiveness (AE)**

On October 2, 2007, the NGO RC participated in organising a National Consultation Workshop on Civil Society Organisations and Aid Effectiveness (AE). The consultation was organised by Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association (VUSTA), with the support from S-CODE, the NGO RC and UNDP, with the purpose of raising awareness on AE among national civil society organisations (CSOs), and specifically to discuss the role of CSO in enhancing AE.

More than 130 participants, national CSOs, INGOs, different ministries, donors, and others participated. The national consultation was a part of a global consultative process on issues of aid effectiveness relating to civil society lead by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG) created by OECD-DAC. A Regional Multi-stakeholder Workshop on CSOs and AE was held in Hanoi on October 11-12, which was attended by more than 60 CSO representatives from across the region, including 12 Vietnamese CSOs. Organised by the Reality of Aid Network, in association with the NGO RC, VUSTA, S-CODE, and C&D, the workshop aimed to develop a better understanding by CSOs and other stakeholders of the roles of civil society in relation to the Paris Declaration and the overall aid system.

As the first in a series of consultations to be held throughout the world, the workshop also served to provide an opportunity for the Advisory Group on Aid Effectiveness to collect advice and recommendations from CSOs for submission to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness towards the Accra High Level Forum planned for September 2008 in Ghana. For more information on this event, please contact the NGO RC.

In 2008, the NGO RC plans to continue to strengthen relationships between DFID and the NGO community by facilitating further consultations and dialogues relating to DFID's development activities in Vietnam.

### **Partnerships and networks**

#### **INGO representatives to partnership groups**

In 2007, the NGO RC and other INGOs formally represented the INGO community in a range of partnership groups. These representatives were elected by the INGO community, with the NGO RC playing a coordinating and facilitating role in the process.

- 1 The International Support Group–MARD (ISG–MARD). Representative: To be elected.
- 2 The Health Partnership Group (HPG). Two INGO representatives have been elected - Laura Wedeen, Pathfinder International/PI (from 2004) and Michelle Gardner, Program for Appropriate Technology Health/PATH (from October 2006).
- 3 The Partnership Group for Aid Effectiveness (PGAE), where INGOs were invited to participate in extension of the Mid-term CG meeting 2006. Representative: NGO RC Co-Director (from July 2006).
- 4 HIV Policy and Programme Coordination Committee (HPPCC). Four representatives have been elected - Diana Measham, Country Representative/PACT, Peter Barnard, Country Representative/Medecins du Monde Vietnam, Stephen Mills, Country Director/Family Health International, Vietnam, and Susan Wood, Program Officer, Sexuality and Reproductive Health, The Ford Foundation Office for Vietnam and Thailand.

## 5 People's Participation Working Group (PPGW). Representative: NGO RC Managing Co-director.

In 2008, the NGO RC and INGO representatives plan to ensure that input and feedback for the groups and partnerships mentioned above becomes more regular. Also in 2008, the NGO RC will continue to monitor which partnership groups have active INGO participation in order to increase information exchanges. The NGO RC will seek to increase coordination and collaboration with partnership groups that have activities relevant and/or similar to that of the NGO RC, in particular the WGs operating under the NGO RC umbrella.

### **PAHI Secretariat**

The NGO RC assisted the PAHI Secretariat in calling for NGOs to update the overall matrix of activities relating to avian and human influenza in Vietnam. Following a request from the PAHI, the NGO RC utilised its networks and electronic infrastructure to gather input from members and related partners in order to have the information included on the PAHI's Matrix of Support table

### **Aid Monitoring Group (AMG)**

In June 2007, the Aid Monitoring Group (AMG) was launched under the NGO RC by a group of international and Vietnamese NGOs that have been involved in aid effectiveness activities and the official development assistance (ODA) agenda for several years. The AMG was initiated with the purpose of developing and carrying out independent monitoring of the implementation of aid in Vietnam, in order to enhance the accountability of donors and government to citizens in Vietnam, and ensure that donor strategies and programmes reflect the priorities of the Vietnamese people - particularly poor and vulnerable members of society. By enhancing coordination among NGOs and civil society organisations (CSO) in the monitoring of aid, the AMG also seeks to strengthen the dialogue and interaction between development actors and donors in Vietnam.

