Vietnam Higher Education – Reform for the Nation’s Development

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I. Vietnam overview

Vietnam has 330,900 km² in land, 84 millions in population with 1.2% growth rate. GDP of 2007 was USD 70 billion and GDP per capita was USD 833. In the year of 2006, the GDP was doubled as compared to that in 1996 and keep increasing after the Economical Crisis in South East Asia (1998 – 2000). The Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.709 (109 of 177 countries). The economic growth of 2007 was 8.48% and Vietnam has become WTO member since November 2006. From 1999 to 2006, the average rate of growth in the industry and construction sector was 10.3% while the rate of service sector was 7.3%, agriculture/forest/fishery was 3.9%

From 2000 to 2006, the total workforce had increased 15% from 37,610,000 in 2000 to 43,347,000 in 2006. Even with the increase in the total employed population, the distribution of employees in Agriculture/Forest/Fishery remained at 24-millions threshold. In the contrary, the Industry and construction sector attracted many workers: in 2006, the total workforce in this sector was almost doubled as compared to that in 2000. The service sector increased 34% in 2006, compared to that in 2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total employed population in three sector (x1,000)</th>
<th>Agr., Forest, Fishery</th>
<th>Industry and construction</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>37,610</td>
<td>24,481</td>
<td>4,930</td>
<td>8,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>38,563</td>
<td>24,468</td>
<td>5,552</td>
<td>8,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>39,508</td>
<td>24,456</td>
<td>6,085</td>
<td>8,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>40,574</td>
<td>24,443</td>
<td>6,671</td>
<td>9,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>41,586</td>
<td>24,431</td>
<td>7,217</td>
<td>9,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>42,527</td>
<td>24,343</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>10,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>43,347</td>
<td>24,123</td>
<td>8,193</td>
<td>11,032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Vietnam Higher Education Current Situations in Brief

Along with economic growth, Vietnam has achieved a significant progress in general education and higher education as well. In the academic year of 1992 – 1993, Vietnam had approximately 162,000 university and colleges students at around 110 higher education institutions, accounted for 2% of the cohort, yet, in the year of 2007 – 2008, Vietnam has over 1.6 million students at 369 higher education institutions (64 of those are private institution, which account for 17.34% in total), and accounts for 13% of the cohort. This means out of 10,000 populations, 188 of those are students. The number of faculties is above 56,000, which means each teaching staff will be helping more than 28 students. Only 5,900 of those have PhD degree (occupy less than 11% of the teaching staff), 314 are full professors and 1,845 associate professors.
The educational scale is not sufficient for the nation’s industrialization and modernization; and neither imbalanced between supply and demand. Quality and relevance of graduates’ qualifications are a paramount issue. Graduates lack of labors skills needed, so that the employers are facing with difficulties in employing adequate and capable labors. The following figures have showed the degree of graduate skill’s responsiveness to the employer requirements:

Discrepancies in access in higher education among the Richs and the Poors are significant. Although economic growth has helped clearly reducing the poor rate in Vietnam (this rate in 2004 has decreased one third than the 1993’s figure), poverty is still a barrier to the access to higher education, so that the Government is required to pay special attention in its higher education policy renovation. The following table shows the distribution of tertiary enrollment by income quintile (%):
The system and institution structures have shown much inappropriateness. The network of universities and research institutes has been isolated, subsequently reducing the efficiency of investment, and quality of training and research; research activities in higher education institutions have been paid inadequate attention. There are weak links between teaching and research in service of social life and also the absence of hierarchy among higher education institutions with respect to functions and responsibilities. Institutions’ autonomous rights still have been constrained without high social responsibilities.

Limited resources which is mainly dependent on the small state budget and modest revenue from tuition fees (due to bad habits deeply rooted from the subsidizing period, inappropriate mobilization mechanism of the participation of non-public components, small resources for research and research implementation, lack of suitable mechanism and policies, and lack of initiatives among tertiary institutions in utilizing resources in the society…).

