REPORT ON SEMINAR RESULT ON
VIETNAM DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2010

To: The World Bank in Vietnam,

As agreed by the management of delegate working board, with assistance from the World Bank (WB) in Hanoi, the Delegate Working Board’s Elected Delegate Training Center held three seminars titled “Vietnam Development Report 2010” for nationwide elected delegates and organs on 2nd, 4th and 31st August 2010. The Elected Delegate Training Center would like to send you the report of 3-seminar results as follows:

I. REGARDING ORGANIZATION WORK

1. Seminar Organization Purpose

The Vietnam Development Report – Modern Institutions – was prepared and issued by the World Bank (WB) in coordination with international donors in Vietnam. The report focused on devolution and accountability, as two aspects of Vietnam’s modern institutions and most important reforms in the past two decades.

The Vietnam Development Report was officially public at the Vietnam Consultative Group Meeting (as held on 3-4 December 2009 in Hanoi and on 9-10 June 2010); and was public nationwide to competent authorities and media organizations at the central and local levels (in January 2010) through the Vietnam Fatherland Front’s Central Council. It is very necessary for continued publication of this report to elected delegates and organs for improved capacity for elected delegates and organs – politicians – on economic field, which help
delegates know more comprehensively their access to economic issues for their participation in their decision of national important issues, which is a very important and practical work.

The Elected Delegate Training Center, with assistance from the World Bank Office in Vietnam, organized the seminar “Vietnam Development Report 2010” with the following expected purposes:
- Presenting to elected delegates on the content of Vietnam Development Report 2010 in relation to modern institutions,
- Presenting expert’s comments from areas relating to the report’s content,
- Discussing and exchanging experience among participating experts on Vietnam’s important reform results as gained in the past two decades and on others covered by the report’s content, which were presented at the seminar.

2. Seminars’ Participants:

Seminar participants included the management of the Delegate Working Board and the Elected Delegate Training Center, and representatives from the World Bank in Vietnam together with main participants from National Assembly delegates, People Council’s Standing committees, and the management of Provincial People Committee’s Economic – Budgetary Commission and Offices of the National Assembly delegations and People’s Councils from 52 provinces/cities nationwide.

Presenters at the seminar included:

- WB experts consisted of:
  + Mr. James Anderson, Senior Expert from WB in Vietnam
  + Ms. Tran Thi Lan Huong – Governance Expert, the World Bank.
- Local experts consisted of:
  + Ph.D Tran Du Lich, Vice Chief of Hochiminh City National Assembly Delegation;
+ Prof. Ph.D Tran Ngoc Duong, Senior Legal Expert, Legislative Studies Institute.

+ Ph.D. Nguyen Si Dung, Vice Director of the National Assembly Office

+ Ms. Pham Chi Lan, Senior Economic Expert

+ Vice Prof. Ph.D Dang Van Thanh, Senior Expert, Legislative Studies Institute

+ Mr. Nguyen Van Me – Former Chief of National Assembly Delegation cum Former Chairman of People’s Council of Thua Thien – Hue province

All presenters are heartfelt and much experienced in economic field and elected bodies’ activities.

3. Regarding training time and place

Three seminars on this content was hold nationwide. In details:

- On 2th August 2010, held in Danang city with 45 participants from 13 provinces and cities;

- On 4th August 2010, held in Hochiminh city with nearly 70 participants from 19 provinces and cities;

- On 31 August 2010, held in Dien Bien city, Dien Bien province with 70 participants from 20 provinces and cities;

4. Regarding organization and logistics

The seminar’s Organizing Board included officers and specialists from the Elected Delegate Training Center in close coordination with WB’s Office in Hanoi for good arrangement of logistics and accommodation for participants and presenters, and supply of materials and supporting technical tools and vehicles to the seminars. The seminar’s logistics was highly appreciated by participants.
II. REGARDING SEMINAR CONTENT

The seminar’s main content focused on “Vietnam Development Report 2010” presentation, and discussions and exchanges on the report’s main content.

The seminar’s main content included:


2. General comments on Vietnam Development Report 2010: including comments and assessments by local experienced experts on elected body’s activities and the State’s general management applicable to Vietnam Development Report’s main contents, then delegates would have multi-way and in-depth views on the report.

   General comments and assessments were presented by Ph.D Tran Du Lich and Ms. Pham Chi Lan.

3. Some general assessments on actual situation of information supply to elected delegates and their usage of rights to request information supply were issued. National Assembly delegate’s rights to request information and document supply are of constitutional rights. Presenters gave out some their general comments on using rights to request information supply, on information-supplying responsibility as well as, at the same time, initial recommendations for better information and document supplies to National Assembly delegates.

