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Report of the Viet Nam Red Cross Society on the promotion of human rights in Viet Nam under the 3rd cycle of Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

To: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Viet Nam Red Cross Society (VNRC) is a professional social humanitarian organization founded by President Ho Chi Minh on November 23, 1946. It is a member of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front. The VNRC was officially recognized as a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (movement) in 1957 and followed 7 fundamental principles of the Movement including: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity and Universality.¹ Based on these principles, the organization's activities contribute primarily to the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, with priority given to vulnerable groups such as poor people (particularly in remote areas with socio-economic difficulties), people with disabilities, victims of Agent Orange, war victims, the elderly, women, children and ethnic minorities.

There are 4 key operational priorities in the development strategy of the VNRC for 2010 - 2020, namely participation in disaster preparedness and response, community - based health care, voluntary blood donor recruitment and humanitarian social work. The Society's activities have achieved remarkable results in all areas, particularly in the period from 2013 to 2018 which showcased its auxiliary role to the government's efforts in social security policies.

Disaster Preparedness and Response: Thanks to the financial and technical supports from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Partnership National Red Cross Societies, the VNRC has implemented many community - based disaster risk management programs which

¹There are 191 individual National Societies of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the moment.

built disaster preparedness and resilience for 585 communities (villages) across the country and helped people in disaster - prone areas gaining awareness and skills as well as being equipped with a number of tools and constructions to be safe once disasters happen. In addition, annual emergency response programs help meeting the most pressing needs have affected communities as well as supporting for post - disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts.²

Humanitarian social work: Many programs and campaigns have been implemented effectively, drawing attention from the whole society in taking care of the poor and the vulnerable such as the “Tet for the poor and victims of Agent Orange” program,³ “Each organization and individual associating with a humanitarian address” campaign,⁴ "Cow Bank" Project,⁵ programs aiming at helping people with disabilities fully integrate into society (by providing health and rehabilitation services, hearing aids, mobility equipment (wheelchair, prosthetic limbs), vocational trainings and job creation); assisting local authorities to ensure disabled people having equal opportunities (integrating issues of people with disabilities into local disaster preparedness and socio-economic development plans), eradicating barriers and raising disabled people’s position and opportunities in the community.

Voluntary blood donor recruitment: The VNRC actively mobilizes the blood donors through different campaigns, creating more sources of blood to meet the need of blood for treatment. An average of 1 million of blood units⁶ are collected annually via the programs of the VNRC, increasing the chance of living for millions of patients.

Community - based health care: the VNRC carries out many activities such as (1) organizing free health care for the poor in remote areas via the network of

² During the period of 5 years, 57905 households (approximately 231620 people) were supported via emergency relief programs.

³ From 2013 to 2018, the number of gifts given to families in difficult circumstance in lunar New Year raised gradually from the initial quota of 1 million. 2.77 millions Of poor families were supported for the occasion of Tet 2018 only.

⁴ The VNRC has established 473,740 records of humanitarian address which are families in great difficulties, assisted or called for assistance for 581,886 humanitarian addresses. The program offers a wide variety of support such as scholarships for poor children, live hood development and so on.

⁵ Over 24,000 breeding cows have been allocated to poor households from Cow Bank" Project so far. The number of cows distributed since 2013 doubles that of the previous period (7028 cows).

⁶ Over 5.8 millions of blood units were collected from 2013 to 2017.

Red Cross clinics and consultation rooms as well as organizing voluntary doctors' groups, providing medical examination and treatment for over 1 million people a year, (2) improving the condition of drinking water and sanitation in emergency situations and community development programs, (3) organizing programs of community-based first aid and injury prevention,⁷ (4) raising awareness of health care and infectious diseases prevention (such as dengue fever, hand-foot-mouth disease, bird flu ...).

Viet Nam officially joined four Geneva Conventions and the First Additional Protocol, which was a fundamental element of the International Humanitarian Law since 1957. In recent years, the VNRC has also coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross to enhance the introduction of the International Humanitarian Law in schools (Hanoi Law University, the School of Law in National University of Hanoi, military officer training schools) and in other relevant agencies (Viet Nam Coast Guards, the People's Navy, the Peacekeeping Center ...).

In addition, as the representative of over 4 million members, nearly 400,000 volunteers and 4 million Red Cross juniors and youths, the VNRC has also made contribution to the implementation of people's civil and political rights via providing critics to humanitarian and social policies.

⁷ The VNRC has established a network of over 300 qualified first aid stations with skillful volunteers across the country (under Ministry of Health's circular no.17/2014/TT-BYT dated June 02, 2014).