

VIETNAM
HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA

Period 2006 – 2020

PREFACE

Globalization is strengthening as a result of advances in science and technology and major social and political changes at the international level. In light of the Communist Party's reform policies in the cause of industrialization and modernization, our country has scored a number of significant achievements.

After nearly two decades of national reform and five years of implementing the "Education Development Strategy for 2001-2010"^[1], the education system in general and higher education in particular have achieved much. However the system remains weak in some aspects and has not been able to meet fully new challenges facing the country at this time.

With a view to speeding up the development of higher education – a factor of utmost importance for the country's sustainable development, and in accordance with the regulations as stipulated in the "Education Development Strategy for the period of 2001-2010", the Government plans to develop Higher Education Reform Agenda.

Following the guidance of the Government, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has established a Committee for Outlining the Scheme. The Scheme' Outlines had been drawn up and received consultancy/ opinions of many teachers, scientists, young people who have been trained in developed countries, educational management experts, representatives from various ministries, departments, agencies, corporations, industrial enterprises, Technical Sub-Committee under the National Education Council, etc. After this process, the drafting outlines was refined and finalized as the Scheme.

The Scheme includes the following parts:

- I. The urgent necessity for higher education renovation*
- II. Guiding viewpoints on higher education renovation*
- III. Objectives of higher education development up to 2020*
- IV. Tasks and solutions to higher education renovation*
- V. Implementation*

*The main part of this Scheme document is briefly presented, attached with **Explanatory Notes** to clarify several ideas indicated in the main part. In addition, the **Annex** is also included to provide clearer description of the current situation, and the list of reference documents on higher education system in several countries.*

NOTES:

Those notes marked with:

- [I], [II] etc. are to refer to documents indicated at the end of main part of the Scheme Paper;
- (1), (2) etc. are to refer to explanations or illustrations included in the Explanatory Notes.

I. THE URGENT NECESSITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION RENOVATION

A. *International and national contexts:*

We continue to carry out higher education renovation in very special international and national contexts.

1. With the great leap of science and technology, especially *information technology and telecommunications*, the mankind is in its initial transition into *knowledge economy*. Strong *globalization* trend is growing over the world.

In such an international context, the philosophy on education for the 21st century has experienced major transformations, i.e. “*lifelong learning*” is considered as the foundation, and the overall objectives of “*learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be human being*” are viewed as a basis to move towards a “*learning society*” [VI]. Globally higher education has undergone rapid development with manifest trends: *popularization, marketization, diversification and internationalization* [VII].

2. The *Socio-economic Development Strategy for period of 2001-2010* introduced in the Communist Party’s IX Congress (in April 2001) sets the overall goals as “to bring the country out of the underdeveloped state, to noticeably improve people’s material, cultural and spiritual lives, and to lay the foundation so that Vietnam will become an industrial country in the direction of modernization”...“Industrialization is linked with modernization from the beginning and during all development stages...; gradually develop the country’s knowledge economy” [III].

3. The Communist Party and State consider education and training, and science and technology as the *national priority policy*: a) Education and training development is regarded as the foundation and momentum for the cause of industrialization and modernization, and the condition to bring human resources into play; b) It is essential to create fundamental and comprehensive changes in education and training; c) Area of education and training is one of three *key ones which require breakthroughs* to make the forward movement of the socio-economic situation, and to bring about dramatical shift in human resource development. It has close linkage with two other areas; firstly, *mechanism - policy reforms* in order to thoroughly liberate production forces and to *expand foreign and domestic markets*; and lastly, *administrative reform* to build up a strong and transparent state apparatus [III].

4. After nearly two decades of reform policy implementation and transition from centrally planned to socialist-oriented market economy, our country has undergone a great deal of changes in all aspects. However, with the requirements of the country development and increasing pressures of international economic integration, our country’s economy has revealed many mismatches [III]. The Government has pointed out the key areas which require breakthroughs, including “*the expansion of non-public sectors*”, and the

transformation of public establishments which operate under subsidy-based and heavily bureaucratic mechanisms into those which follow autonomy-based mechanisms without subsidy and profit ^[IX].

5. The strong conversion of economic structure (agriculture – industry – service) during transition period into market economy has led to necessary transformation in Vietnam's higher education structure including structures of degrees, disciplines, and regions.

B. Achievements and weaknesses of higher education system

1. Achievements:

a) In the past 60 years, Vietnam has gained considerable achievements, and made its contributions to the cause of national liberation, and the cause of economic, cultural, social construction and development.

b) In parallel with the country's reform in the last nearly two decades, higher education system has been renovated and obtained some significant success such as: shaping the directions for Vietnamese higher education system while the Vietnamese economy has been in its transition into market mechanism; identifying an appropriate structure for basic level degree system ^[VI]; diversifying objectives to serve economic components, and making various models of higher education institutions in terms of structures and ownership; and restructuring the training programs, developing study unit - based training process, initially applying certificate-based study mechanism and designing different training modes. The above-mentioned renovations have aimed at narrowing the gaps between Vietnamese and regional higher education and ensuring that our country's higher education would stand firmly, develop rapidly and gradually expand the educational scale (in the academic year of 2003-2004, there were 1,032,000 students at higher education level with 12% from non-public institutions, 33,000 post-graduate students and nearly 40,000 lecturers).