At the moment, there are only few researches at the universities (which plays 3% of universities’ revenues). In addition, these researches have a weak linkage with the industry and the funding sources for higher education are limited. These limitations lead to obsolete equipment for teaching and research, out-dated curriculum and teaching method.

**FUNDING FOR EDUCATION**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>25,701</td>
<td>33,143</td>
<td>49,427</td>
<td>73,186</td>
<td>89,860</td>
<td>101,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In which: - budget expenditure</td>
<td>18,386</td>
<td>22,541</td>
<td>34,872</td>
<td>54,798</td>
<td>66,875</td>
<td>72,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- private’s expenditure</td>
<td>7,315</td>
<td>10,602</td>
<td>14,555</td>
<td>18,388</td>
<td>22,985</td>
<td>28,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of private/total expenditure (%)</td>
<td>28.46</td>
<td>31.99</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>25.58</td>
<td>28.54</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
State budget for education increased from 4.2% of GDP in 2000 to 5.6% in 2006 while the Private contribution fluctuated between 1.7%. The total funding from public and private sectors rose from 5.8% of GDP in 2000 to 7.5% in 2006, mainly according to public budget increased. According to the table, the ratio of Private sector’s expenditure over the total expenditure on education was 25.1% in 2006.

In general, expenditure on education per capital is still low, for example in 2006, the expenditure for a person was approximately 54 USD (over 1 USD per week) and about 203 USD per student (0.56 USD/student/day). In addition, expenditure for universalization at primary and lower secondary education accounts for 52% of the total budget for education while kindergarten and other general education accounts for 71% of the total education budget. The remaining share of budget for workforce training from semi-skilled workers to higher education was only about 15%. Average expenditure on higher education is just about 400 USD/student/year. While access opportunity among the poorest is much lower, expenses to higher education from the poor families account for a significant proportion, pushing the poorest into the most difficulties in term of education access:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Quintile</th>
<th>Total HE Costs ('000 VND)</th>
<th>Percentage of Nominal Total Expenditure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>3071</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near poorest</td>
<td>2679</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>3029</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near richest</td>
<td>3092</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>4490</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey, 2004*

### III. The need for human resource training

Overall, there is not any national organization forecasting the need of workforce for the socio-economic development, while the need of workforce for every industry, every area is very high.

**The labor force demand of enterprises and society:** There is a fact that there is big number of labor in Vietnam but there is not enough skilled or trained workforce for the industry. As the data from provincial department of labor, invalid and social affair, and management board of industrial zones, the possibility to import trained workforce to Vietnam may account for half (49.9%) of the labor with college training and below, 46.5% for labor with university or higher education. For the distribution of foreign labor, administrative role accounts for 31.8%, technical expert accounts for 41.2% and other is 27%. With the current growth speed, Vietnam may lose its advantage of inexpensive labor if the labor after training does not meet the employers’ requirements.

**The labor force’s demand in banking – finance** The evaluation of human index by Navigos shows:

- The 2nd quarter of 2007, the need for workforce in accounting, finance is over 1300, with 383 % increase.
- As the growth of labor market, the human resource for banking increase 57% next is accounting and finance 42%, environment and waste processing increase by over 40%, real estate 39%. The labor supply increases 30%, but the need increase 142% in comparison to the 1st quarter.

- The security market: 60 companies is operating with only 300 staff with working certificates, while the actually need is 1500. The fact that seeking an employee with certificate is difficult but looking for an experienced is more difficult.

- By 2012, the need of labor in banking and accounting is about 1.8 million (600 000 enterprises multiple 3 – finance director, accounting head, treasure). It is not mentioned 80 000 units using state budget (schools, hospitals, public authorities) which need 12 to 15 thousand.

- For the finance at commune level: There are 11,000 communes with over 40,000 finance staff, in which only 9% got training from secondary professional education to higher education, 91% have only elementary professional education or none.