The AMG is organised on a voluntary basis and co-chaired by the NGO RC and the Vietnamese NGO Centre for Cooperation & Human Resource Development (C&D). A number of international members of the NGO RC are part of the AMG, as are members of the newly established Vietnam Development Forum (VDF), which consists of six different CSO networks.

At the regional level, the AMG is linked to the NGO Forum on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Bank Information Centre (BIC), which are both involved in work on multilateral development banks, and in particular, safeguard policies.

In addition to its regular meetings, in 2007, the AMG held a consultation meeting on World Bank (WB) conditionality at the NGO RC as part of the WB's multi-stakeholder consultations currently being carried out in 10 IDA countries in preparation for the WB Second Progress Report. Assisted by the NGO RC and Centre for Cooperation Human Resource Development (C&D), the AMG facilitated the consultation, which saw the participation of a wide range of NGOs, civil society organisations and academia.

The AMG, together with the NGO RC and C&D – the focal point of the Network on People's Participation and Monitoring Government Transparency and Accountability (PPM-GTA) - participated in a meeting with World Bank (WB) president Robert Zoellick in 2007 to discuss a range of issues relating to increasing coordination and partnerships between the World Bank, other donors and INGOs and local civil society. The WB was encouraged to promote the role of Vietnam's civil society in its efforts to support and improve governance, in particular in relation to anti-corruption efforts, but also in relation to the monitoring of aid effectiveness and other issues. The outputs of this meeting were used as inputs into other related partnerships and groups operating under the NGO RC such as the PPWG.

In 2008, the AMG will finalise the design of an independent monitoring initiative, which will link national-level, policy-focused work with community-level, people's monitoring activities. The outcome of this initiative will be a report, which will be submitted to the National Assembly (NA) and form part of the ongoing capacity building of the NA in relation to aid monitoring. The AMG and NGO RC will also participate in organising training workshops on a variety of issues relating to aid effectiveness, including ADB safeguard policies, new aid modalities etc. For more information, please visit <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/421>.

## **Programme 135 Phase II**

In 2007, the NGO Resource Centre, together with the Ethnic Minority Working Group (EMWG), continued to develop collaborative efforts with State Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), the UNDP Project VIE/02/001, and related ministries and provinces on I/NGO involvement in P135-II. The NGO RC and the EMWG organised a number of concrete actions to strengthen I/NGO involvement in P135-II, including continuing to update the matrix on I/NGO presence in P135-II communes.

In 2008, the NGO RC, together with the Ethnic Minority Working Group (EMWG), will continue to develop collaboration with CEMA, the UNDP's VIE 02/001-SEDEMA, and related ministries and provinces on I/NGO involvement in P135-II. In general, the NGO RC hopes to plan, structure and coordinate the consultation efforts in a more proactive and strategic way, thereby facilitating a more relevant and effective use of resources to increase the impact of the consultation process.

## **Campaigns**

### **Global Campaign Against Poverty (GCAP) Vietnam 2007**

The NGO RC was a member of the INGO team developing the framework and activities for the 2007 GCAP in Vietnam in response to the Global GCAP campaign. The objectives of GCAP Vietnam 2007 were to:

- 1 Respond to the global call in the month of action (September 16-October 17, 2007)
- 2 Influence pro-poor policies and their effective implementation
- 3 Raise awareness and mobilise public participation in poverty reduction, targeting trade justice, and governance for poverty elimination in Vietnam.

GCAP Vietnam was approved by the Central Party Committee in November 2006 and the Fatherland Front assigned to be the key actor implementing GCAP Vietnam in the long-term. The GCAP team organised a range of different activities during the autumn, including talk shows, public walks, youth concerts, publication of newspaper articles, etc.