2. Weaknesses:

Despite a number of efforts made to renovations, changes in higher education have been made slowly and our higher education system has remained in *poor, improper situations*. It can be said that, the biggest weakness which has caused a lot of concerns in the society and hindered the process of industrialization and modernization, and international economic integration, is *the irrationality in relation to the higher education system's capability in meeting with the requirements of training human resources for the cause of industrialization and modernization and the learning needs by people*. This has been signaled as follows:

a) Poor training quality, limited efficiency, too theoretically focused study without closely combining with practice and the unpleasant situation in which the trained human resources are weak in terms of capacity and moral qualities and even are not equal in approaching opportunities.

b) The educational scale is not big enough for industrialization and modernization (higher education is only for a small number of people with only 10% of the age group population attending higher education institutions); imbalance between supply and demand.

c) The system and institution structures have shown much inappropriateness. The network of universities and research institutes has been isolated, subsequently reducing the efficiency of the investment, and the 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.

d) Limited resources which is mainly dependent on the small state budget and modest revenue from tuition fees (due to bad habits deeply rooted in 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...).

e) Rigid, inflexible training programs which are mainly theoretical ones with making light of practice. The structure of training areas and disciplines has been monotonous with insufficient emphasis on social scientific and humanity knowledge; out-of-date teaching/learning methods with heavy volume of knowledge and lacking focus on learning methods, skills and attitudes; training process has been close, rigid, inflexible, and lacking articulation (without making full use of an open, modular and multi-staged model).

f) Lecturing staff and managers have not been able to meet the renovation requirements in terms of both quantity and qualifications; serious shortage of experts in the area of research and design of higher education policies; small number of lecturers conducting scientific research.

e) Macro management of higher education has been heavily subsidized, bureaucratic, and controlled. The existing mechanisms and policies have not created: firstly, the autonomy and social accountability of higher education institutions in respect of personnel, income and expenditure calculation of income and expenditure and themselves made products; secondly, the essential competitiveness to develop higher education in the socialist-oriented market economy. The management activities in higher education institutions have not been renewed and primarily dependent on the experience and routines of the command economy.

h) Investment efficiency has been diminished because there haven't been clear and long – term plans to develop the system of universities and colleges as well as suitable

allocation of this system in our country. The temporary infrastructure proved the absence of long term plan of developing tertiary education.

In short, the renovation of Vietnamese higher education has not caught up with the economic reform and the requirements of international integration. Educational management has not kept up with the tempo of educational socialization. One of the important reasons for these constraints is the *slowly changed thinking process*, particularly the deviant manifestations. The thoughts and habits under subsidizing period in relation to education still weighs heavily against various sectors, levels and in the society.

C. Opportunities and challenges to higher education system and the urgent need for renovation promotion

1. The international context has created an unprecedented *opportunity* for our country's economy, society and tertiary education: the taking advantage of information technology will facilitate our higher education in accessing to the massive source of knowledge and information for learning and research purposes. Non-border education system provides our country's citizens with a number of learning opportunities. The current rapid and strong changes in global higher education brings about good opportunities for our country's higher education to take a shortcut to access to learning sources, and to make creative application into the reality.

The Communist Party and State consider education and training, and science and technology as national priority policy; therefore, higher education (including both training and scientific research) is regarded as "dual" national priority policy in both aspects. Highly qualified human resources are the urgent need of *industrialization and modernization*, and international integration. The achievements gained from reform process and the improvements of people's lives have created a new potential in human resources for tertiary education. Mismatches in supply/demand in terms of currently higher education scale are also great opportunities: if there exists an appropriate mechanism to address those mismatches. Booming development will take place and subsequently lead to major changes.

All above-mentioned factors are important opportunities, created by the national context for the development of tertiary education.

2. On the other hand, in the context of globalization with the fulfillment of international commitments (Vietnamese – the United State Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), etc.) and upcoming membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), our country's economy, society and higher education are facing extremely major *challenges*: potentially widening gaps between our country 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 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.

In summary, our country's 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*.

II. GUIDING VIEWPOINTS ON HIGHER EDUCATION RENOVATION

1. Higher education renovation requires the fulfillment of the mission in training the knowledgeable, skilled, qualified and high quality human resources for various careers, economic sectors in all socio-economic domains, making contributions to the enhancement of country's intellectual potential.

2. Higher education renovation requires the close linkage with and makes direct contributions to: the socio-economic development, the increase in the scientific and technological advancements, the consolidation of security and defense in order to meet people's learning needs.

