



**THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM  
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**STATEMENT**

**by Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam  
at the 21<sup>st</sup> United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process  
on Ocean and Law of the Sea (ICP21)**

*New York, 14-18 June 2021*

*Chairperson,*

Viet Nam warmly congratulates Ambassador Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Monaco and Ambassador Viliami Va'inga Tone, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga on their appointment as Co-Chairs of the 21<sup>st</sup> United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean and Law of the Sea.

Our statement will address two main points: (1) Understanding the issue of sea level rise, its impacts and related challenges, and (2) International cooperation and coordination in addressing the impacts and challenges relating to sea level rise.

As a low-lying country, Viet Nam welcomes the theme of ICP 21 - "Sea level rise and its impacts" to boost international community's efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially Sustainable Development Goal 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (SDG 14).

Sea level rise poses serious challenges to many ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources, affects various aspects of human life on a global scale and hinders the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the World Ocean Assessment II report, the East Sea (South China Sea) will have higher sea level rise than the world average. Countries bordering the East Sea, hence, bear the brunt of sea level rise impacts.

Viet Nam, as a coastal country in the East Sea with low-lying terrain and a coastline of 3,260 km, is among the countries most vulnerable to sea level rise. Our

Strategy for Sustainable Development of Viet Nam's Marine Economy to 2030 with a vision to 2045 affirms that climate change and sea level rise are urgent issues.

Climate change and sea level rise put at tremendous risk various important sectors of Viet Nam, including agriculture and food security, natural ecosystems, biodiversity, water resources, public health, habitats and technical infrastructures, since those are the sectors of high exposure and sensitivity to natural disasters and extreme climate events. Viet Nam's Mekong River Delta, the Red River Delta and the Central Coast will face enormous risk. The poor, ethnic minorities, the elderly, women, children and the sick are the most vulnerable.

The national studies of Viet Nam predict that, by 2100, the sea level will rise by 100 cm and will harm 4% of the railway system, 9% of the national highway system and 12% of the provincial road system. It will also inundate 6.3% of Viet Nam's land area, of which nearly 39% of the area of the Mekong River Delta will be submerged, affecting nearly 35% of the population and potentially losing 40.5% of the total rice production of the whole region.

In general, sea level rise causes multi-faceted losses and damages in the long term and beyond the control of any single country, even ones with extreme climate change adaptation plans and greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures. Other measures to withstand the impacts of sea level rise might include constructing artificial shields to protect their infrastructures and reclaim their coasts. However, these measures are extremely expensive and only help address the problem in the short term, since sea level rise will remain and progress in centuries ahead.

Therefore, it is crucial to promote international intersectoral cooperation and coordination for innovative solutions to prevent the negative impacts of sea level rise while continuing efforts to actively and proactively implement obligations under international environmental law and law of the sea, especially the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and to take urgent actions to realize the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Strategy for Sustainable Development of Viet Nam's Marine Economy to 2030 with a vision to 2045 affirms climate change and sea level rise as global urgent issues and sets specific goals and directions to take steps for proactively adapting to climate change and addressing their challenges. It recognizes international cooperation as the key to the issue.

To this end, Viet Nam has issued and implemented many laws and policies to fulfill her international commitments to addressing climate change and its impacts,

particularly by promulgating Law on Environmental Protection (2014), Law on Hydrometeorology (2015), Law on Irrigation (2017), Law on Forestry (2017) and Law on Fisheries (2017). The national programmes and plans include Resolution 24-NQ/TW on active response to climate change, improvement of natural resource management and environmental protection (2013), Resolution 120/NQ-CP on Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Development of the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam (2017), National Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (2017), Plan for Implementation of the Paris Agreement (2016) and Target Programme to respond to climate change and green growth for the period 2016-2020 (2017). Ministries and sectors have mainstreamed response to climate change in their strategies, plans, sector development master plans and other related policies.

However, as mentioned above, sea level rise impacts are beyond the control of any single country. In addressing this issue, it is prerequisite to ensure compliance with obligations under international environmental law and law of the sea, especially UNCLOS, take urgent actions for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and join hands to work out innovative solutions through international intersectoral cooperation under the coordination of the United Nations.

Viet Nam is of the view that every solution to address sea level rise impacts must be taken on the basis of international law, including UNCLOS, and ensure the stability and certainty of maritime boundaries. International intersectoral cooperation to this end needs to be strengthened. We must focus on raising global awareness of climate change and sea level rise and on research, capacity building and technology exchange, especially developing scenarios of climate change and sea level rise, as well as forecasting and warning technology.

To conclude, Viet Nam looks forward to continuing its active engagement with all Member States and stakeholders in promoting sustainable solutions on this topic with a view to achieving SDG 14 for all.

Thank you very much./.