The NGO RC and a representative from the Fatherland Front also participated in the regional GCAP meeting in Bangkok on March 12-13 and the global meeting in Montevideo in May 3-5 to further integrate Vietnam's participation in the campaign into regional and global initiatives. The GCAP Vietnam coalition also met with the Asia Deputy Director of the UN Millennium Campaign Mr. Minar Pimple on August 23 to discuss the UN Millennium Campaign, GCAP globally and regionally, and how GCAP Vietnam is linked with these different levels and campaigns. During his visit, the NGO RC also coordinated a meeting between Mr Pimple and the Fatherland Front to discuss the campaign in general and the Fatherland Front's lead role in its organisation. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) – October 17 – was marked in Vietnam by the launch of the Fatherland Front's month of poverty action. As part of the launch ceremony, Action Aid Country Director Phan Van Ngoc gave a speech at the Fatherland Front

headquarters in Hanoi on behalf of the GCAP alliance in Vietnam, in which he highlighted how local poverty reduction campaigns fit into regional and global GCAP initiatives. A representative from the UNDP also gave a speech that highlighted GCAP's role in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For more information, please visit the GCAP section of the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/98>.

In 2008, the Fatherland Front and INGOs will continue to organise GCAP in Vietnam. The team plans to mobilise a broader range of organisations and other stakeholders to take part in the campaign, while also broadening the breath and depth of awareness-raising on issues addressed by GCAP.

### **Global Action Week (GAW) - Global Campaign for Education (GCE) 2007**

The NGO RC was a member of the NGO alliance involved in the 2007 GAW/GCE campaign, which promotes education as a basic human right, and mobilises public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfill their promises to provide free, compulsory public basic education for all people; in particular for children, women and all disadvantaged, deprived sections of society.

From February to the end of April 2007, including Global Action Week (April 23-29), a series of activities under the theme "Join Up for Education Rights Now!" were organised in 22 project sites of INGOs involved in the GAW alliance. Activities for GAW Vietnam included a TV show televised nationally on VTV1 and various other media coverage, and a special event held in coordination with the Ministry of Education. Throughout the week, posters and caps were distributed to target groups all over Vietnam, together with information highlighting the key themes of the global campaign. A comprehensive publication was also produced to highlight the GAW Vietnam 2007 campaign.

The GAW campaign will continue in 2008. For more information, please visit <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/152>.

### **Vietnam Development Report (VDR) & the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC)**

During 2007, the NGO RC prepared a final draft of the 'Evaluation of NGO involvement in the Vietnam Development Report (VDR2007) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Credits (PRSC 2006-10) preparation process'. The evaluation includes an assessment of the involvement, considers the impacts NGOs might have had through this engagement, and makes suggestions about how the engagement process could be improved.

In an extension of 2007's Vietnam Development Process, I/NGOs, represented by the NGO RC, took part as observers in the preparation process of the PRSC 6, which saw the participation of related ministries, the World Bank and a range of donors. The PRSC is a multi-donor instrument, which supports national policies for economic growth and poverty reduction by providing resources directly to the government budget on an annual basis based on a matrix of policy action.

In extension of the VDR 8 and the Consultative Group End-year meeting, the NGO RC has continued to facilitate I/NGO participation as observers in the PRSC 7 preparation process.

In 2008, the NGO RC will continue to coordinate I/NGO participation in the PRSC process as well as again facilitate NGO contributions to the Vietnam Development Report (VDR). These contributions will include, providing input for the outline of the report, providing existing case studies or analytical documents relating to the specified agenda, and/or by contributing with policy briefs or further analytical work, eg. based on community consultations or group discussions.