3. Higher education renovation is a process of modernizing higher education system, changing thinking in tertiary education, and making improvement to each higher education institution and the system as a whole; perfecting the human, scientific and modern features; inheriting education and training achievements of our country and the world; and bringing into full play the national characteristic and at the same time making full use of mankind's genius to quickly catch up with the development trends of higher education systems in developed countries.

4. Higher education system must ensure practicality and efficiency. Non-public higher education institutions should be strongly developed. Favorable conditions in term of policy should be created for the equal participation of organizations, individuals and the entire society in the development of higher education system.

5. Higher education renovation should follow the directions of increasing the self-control and social accountability, the competitiveness of each institution and the system as a whole, and clearly defining functions and tasks in respect of state management in education.

6. Higher education renovation must be implemented in consistent and comprehensive manner in terms of objectives, processes, content and methods. Higher education renovation should also be closely linked with general education and vocational education to continuously make educational reforms strong and synchronized. Training scale also should be expanded, ensuring the relationship between quality improvement and scale expansion, between the implementation of social justice and training efficiency.

7. Higher education renovation is the cause of the Communist Party, the State and people, in which it's necessary to promote educational socialization, bring into full play the subjects of the renovation process i.e. the universities with the core of lecturing staff and managers, and the active participation and responsiveness of the entire society, primarily scientists, social workers, employers, students and families.

III. OBJECTIVES OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT UP TO 2020

A. Overall objectives:

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.

B. Specific objectives:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

IV. TASKS AND SOLUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION RENOVATION

1. The adjustment in structures of degrees and system of universities in order to make higher education appropriate with the country's requirements in socio-economic development and international development trends

a) Development of higher education programs with two main categories: *research* and *career-application* ⁽²⁾.

- Research category basically maintains the qualification structure of 4:2:3 (4 years of training for universities, 2 years for master degrees, and 3 years for doctorate degrees).

- Career-application category is designed with 2:2:1:1:3 structure, i.e. application of multi-staged training for both undergraduate (2:2) and master (1:1) programs 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.

- Additional regulations on the certification for each training stage will be issued. Intermediate leveled schools (undergraduate schools) will be gradually transformed into technological colleges which offer 2-year degrees. Permission will be given to the establishment of universities within enterprises with an aim to link training activities with practice. Regulations on the equivalent qualifications between research and career-application categories will be provided for all *post-secondary* levels ⁽³⁾.

b) Making adjustment to and strengthening *open university* system ⁽⁴⁾, and putting investment into educational technology infrastructure (information and communication technology, and modern assessment technology) to significantly expand the training scale of *open universities* with the following principles: increased enrollment by registration - based methods; output evaluation by standardized testing; application of flexible training programs so that students will be awarded with degrees/certificates if they have finished sufficient number of subjects. The standardized assessment system of two open universities will be also used for self-learners and other certification-based training modes.

c) Making amendments to the rules applied to non-public universities and colleges; strengthening and developing non-public higher education system; transforming semi-public higher education institutions and several public institutions into private ones ⁽⁵⁾.

d) Expanding the network of *community college* ⁽⁶⁾ and establishing training transfer mechanism between these colleges and universities;

Solutions from a) to d) will make important contributions to size expansion so that the objective of *mass higher education* ⁽⁷⁾ will be early met.

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:

- Making review of organization model, preparing detailed plan for merging scientific research units into universities so that training activities, and scientific research and production/business will be closely associated. ⁽⁸⁾; establishing national leading research institutes/centers, technological centers, as well as enterprises within leading universities; encouraging the establishment of higher education institutions within major corporations and firms.

- Encouraging several strong Vietnamese universities to set up their links with other renowned foreign universities; establishing modern management mechanism; mobilizing the participation of teaching force and highly qualified national and international researchers to make Vietnamese universities recognized as regionally and internationally advanced level ones; putting emphasis on the investment, mobilization of national and international experts, and on the formation of appropriate mechanisms for the creation of internationally recognized universities in our country ⁽⁹⁾.

2. The development of flexible and inter-linked training programs; and the renovation of higher education objectives, content, and teaching/learning methods

- a) Renovating quota-based recruitment mechanisms in the direction of linking with the training quality assurance conditions, the requirements in using human resources, people's learning needs and the increased autonomous rights for higher education institutions.

Improving university entrance exams in the direction of application of *modern educational measurement technology* ⁽¹⁰⁾; designing multi-subject end-of-upper secondary exam which can provide scientific, accurate and transparent results so that upper secondary schools can make use of those results to recognize students who are qualified to graduate, and universities can select the best candidates; expanding recruitment sources, creating more favorable conditions for disadvantaged people to achieve social equity in enrollment process.