   This comment and assessment were presented by Prof. Ph.D Tran Ngoc Duong, Ph.D Nguyen Si Dung and Ms. Pham Phuong Thao.

4. Replies for benefit conflicts as mentioned in the report: mainly concentrating on analysis of concerns, shortcomings and negative consequences in devolution and decentralization as pointed out by the report and of some
recommendations and solutions in the coming time for successful institutional reforms.

This comment and assessment were presented by Vice Prof. Ph.D Dang Van Thanh.

5. Focus Group Discussions:

At three above seminars, the Organizing Board spent half of each seminar’s time to divide participants into 4 groups for information exchanges and discussions on the two following fields:

+ Issues related to national/local benefit conflicts issues, including: (i) Is prevention of benefit conflict risks in delegate’s activities necessary? Why? (ii) Have participants faced any case of benefit conflict? If yes, what were these conflicts? (iii) If delegates face a case of (private) benefit conflict, what can you do? What can not you do? Why? (iv) What need to do for delegates to bring into full play of their supervision role in preventing benefit conflicts?

+ Forms of delegate’s information requirements and usage in their policy planning and law development, including: (i) How does information play in delegate’s supervision works? (ii) What main information source has delegates collected information from? (iii) Have delegated been supplied with sufficient information for their supervision works? (iv) What difficulties and advantages have delegates faced in their information access? (v) What should recommend for strengthened information access?

5.1. Seminars at Danang city and Dien Bien city:

+ Arising issues on national/local benefit conflicts: on this issue, these groups have discussed and agreed that prevention of benefit conflicts in delegate’s activities was really necessary to avoid their participation for deciding the country’s important issues of and issuing policies of partial benefits.
Participants have shared cases of benefit conflicts faced by them. It could be of their local benefit conflicts or sectoral ones. E.g., when they involved in consultation for last year’s budgetary finalization and next year’s budgetary distribution, delegates were afraid that their contributed opinions could affect to sharing budget for their localities; or sectoral delegates were afraid to raise out their opinions on their sector’s limitations at the session meeting’s hall.

In addition, participants also said that in course of their performance, they faced with cases of benefit conflicts which were solved for their objective decisions, but also with others which they could not do anything due to these conflict’s direct relation to their local or sectoral benefits.

Almost participants agreed that it should do the followings, so elected delegates can bring into full play of their supervision for avoiding benefit conflicts and preventing and fighting against corruption:

- Legal framework for building up consistency and synchrony among legal documents should be completed. Legal document’s content, especially economic and financial laws, should origin from objective requirements by economic and financial activities, and from actual life, business activities and the society, and should ensure its scientific and feasible nature;

- Supervision should be enhanced for law enforcement, which, then, discovers shortcomings and unrealistic issues available in draft laws and law enforcement;

- Elected delegates’ capacity, knowledge and skills should be improved through training courses, seminars and conferences with their realistic content similar to the seminar. Delegates themselves should enhance their capacity, knowledge and operational skills as well as their responsibilities as elected delegates;

- It should reduce the ratio of delegates, of which they are holding many positions concurrently to avoid their two-role playing at the same time.
+ Forms of elected delegate’s information requirements and usage in their policy planning and law development:

Regarding this issue, after studies and discussions of cases as proposed by the Organizing Board, almost participants at these two seminars said:

- As for supervision works conducted by National Assembly delegates in particular and elected delegates in general, information has played the important role, especially in-depth information relating to legal issues in specific areas, and information close to life and actual facts and relating to supervised issues;

- At present, delegates are mainly getting information from such sources as National Assembly’s questioning sessions applicable governmental members, socio-economic reports, and specialized reports from localities, the Government and National Assembly’s bodies; local and sectoral reports; articles, and scientific and actual-fact reports through seminars as held at the local level, National Assembly delegations and National Assembly’s commissions;

- The majority of participants stated that at present, delegates have many sources of supplied information at National Assembly’s session meetings, but they are supplied with less information for their supervision activities;

- In addition to delegates’ above-mentioned quite favourable information access at the National Assembly’s session meetings, it was much difficult for delegate’s information access, especially faced by delegates holding many positions concurrently. Because many delegates have not known to use their rights to request sufficient information supply as well as their effective information exploration from other sources;

Some opinions are that, at present, information supply to the National Assembly is not sufficient and accurate; and much information supplied to National Assembly delegates has been old and unvaluable, etc
+ From the above-mentioned seminars, some recommendations have been proposed for elected delegate’s usage of information sources as follows:

- Detailed regulations on rights to request information and document supply, and responsibilities by information and document providers in service for National Assembly delegates and elected ones should be issued.