- At present, finance – banking service accounts for 9.5 – 9.8 GDP and the goal by 2020 is 18 – 20%, a question of labor force?

- The enterprises also face the difficulties in financial management, especially for the foreign loan or credit. The weakness of the financial staff made it very hard for administrators to manage enterprises and companies; also resulted in incomplete reports and information.

**The labor force demand of information technology IT**

The economic growth is about 8.5%, FDI increases rapidly, has made the need for IT labor force a challenge for many enterprises and companies. In 2007, a series of big corporations, companies have come to Vietnam: Intel, Fox Con, Campbell from Taiwan, Renesas Japan, Samsung and others. This foreign investment to Vietnam has brought challenges to the education to provide workforce that meet the requirement of employers and investors.

**Intel Vietnam** needs about 4000 labor, including 1000 engineers from electrics, electronics, IT, automatics. It is expected by 2011 the Intel Vietnam export will be 3 billion USD per year.

**Renesas Company** from Japan, in 2007 has set up a design center in Ho Chi Minh City. This center needs about 1000 engineers in transitory design.

**Fox Con Corporation** from Taiwan in 2007 began to invest in Vietnam. It is expected in the next five year the corporation will invest 5 billion USD in Vietnam and needs 50 000 labor. The corporation’s export will be 5 billion USD per year.

**Campal Company** from Taiwan invested in Vinh Phuc a factory with the initial investment is over 500 million USD. Currently the company is recruiting 1200 candidates to train abroad for the key positions in the factory. When the factory begins operation, a number of labors will be employed.
Samsung from Korea plans to invest a cell manufacturing factory with billion of dollar investment and need a big number of workforces.

At Quang Trung Software Park, Ho Chi Minh City, there are currently 78 enterprises and 32 investment projects with total capital of 150 million USD, in which 46 companies from overseas. The labor at this park is 3100 engineers and experts and 4500 students pursing education with foreign programs.

It is not only the domestic market; the need for IT workforce is existing in developed countries such as US, Japan, EU. If the education meets the requirement and assures quality, Vietnam labor can reach abroad market.

The Ministry of Communication and Telecommunication has set up plan to develop workforce for IT Vietnam to 2020 stating by 2020 over 80% of population have knowledge in IT, students at all levels have education in IT. The goal is to ensure the quality of IT workforce so that after graduation, students have the capability and accepted to work. It is planned by 2015, IT students will meet ASEAN standíon and 80% be able to participate in world labor market.

**IV. Higher Education reform for Nation’s development**

The fast economic growth, and the nation’s modernizations and industrialization requirements in integration process and fulfillment of international commitments have placed Vietnam higher education facing big challenges: potentially widening gaps between Vietnam and other developed ones; likely serious brain drain, possible incapability of higher education system to compete with the penetration and attraction of higher education institutions in other countries; potential violation in learners’ rights; and possible fading of characteristic features in national culture and traditional values of tertiary education.

In the national context, if higher education is not able to produce highly qualified human resources and neither respond to people’s learning needs, the cause of industrialization and modernization, and the objectives of rich people, prosperous country, and just, democratic and civilized society will fail to be materialized.

Vietnam higher education system is, in spite of some achievements, showing serious weaknesses and mismatches. Given the great opportunities and major challenges, there is an urgent need for the higher education system, i.e. intensifying the fundamental and comprehensive renovations. By November 2005, Vietnam Government has a Resolution numbered 14 on the fundamental and comprehensive reform of Higher Education in Vietnam and approved the Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006-2020 with the objectives of Vietnam Higher Education Development up to 2020 as follows:

1. **Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006 - 2008:**

   1.1 **Overall objectives for**

   By 2020, higher education will have undergone fundamental changes in quality and scale, responding to the human resource requirements for the cause of socio-economic development and nationally intellectual improvement, accessing to the advanced levels in the region and the world, upgrading several universities to international level, making
contributions to improve the competitiveness of human resources and the country’s economy.