- b) Drawing experience from the institutions applying *academic certificate system* ⁽¹¹⁾; developing appropriate academic certificate system for higher education institutions, and pointing out the route map for the whole academic certificate system in using this *academic certificate system*; assisting the learners to gradually accumulate their knowledge according to their own conditions and abilities, and to enjoy either domestic or overseas training; removing the differences between formal and non-formal degrees.

- c) Continuing designing the standardized curriculum for training areas in universities and colleges which is considered as a standardized measure for quality improvement and insurance of the autonomy at higher education institutions over the training content; using scientific approach ⁽¹²⁾ to develop training programs with a focus on attracting learners and graduates in the development of training programs.

d) Review of the structure and relationships between standardized curriculum and training content used for undergraduate, master and doctorate levels in order 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*.

e) *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 ⁽¹³⁾; 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*. In parallel with developing the infrastructure and teaching/learning reform, universities will be encouraged to reduce the class hours and increase self-learning and discussions. Especially, emphasis should be given to create fundamental changes in teaching/learning content and methods for subjects of Marxism-Leninism sciences, Ho Chi Minh thoughts, physical education and national defense education.

f) 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) ⁽¹⁴⁾ 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.

g) 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.

h) Strong renovation of selection methods, and training content and methods in order to improve the quality of master and doctorate programs, especially in the selection of postgraduate candidates, in the implementation of proposed thesis and in the evaluation of doctorate thesis.

3. The development of lecturing staff and higher education managers with firm political spirits, good moral qualities, professional ethics, highly professional qualifications, and modern teaching/management styles

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; focus on the improvement of professional and pedagogical skills of lecturing staff, and strategic vision, creativity and professionalism of higher education leaders and managers.

b) Selection of excellent students, and qualified scientists with working experience in socio-economic organizations to fill staff positions. Several universities will be responsible for providing pedagogy-related training programs for lecturing staff⁽¹⁵⁾.

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 with priorities given to knowledge, efficiency and suitable balance with other areas; permitting to establish subject - and professorship-based funds so that talented academics will be identified and fostered.

Quickly drawing up the working norms framework⁽¹⁶⁾; specifying science- and technology-related tasks for university lecturers on the basis of new situation; making study on the set-up of leave-salaried mechanism to facilitate academic exchanges, scientific research and fieldwork.

Providing well equipped working place for university lecturers⁽¹⁷⁾ to minimum level so that their contact time with colleagues and students will be increased.

e) Conducting activities for fostering research capabilities of lecturers in order to form research-based teaching styles and gradually to forge a compulsory linkage between teaching and research.

f) Reform in processes of appointing and removing the titles of professor and associate professor in the direction of providing higher education institutions with responsibility, based on criteria and conditions regulated by the State; setting higher criteria and standard in appointing professors and associate professors; conducting regular review/assessment for re-appointment or removal of professor and associate professor titles; conducting reforms in administrative procedures for consideration and recognition of lecturers and key lecturers with an emphasis on technical capacities and professional ethics; developing an appropriate process of lecturer assessment through managers, colleagues and students⁽¹⁸⁾.

g) Provision of overseas training for lecturing staff through state budget scholarship programs and other sources with priorities given to “sandwich” programs which train in-service staff and talented people through schemes, joint training programs such as and programs offered by national and foreign universities.

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.

4. 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:

- Institutionalization of scientific research tasks done by university lecturers; refinement of mechanism and policies with a view to linking research with teaching; improving research styles in university teaching, and linking research topics with master and doctorate thesis; giving appropriate policies for students attending master programs to actively participate in scientific research.

- Encouragement of research topics on higher education pedagogy in order to make specific proposals on the improvement of research styles in university teaching; efficient application of new teaching and learning methods in higher education institutions.

- Execution of laws on intellectual property of research works.

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.

- Providing that, research topics must originate from socio-economic development requirements; enhancing the roles of strong universities in research and development in prioritized areas (e.g. biology technology, information technology, new material technology, mechanics, electronics and automation, etc.), and other essential areas for market economy integration and development such as laws, economics, etc.

- The State puts investment into the establishment of strong research units within universities, temporarily for leading universities. Encouragement will be made to establish and to invest with the view to developing research units, scientific and technological enterprises, and technology promotion centers within higher education institutions. Co-funding mechanism will be formulated for the implementation of topics serving the needs

of enterprises, Ministries and localities. The participation in the science and technology markets should be noticed.

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.

5. 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* ⁽¹⁹⁾ 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 principle of tuition fee payment will be followed by learners; source for covering tuition fees may come from either learners or state budget or community. 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 ⁽²⁰⁾.

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; providing, supplementing and amending financial

regulations for non-public higher education institutions; regularly conducting assessment on financial efficiency of tertiary education.

g) Mobilization of resources for Internet-based infrastructure, e-library connection and provision of basic management software for higher education system.

