

Interview with H.E. Mr. Bui Thanh Son, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on Viet Nam's election to the UNHRC for 2023-2025

Question: What is the significance of Viet Nam's election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for 2023-2025 at the 77th General Assembly in New York on 11 October 2022?

Answer:

Along with security, peace and development, the promotion and protection of human rights constitute one of the three main pillars underpinning the United Nations (UN). The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the most important mechanism on human rights within the UN system. It is a forum for dialogue, cooperation and promotion of human rights across countries in the world.

In Viet Nam, the Party and State consistently identify the people as the center, the actor, the most important resource, and the purpose of the developmental process. This well-founded view has been set out in detail in Viet Nam's socio-economic development plans and strategies, and is also institutionalized under the Constitution and the law. Accordingly, human rights, and citizens' political, civil, economic, cultural and social rights are recognized, respected, protected and ensured pursuant to the Constitution and the law.

As an active and responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam always seriously and fully implements its international commitments on human rights, and makes all efforts to advance human rights domestically and internationally. Viet Nam successfully fulfilled its UNHRC membership for 2014-2016, and actively promoted dialogue and cooperation in this process. Such efforts left positive impressions and are highly regarded by the international community.

Viet Nam's election to the UNHRC for 2023-2025 is of great importance in various ways.

First, it helps reaffirm Viet Nam's sound and consistent position and policy on the special importance attached to the human factor and on how best Viet Nam can harness the human element in national development. This view holds that economic growth must be closely linked with cultural and human development, and social progress and justice must be upheld. It is also a testament to Viet Nam's immense achievements so far in upholding the people's right to mastery, and our respect for, and protection and championing of human and civic rights according to the Constitution and the law.

Second, it contributes to the implementation of the foreign policy line set by the 13th National Party Congress. The policy calls for the elevation of multilateral diplomacy to a higher level, active participation and proactive engagement at instrumental multilateral forums of strategic significance, as a channel to further enhance Viet Nam's global standing and prestige. Viet Nam's election to the UNHRC stands testimony to Viet Nam's tireless efforts in

fulfilling its international human rights commitments. More than that, it is also a confirmation of the international community's support, trust and expectation for Viet Nam given Viet Nam's important and responsible contributions to the advancement of human rights worldwide.

This event is all the more significant as this year marks the 45th anniversary of Viet Nam's accession to the UN. This will be a great opportunity for Viet Nam to continue contributing to the common efforts of the UN and the international community in protecting and advancing the universal values of human rights, striving together for peace, national independence, democracy, and development cooperation and social progress.

Third, Viet Nam's active participation in and contributions to the UNHRC will broadcast a strong message of a peace-loving Viet Nam that champions humanistic and humanitarian values. It will also be instrumental in helping Viet Nam's Ministries and agencies at all levels, its people and international friends, gain a more complete, accurate and deeper understanding of Viet Nam's position, policy and achievements in the area of human rights. In addition, it enables Viet Nam to call on the support, advice, and experience sharing from the UN and other international partners in order to better uphold human rights, civic rights, and the people's right to mastery in the new period of national development.

In summary, the fact that Viet Nam was elected for the second time to the UNHRC is the culmination of the efforts of the entire Party, people, ministries and agencies at all levels, and the entire political system, in implementing the sound policy line and position of the Party and State for national development and international integration. This success is attributed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the external relations organs, other competent ministries and agencies. Their thorough preparations, and effective advocacy at different levels and through various channels, especially the high-level diplomatic channel and via the Vietnamese missions to the UN, have made this success possible.

Question: What are the directions and priorities of Viet Nam in its upcoming term on the UNHRC?

Answer:

Viet Nam today enjoys a new national posture and strength after thirty five years of Doi Moi with sound policies and position, and experience accumulated since its previous terms as a member of the UNSC and the UNHRC. This lays a very important foundation for Viet Nam's confidence in performing its mandate at the UNHRC for 2023-2025.

As a reliable partner, and an active and responsible member, Viet Nam will continue to work closely with fellow member states and make substantial contributions to the common work of the UNHRC. These include advancing dialogue and international cooperation in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding, and promoting human rights taking into account the particular conditions and legitimate needs and interests of countries, especially developing countries.

We will join hands with other member states to advance initiatives and solutions for the right to live in peace, right to development, rights of vulnerable groups, gender equality, right to access to healthcare, education and employment, and response to climate change and epidemics, among many others. In its 2023-2025 term, Viet Nam will perform its reporting obligation under the 4th Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and other international conventions on promoting civil and political rights, fighting discrimination, and championing the rights of women and persons with disabilities.

With the consensus and close coordination within the entire political system under the leadership of the Party and the administration of the State, alongside the support of the international community, Viet Nam will certainly fulfill its mandate at the UNHRC. We will work alongside the international community to build a world of peace, where all people, states and nations may benefit from the fruits of development and social progress, and where no one is left behind.