For more information, please visit the NGO consultation on the Vietnam Development Report (VDR)

section of the NGO RC website at <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/99>

### **Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) system**

The NGO RC assisted Care International Vietnam in establishing an online CBDRM by helping to coordinate NGO input into the initiative. Funded by DIPECHO – the European Commission’s Disaster Preparedness Programme – the project aims to develop a pool of IEC materials that is accessible to all those involved in disaster preparedness activities in order to improve coordination and the quality of such work in Vietnam.

### 3. Legal & Operational Issues

In 2007, a number of legal and operational issues had implications for INGO operations in Vietnam. The NGO RC facilitated a range of meeting and support different activities in relation to these issues.

#### **Personal income tax (PIT) for expatriate INGO staff**

The issue of PIT liability of expatriate INGO staff continued to be discussed in 2007 among relevant Government agencies, Committee for Foreign NGO Affairs (COMINGO), PACCOM, and INGOs. The issue of Circular No 55/2007/TT-BTC<sup>1</sup> May 29, 2007 provided some clarity on personal income tax exemption for foreign consultants in NGO funding programs, projects in Vietnam. The Circular No 55/2007/TT-BTC states that the tax exemption applies to people with a foreign nationality, who have been recruited to work in Vietnam based on an agreement between an INGO and a Vietnamese agency to directly implement programmes/projects as written in the project/programme document and in accordance with a TOR for a foreign consultant. Others, including foreigners working as staff for a representative office, project office or working as a consultant for projects excluded from the application scale of the circular, are not included in exemption. Hence, full clarity on the general issues on all types of expatriate INGO staff was still not provided in 2007.

As communicated in a INGO letter to the Prime Minister in 2006, the lack of clarity relates to a conflict between the two legal documents a) the PIT under Section III 2 (i) of the implementation guidelines for Decision 340/TTg dated 24 May 1996, and b) the PIT Decree 147/2004/ND-CP dated July 23, 2004. Up to 2006, PIT exemption was provided in the Memoranda of Understanding signed between the individual INGO and COMINGO by referring to the PIT under Section III 2 (i) of the implementation guidelines for Regulation 340/TTg provided PIT exemption. However, since May 2006 and in 2007, PIT exemptions have no longer been provided due to Decree 147/2004/ND-CP dated July 23, 2004, even though the decree would appear to be in conflict with the implementation guidelines for Regulation 340/TTg dated 24 May 1996.

In extension to the meetings and correspondence relating to the PIT in 2006, the NGO RC and INGOs continued to emphasise that INGOs want to abide to the Vietnamese laws in general including the laws on taxation during several INGO Forum meetings held in 2007. However, the NGO RC and INGOs also kept pointing out that a move to tax INGOs expatriate staff would affect INGOs' operational budgets, thus reducing funds available for development assistance. This may also in time lead to INGOs allocating resources away from Vietnam to programmes in other developing countries on the basis of relative operating costs.

Due to the implications a move towards taxing INGOs could have on the operation and resource allocation of INGOs in Vietnam, INGOs had hoped to gain clarity on this issue in 2007, and therefore look forward to 2008 and for this issue to be resolved. Moreover so, as this issues is linked to the issue of MOUs.

Finally, the lack of clarity has caused some confusion in relation to audits of INGOs carried out in different parts of the country. The Administrative Working Group (AMG) under the NGO RC has during the facilitated information exchange on this and other related issues. For details please contact [administrator@ngocentre.org.vn](mailto:administrator@ngocentre.org.vn).



## **Revision of 340**

In 2007, COMINGO started a process of revising the Regulations on the Operations of Foreign NGOs in Vietnam (issued in conjunction with Decision 340/TTG on May 24, 1996 by the Prime Minister of Vietnam)<sup>2</sup>.

PACCOM organised several consultations with INGOs and related government agencies, to gather input on revisions to the above guidelines, and there was extensive participation of and contributions from INGOs. The first revised draft for consultation was planned for the fourth quarter of 2007, however, this was postponed to early 2008. PACCOM will call for consultations on the draft once it is available.