6. 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 Tertiary 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 fulfill the function of doing research on public policies and issues related to higher education management ⁽²¹⁾, designing MOET's "Public Relations" website, attracting "relevant beneficiary stakeholders" to involve in decision-making process, and take advantage of the public's consensus ⁽²²⁾.

d) Establishment of the Institute for Education and Training Management as the substitute for two Cadres' School for Central Educational Training. The MOET's relevant departments will coordinate with the proposed Institute for Education and Training Management, and universities to develop criteria, training programs, and mechanisms to foster, employ and appoint higher education cadres.

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; expeditiously establishing and running the Councils within higher education establishments as the most powerful organization within a university; realizing the process of making strategic plans at universities as a measure to bring about consensus and democracy at universities.

f) Establishing quality assurance centers within higher education institutions, forming the 'cultural quality'; carrying out the quality assurance and *accreditation* activities ⁽²³⁾ within the entire higher education system with a view to increasing *social accountability* ⁽²⁴⁾; improving competitiveness and making university 'reputation'.

7. Improvement in competitiveness of higher education system in international integration process

a) Developing the *international integration strategy* for our country's higher education ⁽²⁵⁾ within the context of existing Vietnamese – American Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), and upcoming General Agreement on Trade Services (GATS) as well as upcoming membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

b) Launching the strategy on teaching and learning in foreign languages, especially in English; selecting and putting in to use some of advanced and modern training programs and materials, which are being used in foreign universities and suitable for Vietnam's development requirements in the areas of natural sciences, engineering, technology and economic management.

c) Improving quality of research and training programs with national specific features in order to attract international researchers and students; maintaining and bringing into play the national entity and traditional values.

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 ⁽²⁶⁾.

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 ⁽²⁷⁾.

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 ⁽²⁸⁾; 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.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

A. *Setting up Sub-Schemes*

- The Government issued the Resolution, which approved the “Renovation of Vietnamese Higher education for 2006 – 2020 period” Scheme (hereinafter called Scheme), and the Decision on the Establishment of “Steering Committee on Higher education Renovation”. This Steering Committee includes representatives from Ministries, Departments, the National Education Council and some experts, and is chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister who provides direct guidance on implementing the Scheme and setting up Sub-Schemes.

- The Steering Committee on Higher education Renovation established a Task Force/ Working Group including higher education and inter-sectoral experts (about 6-8 full-time working people, some of part-time working (50%) people, and 2-3 international consultants working regularly with about 12 months/person). The main missions of the Task Force are to develop Sub-Schemes, to provide higher education establishments with guidance on developing *medium-term development strategy and plan* in accordance with the Scheme, and to ensure prompt and synchronous development and implementation of the Scheme.

- Each university will establish a Committee on Higher education Renovation with the task of studying the Scheme, organizing the implementation according to the Steering Committee’s plans, and developing *its development strategy and plan* in accordance with the Scheme’s requirements.

One important requirement for this period is to make sure the shared information and harmonious coordination among the Scheme’s Steering Committee, the Task Force and universities to consistently set up Sub-Schemes at Ministerial level, as well as to devise development strategies and plans at universities.

- “Task Force” will conduct regular workshops with the participation of universities, and representatives from the Communist Party’s and Government, Ministries, agencies, and sectors, and make regular report to the Steering Committee.

- “Task Force” will finalize Sub-Schemes (by at the end of Quarter II, 2006).

B. *Scheme Implementation*

Implementation periods:

- 2006-2010 Period: Emphasizing on addressing issues on theory, mechanism, and legal framework serving higher education renovation; creating the consistency in will and actions of the entire society to join in higher education renovation and to implement Sub-Schemes; speeding up educational socialization; bring about primary changes in quality, and renew in content, in training methods, management mechanisms, and resource mobilization mechanisms.

- 2010-2015 Period: Focused investments. Maintaining the achievements gained in the first period, especially those in relation to training process and operations of quality accreditation and assurance systems, catching up with regional and international higher education quality; increasing the efficiency of resource utilization, and establishing and upgrading the lecturing staff and higher education managers.

- 2015-2020 Period: Expanded and comprehensive investment into the whole system. Forming the modern education system; suitable qualification structure; appropriate and integrated network of education with the aim of basically meeting the requirements in highly qualified human resource for the cause of country's industrialization and modernization.

Despite central tasks for each period as stipulated above, several activities will be implemented on staggered basis.

C. Implementation Costs

The cost estimate for Scheme implementation from 2006 to 2020 on the basis of 2005 currency consumption capacity is ⁽¹⁾: VND 320,000 billion, of which:

- From socialization source (50%): VND 160,000 billion
- From State budget (30%): VND 96,000 billion
- From ODA source (20%): VND 64,000 billion

D. Responsibilities of State management agencies

a) The MOET take the lead and coordinate with relevant Ministries/agencies, and People's Committees in provinces, cities under the central to implement the Scheme; to provides guidance; to monitors, to supervise, to synthesize the situations regarding the implementation of the Scheme and to make regular reports to the Prime Minister; to make preliminary review of the Scheme implementation at the beginning of 2010, 2015 and 2020.

