

CONSCIENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD AGENT ORANGE /DIOXIN VICTIMS

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Chairman of Red Cross Association of Quang Nam Province – Chairman of Agent Orange victim fund

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We may understand that peoples of Vietnam in general and of Quang Nam province in particular have ever suffered great loss for decades of struggle for national independence. Not mentioned as a whole, in the American war there have been 61,935 martyrs, 6,499 heroic mothers, 21,112 war invalid soldiers and 4,287 badly sick veterans. These above mentioned numbers are not inclusive of Quang Nam people who are living and receiving special treatment for veterans in other provinces and cities. Among more than 41,000 poor disable people almost 24,000 are allegedly infected with Orange Agent/dioxin. Most of these people are leading miserable lives at 214/231 communes and wards of 17 districts and towns, particularly in 8 remote and mountainous districts of the province. As consequences of Orange Agent, more than 1,000 villages were devastated and more than 100,000 hectares of forest and rice field were defoliated and destroyed. Moreover, the Quang Nam people usually suffer from natural disaster which took away many lives and property accumulated during their life...Difficulties heap up difficulties.

But there are no such miseries that has been protracted to the descendants of Orange Agent victims as concerns and worries of the parents gave birth to child with inborn deformity, crippling, dullness : “ What would happen to our children in case we did not exist in this life?”, and they themselves are the victim allegedly infected with Orange Agent.

Over the past years, under the instructions and guidance of the People’s Committee of Quang Nam province, the Red Cross Association and the provincial Orange Agent Victim’s Fund have recognized their duties and responsibilities in mobilizing donation from organizations and individual both domestic and overseas for assisting Orange Agent victims. As of today, there have been 11,516 victims received assistance and donation worth of VND 5 billion from Red Cross Association of Switzerland, Holland, Norway,

Germany and England. Particularly, in the mobilizing campaign in 6 months of 2005, there have been 469 individuals and organizations inside and outside the province donated VND 541,731,265 , including the donation from lawyers, scholars and students in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and from Quang Nam people living and working in Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang city and in Germany. The Red Cross Association and provincial Orange Agent Victim's Fund transferred this amount of money to the Orange Agent victims of the province in a timely manner by building compassionate houses for people in specially difficult circumstances, hundreds of households were assisted with capital for livestock raising and other thousands of households were provided with rice and house wares. Scholarship and vocational training have also been awarded to children of families under extremely difficult circumstances...

In collaboration with the local government and family clans in the community, the Red Cross Association and Orange Agent Victim's Fund of the province yearly initiated a Campaign Month among staff and members of Red Cross Association and communities under the theme “ Traditional Tet for Orange Agent Victim, Orphans and poor disable people”. As a result, every year nearly VND 900 million is raised.

We do expect that more and more assistance and donation from kind hearts “ Love others as we love ourselves” “Little donation but great deed” from near and far people and international community in terms of housing, health care service, community based adaptive vocational training, financial assistance for livestock raising and micro business production are dedicated to misery people in order to help Quang Nam province fulfill the motto “Improve livelihood of vulnerable people by mobilizing strength of humanitarian programs”

Allow me to be on behalf of Orange Agent Victims of Quang Nam province to express my acknowledge with deep gratitude to the domestic and international organizations and individuals for such valuable assistance and donation.

May I wish you all good health and happiness.

Thank you.