1.2 Specific objectives:

- Completing the national network of higher education institutions with distinct layers, and appropriate structures of qualifications, training areas/disciplines and regions, in line with provincial/city master plan.

- Refining the division of training programs into two categories: research and career-application; using flexible training processes in which traditional model is combined with the multi-staged one, and higher education establishments will use certificate based training programs; reforms in teaching/learning content and methods at universities, paying focus on the linkages between learning and practice, scientific research and enhancement in professional skills.

- Expanding educational scale with the target of 200 students/10,000 people by 2010 and 450 students/10,000 people by 2020, of which 70-80% of students following career-application programs and 40% attending non-public institutions; establishing several international-level universities; increasing the number of foreign students studying in Vietnam.

- Developing the lecturing staff and higher education managers with good moral qualities, professional ethics, highly professional qualifications, and modern, progressive teaching/management styles; ensuring that by 2010 the number of lectures acquiring master degrees will be at least 40% and 25% for doctorate degrees; by 2020, these figures will be 60% and 35% respectively. The student/lecturer ratio in higher education institutions will not exceed 20; this ratio for natural sciences, engineering and technology areas will not be more than 15; and the maximum ratio for economics, social sciences and humanities will be 25.

- Significantly improving the scale and efficiency of science - and technology-related activities in higher education institutions. Major universities also will be strong centers for national scientific research. Revenues from scientific research, technology transfer, production activities and services at universities will reach at least 15% and 25% of their total income by 2010 and 2020 respectively.

- Reaching agreements on qualification recognitions with other countries in the region, and other world; Vietnamese universities will reach accords with foreign universities in equivalent training programs, creating basis for joining ASEAN and international certificate - converting system.

- Finalizing higher education quality accreditation system and establishment of quality assurance mechanism; all higher education institutions will conduct regular accreditation activities and make accreditation findings public.

- Using modern and technological methods of management especially technology, information technology and media in higher education institutions; setting up national database center for training and scientific research, and e-library system.
- Formulating policies on higher education development, ensuring their autonomy and social accountability in training, scientific research, production, business and services, personnel organization, finance, and mobilization of investment resources; assuring the role of the State in its management as well as whole society in its monitoring and evaluation to activities at higher education establishments.

1.3 Tasks and solutions to higher education reform

The Higher Education Reform Agenda has set tasks and solutions to higher education renovation as follows:

- **The adjustment in structures of degrees and system of universities:** a) Development of higher education programs with two main categories: research and career-application, with a view to providing more learning opportunities and hierarchy of human resource qualifications. Priorities will be given to the expansion of training size under the career-application orientation; b) Making adjustment to and strengthening open university system to significantly expand the training scale of open universities; c) Making amendments to the rules applied to non-public universities and colleges; strengthening and developing non-public higher education system; d) Expanding the network of community college and establishing training transfer mechanism between these colleges and universities; e) Establishment of some strong/leading universities, which can make good combination between training and scientific research, catch up with advanced levels regionally and internationally, and lay the good quality foundation for the entire higher education system.