The MOET takes the lead and coordinates with relevant Ministries/agencies to issue documents regarding the improvement in appointing professor and associate professor mechanism, and to move appropriate research institutes to universities.

The MOET carries out the drafting of the Law on Higher education for submission to the National Assembly Term XII, 1st Session (2008).

b) The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) takes the lead and coordinates with the Ministry of Finance (MOF), MOET, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) to set up the mechanism for mobilization of domestic and foreign investment resources for higher education renovation.

c) MOF takes the lead and coordinates with MPI, MOET and relevant Ministries to finalize financial policies, financial management regulations, financial policies which encourage the linkages between training, and scientific research and application, and investment of socio-economic components into tertiary education.

d) The Ministry of Internal Affairs takes the lead and coordinates with MOET and relevant Ministries to establish new operational mechanisms for higher education institutions and to formulate policies on university lecturers; and to propose specific organization model when merging research institutes into relevant universities.

e) MOST takes the lead and coordinates with MOET, relevant Ministries and localities to develop policies and plan for making use of the potentials of higher education institutions in terms of research, science and technology application and environment protection; and conduct the combination scientific, technological research activities between research institutes and higher education institutions.

f) Ministries and agencies will, according to their functions and responsibilities, actively study the Scheme in order to work out plans and to implement the Scheme within their authority; and coordinate with the MOET and other Ministries to fulfill the tasks of higher education development on national scale.

g) The People's Committees in provinces and cities under the central government will be responsible for higher education development in their localities within their authority.

h) Colleges and universities will base on framework Scheme and sub-Schemes to develop their own development master plan according to the set orientations, content and targets.

REFERENCES

- [I] *The Education Development Strategy for 2001-2010 period*. Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2002.
- [II] *Official Document of the Vietnamese Communist Party's IX Congress*. Suthat Publishing House, Hanoi, 2001.
- [III] *Several major issues on socio-economic development*, Speech made by Prime Minister Phan Van Khai in the 6th Session, National Assembly Term XI, October 2004.
- [IV] *Report on Education* presented by the Government in the 6th Session, National Assembly Term XI, October 2004.
- [V] *Education Law and Implementation Instructions*. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi 2000.
- [VI] **Jacques Delors**. *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, UNESCO, Paris, 1996.
- [VII] *Synthesis Report on Trends and Development in Higher education since the World Conference on Higher education (1998-2003)*, UNESCO Paris, 2003.
- [VIII] *Resolution No. 37/2004/QH11 issued by the National Assembly on Education*, National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Term XI, 6th Session (from 25 October to 3 December 2004).
- [IX] *Resolution No. 05/2005/NQ-CP dated 18 April 2005 issued by the Government on strengthening the socialization of educational, health, cultural, and sports and physical education activities*.



EXPLANATORY NOTES

(Notes [1], [2] etc..., see References at the end of this section)

(1) By 2020, Vietnam will basically become an industrial country; therefore, it is important to achieve the ratio of 450 students/10,000 people as other existing industrial countries. With the approximate population of 110-115 million people, there will be about **4.5 million students** (of which 40% distant learners, 20% on-line learners, and 40% face-to-face learners ~ **1.8 million students**); the number of higher education institutions is estimated at **900** (the same as the current number of higher education institutions in Japan). The cost estimate is made on the basis of these projections and the following targets, programs of the Scheme :

1. Development of training programs, materials, and assessment procedures, etc.:		
4.5 million students x USD 10/student	~	USD 50,000,000
2. Development of lecturing staff and managers:		
1.8 million students: (20 students/1 lecturer) = 90,000 academics		
+ about 10% of managers		
→ 110,000 persons x USD 1,000/person	~	USD 110,000,000
3. Improvement of infrastructure:		
900 institutions x USD 20,000,000	~	USD 18,000,000,000
4. Construction of shared facilities		
4.5 million students x USD 200	~	USD 800,000,000
5. Establishment of international-level higher education institutions	~	USD 500,000,000
6. Construction of several modern laboratories	~	USD 300,000,000
7. Establishment of funds for the talented, scholarships, etc	~	USD 100,000,000
8. Scheme implementation	~	<u>USD 10,000,000</u>
Total:		USD 20,000,000,000
	(USD 20 billion) ~	VND 320,000 billion

(2) The human resources trained within our country's current higher education system are especially weak in terms of professional practical skills. This is a major constraint for the cause of country's industrialization and modernization. In addition to weaknesses on training programs, technical equipment, etc., the structure of higher education system has not paid attention to career-practice orientations. Among "new industrial" countries in Asia, Taiwan is a good example. One of the reasons for Taiwanese successes is the establishment of efficient higher education system of practice-based human resource training. Taiwanese higher education system is divided into two distinct categories: research-development and career-practice. These two categories are in bottom up parallel and of qualification equivalence. It is perceived that career-practice must be developed from low up to highest levels as "life does not only require Einstein but also Edison".

