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Summary Report on the International Scientific Conference “Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam – The Expectations”

The Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED), with permission of the Government and financial support from the Fund for Reconciliation and Development (FFRD), as well as facilitation from the National Steering Committee for the overcoming of the consequences of toxic chemicals used by USA in the war in Vietnam (The committee 33), has organised the International Scientific Conference “Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam – The Expectations” in Hanoi on 16 and 17 March 2006.

There were 127 official participants, coming from eight countries: Australia, Denmark, South Korea, the United States, Germany, France, Sweden and Vietnam, who are natural and social scientists; representatives of US and Vietnamese veterans; members of Red Cross Associations; representatives of care centres and rehabilitation centres for disable children; social and humanitarian organisations and activists; and 35 journalists (32 in-country and three foreign journalists).

25 reports and speeches of Vietnamese and foreign participants and three conclusions of three group discussions (Red Cross Associations group; Care and Rehabilitation Centres for Disable Children group; and NGOs and Social Organisations group), presented at the Conference, covered following aspects:

- Analyzing the multi-aspect consequences of Agent Orange/Dioxin, used by the US in Ranch Hand Operation from 1961 to 1971, on environment and people in Vietnam, that is socio-economic life, physical and mental health of the victims, their families and society;
- Addressing concrete and urgent needs of victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin and their families;
- Sharing experiences and proposing innovative solutions on intervention activities supporting victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin and their families by the Government and Vietnamese and International organisations;

The Organising board of the International Scientific Conference “Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam – The Expectations”, the Scientific Committee of the

Conference and many participants have considered the successes of the conference as follow:

Firstly, local and international participants had been very enthusiastic to attend the conference, showing their high responsibility and commitment to the common purpose to support victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam.

Secondly, the conference has gained its objectives, that is scientific research work (done by natural and social scientists) had identified multi-aspect consequences of Agent Orange/Dioxin on environment and people in order to have a scientific foundation for concrete immediate and long-term actions and solutions.

Thirdly, during two days of the conference social scientists, natural scientists and activists had been sharing knowledge, experiences and opinions in spirit of understanding and solidarity and then together come to a common commitment to support the victims and the law suit.

Fourthly, publications and documents used in the conference (these are scientific research work, conducted seriously, and lessons learnt from practical activities of Red Cross Associations and Associations of Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin from some provinces/cities across the country), handed over to each participant, would be good source of reference and tools for social activities.

Fifthly, the logistical provision of the conference, carried out effectively and economically by the Business Promotion and Service Centre (BPSC), had satisfied participants in-country and abroad.

In sum, the success of the International Scientific Conference “Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam – The Expectations” has been expressed also through the opinions of participants after the conference in mass media in-country and abroad.

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Director of CGFED.