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<sup>2</sup> For more details please visit the following link: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/node/69>

## **4. Organisational Development & Staff**

### **4.1 The VUFO NGO Resource Centre Steering Committee**

In 2007, there were two new appointments to the NGO RC Steering Committee (SC) – Diana Measham from PACT and Pieter de Baan from SNV. The NGO RC SC now comprises:

- 1 Daniel Selvanayagam/World Vision Viet Nam (from September 2005)
- 2 Jeremy Stoner/Save the Children UK (from September 2005)
- 3 Patrick Burke/Academy for Educational Development (from September 2005)
- 4 Diana Measham/PACT, Inc. from (from November 2007)
- 5 Pieter de Baan/SNV (from November 2007)

The SC held three meetings in 2006.

### **4.2 Staff at NGO RC**

The staff positions remained unchanged in 2007, and included:

- 1 A Managing Co-Director (full time): Ms. Trine Glue Doan from (April 10)
- 2 An Administrator (full time): Ms. Giang Ngan Ha
- 3 A Working Group Coordinator (full time): Ms. Phan Thi Thu Ha
- 4 Communication Advisor Volunteer (full time): Eddy McCall
- 5 An Accountant (part time)
- 6 An Data Supporter (part time)
- 7 Interpreter/translator Volunteer (part time)

In addition a number of Volunteers have been active at the NGO RC, including a Webmaster/IT support Volunteer (casual), two IT Volunteers (from July to October) sponsored by UNV, and other administrative volunteers on a casual basis.

## **5. Income & Expenditure**

The opening balance in 2007 was approximately US\$ 15,000. The total budget of the NGO RC, including in-kind contributions was close to US\$ 100,000. There was small deficit of approximately US\$ 4000, which brought the closing balance close to US\$ 10,000.

The deficit this year was caused by a shortage of membership fees and sponsorship/grant funds. To ensure more stable funding on a longer term, to sustain the present level of activities and to allow for an expansion of activities and new initiatives, the NGO RC will seek increased external funding in 2008 and develop a fund raising plan for 2008 – 2010.

## **6. The Year Ahead**

In 2008, the NGO RC will pick up on the outstanding issues from 2007, including:

- λ improved provision of information services;
- λ strengthening the overall level and scope of NGO RC Working Group activities;
- λ enhancing INGO input and feedback for the various partnership groups;
- λ broadening and diversifying the INGO input for the Consultative Group meeting;
- λ facilitate dialogue between INGOs, local NGOs and civil society;
- λ enhance the participation of INGOs and NGOs in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda.
- λ strengthen the dialogue and relationship between INGOs and donors, in particular in the perspective of beyond 2010

The NGO RC will also continue to facilitate and support INGO involvement in the development and implementation national programmes such as Program 135-II, as well as facilitating INGO participation in consultations organised by the Vietnamese agencies and donors, and finally continue to strengthen the relations and collaboration with regional and global agencies and campaigns.

### **Planning Activities for the Year Ahead**

Vietnam's development context is changing rapidly, the is expected that the present economic growth rate will continue and that Vietnam will become a middle income country by 2010. This will lead to changes and phase out among donors. Meanwhile development challenges are changing in scope and character, and while Vietnam has achieved significant reductions in overall poverty, the characteristics of poverty are changing and are now clearly becoming concentrated within ethnic minority and other disadvantaged groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS, people living with disabilities, urban migrants, women and children, etc.

At the same time, INGO involvement is increasing in the country. In 2007, there were up to 600 INGOs involved in all 64 provinces of Vietnam, and INGO activities are expanding into more sectors. The total INGO budget for 2008 in Vietnam is estimated to more than \$250 million.

The above changes raises a number of questions. How will the above changes influence the INGOs, and what are the future roles for INGOs in Vietnam?

For this reason, the Steering Committee of the NGO RC would like to propose to it's members that the NGO RC revisit it's strategy in for 2008 and beyond, in order to ensure it reflects the changing development context and the changing roles of INGOs.