In order to facilitate socio-economic development, higher education should be designed into two categories of research-development and career-practice. From career-practice

terms, it is needed to have flexible training system with a number of inputs and outputs, assisting learners to easily improve their qualifications and get certified. Therefore, the existing qualification structure (for college, bachelor, master and doctorate degrees) requires additional certification such as +2 years for college degrees, +1 for bachelor programs, + 1 for master degree, etc. It is necessary to find out appropriate names for these levels and regulations for equivalent salary bands.

Two categories of research-development and career-practice will not be independent from but inter-linked with each other.

(3) The concept of “*post secondary education*” is usually used for expanding the notion of “tertiary education”, which includes post secondary education, short-term and long-term training programs, and for differentiating “university education” that refers to bachelor degree training programs upwards [1]. As higher education is considered as post secondary education, the acceptance of post secondary education concept will facilitate the globalization of higher education and contribute to diminish the consequences from current certification- heavily respected psychology.

(4) Open universities in our country has not been as *open* as they should be as the selection of students is still tightly controlled and there is an absence of appropriate output-based assessment technology for each subject. When open universities are able to establish appropriate output-based assessment technology, mainly by objective tests, for each subject and for a large number of students, these universities can expand their enrollment. Through the use of modern teaching and assessment technologies for mass education, open universities can on the one hand respond to the needs of large number of learners, and on the other hand ensure the output quality and become an important tool for enlarging scale of higher education within the context of limited resources. Several countries such as Thailand and China have successfully applied open-university model for mass tertiary education. China has even used the output-based assessment methods for training programs which offer certificates/degrees for self-learners or those attending private universities without degree-awarding functions. (In 2002, China had 1,200 private higher education institutions, of which only 133 were allowed to offer college degrees. Students in the remaining institutions had to follow the output-based assessment methods to get their certification).

The development of output-based assessment system for each subject requires complex and costly undertakings which are difficult to do with the small budget of individual open university. Therefore, the State needs to provide primary investment for the development of this assessment system. And this system only requires certain funding at the beginning. And after that, training cost per student head in open universities will be much lower than in other universities.

(5) On the basis of the Government’s orientation to increase the number of non-public institutions (by 2010 the percentage of students in these institutions will be about 40%) for the purpose of higher education size expansion and improved equity. The State needs to provide certain investment into this sector (see document [13]). One of the appropriate and

necessary investment options is to ensure the equal rights of academics from both public and non-public institutions to be selected for overseas training under State budget programs. Non-public students should also benefit from scholarship and credit policies as confirmed in Resolution 05/2005/NQ-CP issued by the Government.

(6) *Community college* is a model originated from the United States and widely applied in Canada, Japan and other countries. In Vietnam, the model of community college has been considered for a long time and confirmed by the Communist Party's Central Resolution 2, Term 8 as a model for expansion. In the last one decade, tens of local community colleges have been established with the support from the Netherlands-funded Scheme. Community colleges have the following characteristics: 1) diverse training programs in which the first two years of training are of great importance for the next stage of professional training in other universities, and in short-term and long-term vocational training programs; 2) locally attached. Community colleges are local cultural and science centers which serve for the local socio-economic development purposes and are funded by local sources. An urgent need for the model of community colleges is to work out the development orientation in the Vietnamese context, especially the development of the regulations on *training transfer* between community colleges and other universities regulations.

(7) An American national strategy on tertiary education, Martin Trow [2], used the proportion of student number over the number of university age group (18-22 years old) population to define higher education size (usually called *Gross College Enrollment Rate - GER*). Higher education is considered as elitist higher education if GER is less than 15%; as mass higher education if GER is 15-50%; and as universal higher education if GER reaches over 50%. This concept is widely accepted, and economic strategists even linked the needed size of higher education with the nature and level of current economy: elitist higher education is only suitable for agriculture-based economy; only mass higher education can meet the requirements of industry-based economy; and universal higher education is indispensable need of the knowledge economy.

In 2000, GER reached over 80% in Canada and United States, more than 70% in South Korea and over 50% in OECD countries. China is making all efforts to quickly increase the number of university students. In 1997, China has approximately 5.5 million students with 9% of GER. In order to facilitate mass tertiary education, China enrolled 2.76 million students with increased GER of 10.5% in 1999; 4.75 million students in 2000; and estimated 17 million students with GER of 18% in 2005. China's intention is to not only prepare for industry-based economy but also future knowledge economy [3]. Vietnam's current GER is about 10%.

(8) A major weakness of Vietnam's higher education and scientific research system, which follows the former USSR model, is the separating existence of two parallel systems of strong research institutes and higher education institutions. In the last more than 10 years, the Government has tried to merge these two systems but been unsuccessful due to a number of reasons. The strong research institutes are justifiably desirous to make contributions to the training cause, but do not have training management functions

therefore, training processes at these institutes are not conforming. Therefore, the Education Law regulates that once these research institutes have to coordinate with universities, these research institutes can provide postgraduate training programs. However, the coordination has only been nominal.