- **The development of flexible and inter-linked training programs; and the renovation of higher education objectives, content, and teaching/learning methods:** a) Improving university entrance exams in the direction of application of modern educational measurement technology; b) Pointing out the route map for the whole higher education system in applying the credits system; removing the differences between formal and non-formal degrees; c) To guarantee the inter-linkages among various levels of tertiary education; development of flexible enrollment mechanisms so that learners can attend higher education institutions whenever they feel comfortable, and have life-long learning; d) Exercising the campaign of teaching/learning method reform in higher education according to the new perceptions on objectives, content and methods so that learners have multi-potentials for learning, research and creativity for the development of individuals associated with society; and job generation; renovating teaching/learning methods in accordance with the following rules: teaching how to learn, bringing into play the learners’ activeness, and making use of new information and communication technology; e) Compiling, importing, translating and publishing materials for various subjects; encouraging higher education institutions to select and use advanced materials and syllabi applied by developed countries; facilitating the cooperation among various institutions with regard to the exploitation of open educational resources (OER) and other Internet-based training materials; establishing national database center for training and scientific research, e-library system and centers for learning references with a view to creating supporting tools for teaching, learning and achievement assessment; f) Basically changing the methods of standardized study assessment with an emphasis on the assessment of the whole learning process, using various scientific and modern assessment methods.
- The development of lecturing staff and higher education managers: a) Reform of employment methods on objective, fair and competitive basis; thorough renovation of content, programs and methods of pre-service and in-service training for lecturing staff and managers in higher education institutions; b) Selection of excellent students, and qualified scientists with working experience in socio-economic organizations to fill staff positions; c) Using long-term contractual mechanism (for all qualified people) to increase the number of lecturers for the purpose of ensuring appropriate student/lecturer ratio for each training area/discipline; ensuring the equity between permanent and contracted lecturing staff, and those working in public and non-public institutions; d) Developing and issuing new policies on lecturing staff; determining appropriate salary level and incentives for higher education lecturers and managers; establishing subject and professorship-based funds so that talented academics will be identified and fostered... e) Reform in processes of appointing and removing the titles of professor and associate professor; conducting regular review/assessment for re-appointment or removal of professor and associate professor titles; developing an appropriate process of lecturer assessment through managers, colleagues and students; f) Provision of overseas training for lecturing staff; h) Establishment of mechanism and policies to attract many proficient experts from national and foreign research institutes, production units and businesses (including Vietnamese nationals) to facilitate university teaching activities.

- The increase in research and implementation activities in order to improve training quality, directly address issues arising from socio-economic development and earning revenues for higher education institutions: a) Defining objectives and classifying layers of research activities carried out by higher education establishments on the basis of their characteristics and capacities so that appropriate investment policies will be worked out; b) Annually, the State allots, according to Law on Science and Technology, the budgetary amount of no less than 1% of State budget on scientific research tasks conducted by universities. The amount from non-budget resources for scientific research and technology as a result of increasing mobilization will be up to 30% of total funding for scientific research and technology. More funds will be raised up for scientific research and technology in higher education institutions through bidding procedures for research topics and contractually-based task assignment. Mechanism of increasing capability for fundamental research and technology promotion will be set up in universities; c) Targeting research activities in higher education institutions to the top objective of training quality improvement; d) Making connection between research activities with the settlement of problems in service of social-economic development and market, contributing to increased competitiveness of the country’s economy; e) Enhancement of the cooperation among universities, research institutes and businesses in order to create the links among training, science and production/business; finalization of the development of policies and regimes for scientists working in research institutes to take part in teaching activities; f) Establishment of several joint research programs and collaborative laboratories between Vietnamese and foreign universities; increase in competitive indicators in relation to science and technology development in Vietnamese universities.

- The reform in financial mechanism of higher education establishments in order to diversify resources and improve investment efficiency: a) The State strengthens the infrastructure investment into tertiary education. Investment can be made to the construction of using shared establishments such as national database center, e-libraries, major laboratories, dormitories, and cultural and sports centers for students. Localities can make adjustment to their planning and allocate land for the establishment of new and
modern higher education institutions which meet regional and international standards; b) The State issues policy which assists and gives incentives for national and foreign investors to make their investment into tertiary education, and ensures the legal ownership, and material and spiritual benefits of investors; c) Higher education institutions will actively diversify their financial and investment sources for tertiary education, and make full use of resources from research and development, service and consultancy, and non-state funding and foreign investors; d) Following principles in which universities will be independent in calculating income and expenditures on the basis of the fact that financial income is large enough to make up for the reasonable outcome, and savings will be accumulated to develop the infrastructure for training and research; e) Cost-sharing mechanism will be set up in higher education among the State, learners and community. It’s necessary to reformulate the system of policies on tuition fees, scholarships and student credits. The State will provide directly full or partial tuition fee in support to the poor or those who benefit from special policies, from social subsidies; f) Renovating financial policies to improve the budget-based investment efficiency, and to take advantage of other investment sources for tertiary education; developing and introduction of public, transparent and efficient fund allocation and financial management processes in tertiary education;