E.g: when an authority expected to submit a draft law, all delegates thought that related documents were needed such as the draft law’s effect assessment reports for sufficient review of the draft law’s effects to governed actors (including beneficiary and affected actors).

- Offices of National Assembly Delegations and People’s Councils should assign persons to assist delegates in having further information and implementing regular information supply to delegates among session meeting’s intervals.

- Information supply division should be completed to supply timely and accurate information as needed by delegates.

- Training and seminars should be hold to enhance delegate’s information access and processing skills.

5.2. Seminar at Hochiminh city

In this seminar, the Organizing Board have raised out a theme relating to Information role to National Assembly delegates, which is how National Assembly delegates would react when they were informed by some unofficial sources of information that the Ministry of Health was planning to submit a draft decree on medical fee increase to the Government.

Regarding this issue, almost grouped participants assessed that such information was sensitive in the context of Vietnam’s high-inflation economy. However, all agreed that it was an unofficial source of information, and it required sufficient information and agreed opinions by concerned authorities.
Information supplied to National Assembly delegates should come from competent and responsible authorities. National Assembly delegates would be difficult for their accurate assessments and proposals in case of their confrontation with unofficial type of information.

Some participants said that, in spite of unofficial information source, if the Government intended its submission of the draft law to the National Assembly in their preparation for collecting evaluating opinions on it, National Assembly delegates should be provided with further related information such as an assessment report of medical fee increase’s effects on nationwide socio-economic life is needed; what is the purpose for medical fee increase? In case of increase, what healthcare field will benefit from increased revenue? Should medical fee increase be correspondent to health care and treatment? Does medical fee increase improve healthcare sector’s service quality?

From this theme, some recommendations were proposed as follows:

- To ensure supplied information to National Assembly delegates to be official and sufficient, Legislative Studies Institute’s Center for Scientific Information should be strengthened in their capacity through their active search and update of information relating to law development, and supervision and decision of the country’s important issues; and should provide with independent assessment reports on areas and issues as concerned by the society, etc;

- As for locally-operating National Assembly delegations, advisory and supporting apparatus should be enhanced in their capacity, which are of officers and specialists from Offices of National Assembly delegations and local People’s Councils.

- Skills for information access and collection from different information sources should be equipped for National Assembly delegates in particular and for elected delegates in general.

III. ASSESSMENT ON SEMINAR ORGANIZATION RESULTS
1. Organizational Methodology

The Elected Delegate Training Center developed the programme and exchange with experts for content and material preparation. In one working day of seminar, in addition to presenters’ content, each seminar spent its half time for opinion exchange and sharing between participants each other and with seminar’s participated experts.

Seminar participants conducted their focus group discussions which concentrated on two contents as presented at the seminar, which were of benefit conflicts and actual situation of information supply for elected delegate’s activities. Such methodology has been highly appreciated by participants and proposed for longer discussion time, so delegates could have more chances for experience sharing and actual knowledge improvement relating to concerned issues.

2. Content:

The seminar’s designed content was selective and focused on basic and realistic issues for elected delegates. From follow-up and discussions on each theme, seminar participants shared a comprehensive view on Vietnam’s development process since Doi Moi reforms to date, especially institutionally positive changes. Then, participants also understood more deeply about elected delegate’s role – policy makers for the country’s development in current time.

Reporters were all of experts who did not only have in-depth knowledge on their assigned theme, but also were experienced in actual activities, so their interpretation was thorough with actively cited evidence, making it attractive to participants.

IV. ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Almost seminar participants valued the seminar’s themes to be useful. From these seminars, participants can have further information objectively and sufficiently on gained achievements as well as challenges in the country’s Doi
moi reform course for their studies and reference in service for their contribution to and decision of the country’s important issues.

In addition, there have been some recommendations to increase presentation time on actual facts by localities and local experts for the report content’s clarification, so the seminar content would be more diversified and useful.

From exchanges and discussions, seminar participants have all mentioned some opinions and recommendations as follow:

- Some specialized seminars should be available before National Assembly’s each session meeting, which will focus deeply on issues as raised out by the seminar, especially information relating to the session meeting’s content as further supply of information for the session meetings;

- The Elected Delegate Training Center should strengthen skill-training courses for elected delegates, especially training course as held at their beginning term of office, so delegates can be equipped in a timely manner with useful knowledge and skills for their activities.

The above is of the Report on 3-seminar organization with theme “Vietnam Development Report 2010”. The Elected Delegate Training Center would like to send this report to your organization./.

ON BEHALF OF DIRECTOR OF ELECED DELEGATE TRAINING CENTER
VICE DIRECTOR

Recipients:
- As above-mentioned;
- Filed at the Training Center

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