MEDIA RELEASE

WORKSHOP: “CLIMATE CHANGE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN VIETNAM”

Monday, September 8, 2008

While climate change is certainly a global issue, it is particularly urgent to Vietnam. According to the United Nations, Vietnam is one of five countries projected to suffer the heaviest impacts of climate change. Responding to climate change requires efforts from not only the government, but also the people, including civil society organizations. This raises the question of how to effectively promote the role and capacity of civil society in Vietnam to meet this challenge. This will be the focus of discussion at the national workshop entitled “Climate change and civil society organisations in Vietnam”, which will take place on September 11, 2008 in the Bao Son hotel, Hanoi.

The workshop is a joint effort among civil society organisations that are actively working to respond to climate change impacts in Vietnam. Partner organisations include the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA), the Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD), and the Centre for Environment Research Education and Development (CERED) and the Center for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD). In addition, other organisations are also providing financial and technical support for this workshop.

The workshop aims to raise awareness and exchange views on the role of civil society organisations in dealing with climate change challenges; introduce and discuss the initiative of forming a Vietnam Network for Civil Society and Climate Change; and acknowledge the valuable contribution of a number of organisations and people to the cause of combating climate change. In addition, the workshop also creates a forum to exchange general information on climate change; its impacts in Vietnam; related government policies and programs; and practical experience and activities related to this issue.

According to Mr. Nguyen Huu Ninh, Director of CERED and one among the recipients of the Nobel Prize in global climate change research, “Climate change is becoming a burning issue in Vietnam. Besides the international assistance, only the Vietnamese people can resolve climate change issues in Vietnam. We need to push up our internal power to address such issues”.

“In the role of coordinating members’ activities, VUSTA sees the importance of creating a common forum to exchange information and collaborate more efficiently, and to enhance awareness for the members and promote them to integrate climate change issues into their activities, as well as to connect the member organisations with other stakeholders such as the National Assembly, government agencies, people's organisations, international organisations and donors to deal with the issues of national scale”, stated Mr. Nguyen Manh Cuong, Acting Director of VUSTA International Relations Department.
Ms. Ho Thi Yen Thu, Deputy Director of MCD emphasised that “responding to climate change in Vietnam should be a common work of all organisations and individuals in Vietnam, in which the role of Vietnamese people is especially important. Being a non-governmental organization operating in the field of marine conservation and community development, also a member in the Vietnam's civil society, MCD sees the need to actively participate in the cause of combating with climate change in the country”.

“From the standpoint of an organisation that directly works with the coastal communities, who are most vulnerable to and heavily impacted by climate change, MCD desires to support the coastal communities to understand the climate change issues in their areas; to approach and apply suitable climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Such support would be more practical and more effective if undertaken in a common effort of the Vietnamese organisations and individuals. Therefore, we totally support the initiative of setting up a civil society network in Vietnam that has together the hands to address climate change challenges” added Ms. Ho.

With the participation of approximately 60 delegates including national and international non-governmental organisation representatives, scientists, entrepreneurs, governmental agencies, and donors, this workshop will begin a common forum of civil society organisations to more effectively act in responding to climate change in Vietnam.

Workshop “Climate change and civil society organisations in Vietnam”
Date:   September 11, 2008
Time:   08.00 - 11.30 am
Venue:   Bao Son Hotel, 50 Nguyen Chi Thanh, Hanoi

Contact for interview

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