- The renovation of higher education management in the direction of increasing the autonomy, social accountability and competitiveness of higher education institutions: a) The State management will focus on the followings: the development of policy, the development strategy, and legal environment for tertiary education; the guidance and implementation of development policies and strategies; increase in checking and inspection of implementation process; macro adjustment of higher education structure and scale to meet the country’s requirements for human resources in each period; drafting the Law on Higher Education; b) On the basis of forming university council that is represented for the community, higher education institutions will operate on the basis of their independence and higher social accountability, moving towards the removal of ministry – in charged – mechanism; c) Emphasis on the establishment of a professional research unit which has strength on higher education to fulfills the function of doing research on public policies and issues related to higher education management; e) Management reforms at university level in accordance with the following directions: higher education institutions will have their autonomy in terms of training, scientific research, organization, personnel, finance, and international cooperation; focusing much decision-making power on university level; increasing the social accountability of higher education institutions in order to improve their competitiveness; f) Establishing quality assurance centers within higher education institutions, forming the ‘cultural quality”; carrying out the quality assurance and accreditation activities within the entire higher education system with a view to increasing social accountability; improving competitiveness and making university “reputation”.

- Improvement in competitiveness of higher education system in international integration process: a) Developing the international integration strategy for our country’s higher education; b) Launching the strategy on teaching and learning in foreign languages, especially in English; c) Improving quality of research and training programs with national specific features in order to attract international researchers and students; d) Developing the relation in exchanging lecturers and students, also joint training and research programs with foreign universities; continuing allotting amount of State budget to send lecturers and students overseas to study in key areas; e) Ratifying the “Regional Convention on the Certification and Recognition in Higher education in Asia - Pacific”; signing similar
bilateral treaties and establishing organizations for the promotion of related activities; f) Establishing clear and easy principles and procedures to facilitate foreign countries or qualified foreign universities to provide 100% capital investment or to open their branches in our country; exercising quality control in training services (including on-line programs) provided by foreign training institutions in Vietnam; participating in and building up relationships with quality accreditation organizations in the region and in the world to protect domestic learners; g) Developing on-site (in-country or regional) overseas training centers with the participation of high qualified international training experts, or providing “sandwich” training programs in order to minimize the brain leakage; h) Taking every opportunity to attract highly qualified experts from foreign countries to provide training and research support; formulating systematic policies to attract overseas Vietnamese and Vietnamese citizens trained abroad to come back and make contributions for the national construction; i) Participating in the international human resource training market, moving towards export of high degreed labor.

2. Implementing the Higher Education Reform Agenda:

Since 2006, there has been reforms and changes in higher education, with overall and strategic breakthrough in this sector in Vietnam. Just note some of them:

2.1. Implementing the training with advanced programs: Since late 2005, the first phase of the pilot application of 10 advanced training curriculums in the disciplines of Sciences, Tech-technology, Business, and Agriculture from high ranking US universities has been implemented at several Vietnam universities with all instruction in English. It is not only the content of the curriculum to be used but also the technology procedure, learning materials, learners’ and instructor’s evaluation, management be applied. The facilities of labs, libraries, classrooms at these universities have been upgraded to meet the requirements of the programs. Instructors from US universities have been invited to give lectures in a number of disciplines of the programs. Vietnam also sent lecturers to US for supplementary training in lecturing and management. Several US universities have agreed to award degree to Vietnamese students pursuing advanced programs; many US education institutions agree to support the quality assurance of the training programs of Vietnam. In late 2007, the 2nd phase with 13 advanced programs at 13 Vietnamese universities. In addition to US higher education institutions, the second phase also has the participation of UK and Australian universities.

2.2. Initiating and promoting the connection between training and using labor force by means of conferences and meeting about training for the needs of the society and economy; getting business enterprises, companies, employers involved in training process such as program developing, funding, providing scholarships to outstanding students, accepting students to practice, participating in giving lectures. Hundred of agreements between training institutions and employers have been signed.

2.3. Reforming the financing mechanism for higher education in the framework of sharing expenditure among State, learners, and communities; developing the policy on tuition, grants, loan for students. The Government supports partly or all the tuition for disadvantaged, poor students to ensure the equal opportunities to education for students.

2.4. Implementing the training and providing administrative and management skills for education administrators through courses, practical training in Vietnam or abroad. Those training courses have provided education administrators with practical knowledge and
experience of managing education institutions which is really beneficial for them as most of them promoted from good teachers but lack of management skills.

2.5. Implementing projects of training profession and application with the support of the Dutch Government’s ODA, and further developing it to the framework for a system of training profession and application. It is expected 80% of the total students will follow this program by 2020.

2.6. Implementing the project of training 20 thousand PhD for higher education institutions from now to 2020 in form of training full time overseas, sandwich training (partly in Vietnam, partly abroad), training in Vietnam (with time – 6 months – abroad for practice). Candidates will be prepared in term of language competence, academic skills before sending to abroad institutions. Some of the countries have agreed to support this project such as France, Germany, New Zealand, Japan, a group of American leading universities… in term of language training, insurance, scholarship, ODA…

2.7. Promoting and applying the process of training on credits in higher education; speed up the reform of education content and methods; by the end of 2008 one thousand e-lectures will be posted online. Develop and finish the site Vietnam Open course ware with the support of VEF, MIT, Connexion-Rice University – a useful software tools for lecturers to prepare the lectures meeting the needs of specific group and students to get reference and information.

2.8. Implementing the program of improving English competence for 10 year in Vietnam with the goal of making English is one of the strength of Vietnam students, not the weakness. The program sets a process to use English as a main language of instruction at higher education and possible schools. This program has received commitment to support from New Zealand, Australia, and Singapore.

2.9. Establishing two high quality universities, helping them become world ranking universities of Vietnam. They are Vietnam Germany University, Hanoi University of Science and Technology. The idea of setting up Vietnam Germany University initiated from Hessen State of Germany with the hope to create a symbol of Germany in Vietnam higher education system. Involving in developing this university is the German Government, university from Germany, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Germany universities will bring to Vietnam good curriculum, including equipments and facilities for training, practice and experiments. In the first ten years, most of the lecturers will be from German universities with support of salary, related costs from Germany. In the beginning, the Vietnam Germany University will be located in Ho chimpanh National University, then, it will be built new with international standard. The University will have the first enrollment in academic year 2008-2009.

Hanoi University of Science and Technology will be created on the foundation of Vietnam Institute of Science and Technology. This national institute has over 700 researchers with doctor degree, over 200 professors and associate professors. (meaning of professor in Vietnam is different to US) Every year, hundred of researches, articles published in Vietnam and the world. The labs at the institute are also most modern in Vietnam. In the first 3 -5 years, Hanoi University of Science and Technology will locate at Hoang Quoc Viet, Hanoi; then an area of 65 hectare (~162.5 acres) in Hoa Lac High Tech Zone will be used to build the university with international standard.
It is expected these universities will accept students in academic year 2009-2010

2.10. Forming Center of Workforce Forecasting at Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs. The proposal for the center has been submitted to the Government.

- Ministries, enterprises, and companies work with training institutions to create data base of training capacity, job opportunities; policies and activities to support training institutions and students. Establishing National Steering Committee with the participation of ministries, industries to promote and supervise the programs to develop national human resource; evaluating the quality after training and recommending adjustment.

- Training institutions have to ensure to maintain the records of students after graduate and using information as feedback in the training activities (at present, only several institutions are aware and interest in this activity).

- Creating appropriate policy to promote the participation of employers, enterprises with training institutions (such as participating in the school board, involving in curriculum development, supporting student practice and practical training, providing equipments or facilities).

2.11. Draft of Higher Education Law has been started, and this Law is expected to be proposed to the National Assembly by end of 2010.

3. Future plan with five solution directions

Vietnam higher education, after 3 year implementing its renovation, has achieved some progress. In the coming time, its renovation process is continuing at the following directions:

3.1. The first solution is to introduce performance, based system in education management. This solution is carried out in five steps: introduce the performance standards to all teachers/instructors, have contract-based employment for all teachers/faculties, allow students to evaluate their instructors/faculties, apply credit system and finally prompting ICT application for institutions (academic year 2008-2009 is the ICT’s year in education)

3.2. The second solution is to improve autonomy, efficiency and accountability of HE institutions. This approach requires benchmark-based regulation of student size of universities; in addition, quality assessment and ranking of the universities are also needed. This will allow HEIs to collect higher tuition (recently 150 USD/student/year), more over, schools will gain more supports from the Government via student size-based funding support (instead of institution based). Moreover, the research funding from the Government will be based on performance and demands of the research itself. The next step is to apply financial audit of university and publication, have more training courses on professional development of the university’s presidents. These steps will encourage industry’s participation in training programs of the universities,

3.3. The third solution is to improve the efficiency of financial management of HE. This can be done by introducing student loan scheme to support poor students, the loan can be funded by the Government. In addition, national target programs (advanced foreign training programs at 9 universities, Vietnamese – German Uni., National Uni.; program of
training 20,000 PhD from 2008-2020; 13 years English teaching program) will have more funding supports. In order to maintain the effectiveness of this solution, improving financial management information system is the crucial step. Other than funding sources from the Government, we can ask for international donors for education.

3.4. The fourth solution is further decentralization: Delegate decision making autonomy to local government and HE institutions while enhancing the responsibilities of the ministry in policy design, long-term strategic planning in cooperation with other ministries. In addition, improving quality assurance and effective monitoring and evaluation concurrent with improving professional collaboration of HE by establishing national councils of university presidents and faculty directors in order to improve quality of education and training.

3.5. The last solution is to develop 2-tier higher education system. This can be done in 2 steps. Step 1, developing research universities including high standard research universities (Hanoi University of Science and Technology, German-Vietnamese University, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City national University, 14 recognized research-oriented universities and 25-30 other research universities in the futures) Step 2, developing universities of applied science and colleges (approximately 300 schools – both universities and colleges).

CONCLUSION

Vietnam is a developing country. While facing difficulties in keeping with the economic growth rate, Vietnam sustains its development and growth. Higher education of Vietnam can not stand outside the nation’s economic development and construction. Toward Higher Education system of good quality, serving economic and social needs for the nation’s development, it is required to continue the sector renovation, to build more dynamic and diversified system, to expand its scope and increase competitiveness, helping higher education institutions in their strategic planning relevant with meeting social – economic needs, and to continue investment on the top group of universities.

REFERENCES:

Biography of writer:

Dr. Nguyen Thi Le Huong has served as an expert of higher education in Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) since 1982 and has became a Deputy Director General of Higher Education Department of MOET since July 2007.

She graduate from Hanoi University of Education with a Bachelor’s degree (1980) and Doctor’s degree (1996) in Mathematics and also work as a visiting lecturer there. She has involved in many research and activities related to the Higher Education, especially Higher Education Development and Reform coorporation with other countries in EU, UK, East Asia, ASEAN, North and South America, South Africa...