Several recommendations for addressing these issues have been initiated, that is either to establish postgraduate institutions attached to those strong research institutes or transform those institutes into universities similar to American research universities with the main responsibilities of postgraduate training and scientific research, and increased autonomy as benefited by the two national universities. This solution will naturally be able to create good linkage between higher education and scientific research, and increased competitiveness between strong universities and two national universities. Further consideration is needed for this solution.

(9) Some suggested that the State should put *huge* investment into the establishment of some high quality and modern universities with new organization and management styles and some key foreign managers and academics, making them as good examples for Vietnamese higher education institutions. The visits to Harvard University and MIT by Prime Minister Phan Van Khai with good advice and promises of these universities' representatives help strengthen the above-mentioned idea. The Government can initiate this idea and turn on the green lights for national and foreign scientists to make proposals, and then select the most feasible option.

(10) From 1970s to now, the science on Measurement in Psychology and Education has gained significant achievements, making the measurement methods in psychology and education become relatively accurate and objective. Especially, the Item Response Theory (IRT) initiated the math model for the design of objective test items and test result analysis. This theory allows the design of equal test items to measure student capacities with relatively high accuracy to the degree in which a student's capacity is measured by different tests and shows the same (test free) results [4]. TOEFL, which is annually organized for millions of people, is designed thanks to this science. The combination of IRT-based measurement and information technology will allow for the design of objective test items to accurately measure student's capacities, and minimizing the "copying" problem in exams. In addition, the assessment of test items can be done automatically on computers, avoiding the bias and negative cases in evaluation. The advantages of objective testing method have made many countries (the US, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, etc. and recently China from 1989 and Russia from 2003) apply into exams, which form the basis for decisions on upper secondary graduation and university enrollment. In Vietnam, the MOET has, since early 1990s, started importing objective test items technology, and sent a number of staff for overseas training on this science. Many universities have piloted the development of objective test items and purchased machines for test item evaluation. Up to now, if coordination is made, modern science and technology on educational measurement can be applied into the organization of end-of-upper secondary and university exams.

Preparation of objective test items is a complex, highly professional and costly exercise, and therefore requires collective organization efforts to achieve quality control.

End-of-upper secondary and university exams have different objectives but share the same nature due to the common assessment method on the basis of student's learning achievements in upper secondary schools. Therefore, a national exam with high quality will suffice to provide information for recognition of upper secondary school graduation and university enrollment. In order to do this, two independent stages are needed, i.e. exam followed by consideration for graduation/enrollment. The use of results gained through only one exam for both upper secondary school graduation/university enrollment purposes will not only reduce the pressures and achieve cost savings, but also make the objectives of comprehensive upper secondary education more feasible.

(11) *Academic certificate system* is designed on the principle of the fulfillment of accumulated subject-based modules. This system makes flexible and highly efficient training process with an emphasis on each learner's conditions and capacities, facilitating the learners to select their best learning options. This system was initiated by Harvard University Institute (in the US) in 19th century, and has been applied across North America and spread over many countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Taiwan [5]. China started this the academic certificate system in 1980s.

In Vietnam, the academic certificate system started in 1993 (neglecting the application of this system in Southern universities before 1975) in Hochiminh University of Technology and then in other universities. The Government plans to apply this system in most Vietnamese universities by 2010 (see Document [13]).

(12) In various approaches (*content-based, objective-based and development-based* focus) to the design and implementation of training programs, Vietnamese universities are familiar with the content-based approach which emphasizes on the inclusion of heavy content in training programs. This approach is not suitable in the current circumstance, in which information and knowledge is increasing very rapidly. It is needed to apply *objective-based* approach, which clearly defines objectives to be achieved by the training program, and then essential content and appropriate methods for implementation. This approach can also be combined with *development-based* approach with an emphasis on conditions and capacities of individual learners, creating opportunities for learners to select their preferred programs and learning styles at certain degrees [7].

(13) This is the application of international theory on three types of potentials (*academic capacities, personal and social development skills, entrepreneurial skills*) into Vietnamese context. More specifically: 1) it is important to pay special attention to critical, problem-solving, and change-of-thinking skills, devotion to life-long learning, and the ability to practice what have been trained; 2) there is a need for confidence, respect for moral values, extensive understanding of the society and world, high sense of citizen's responsibility, determination to bring our country out of poor and out-of-date conditions, and fulfillment of "rich people, prosperous country, and just, democratic and civilized society" objectives to catch up with other developed nations; 3) attention should be paid to organizational,

leadership and teamwork skills to master information and communication technology as well as other technologies. These are essential skills to *seek and suit for employment opportunities*, especially the *job-creation* skills for oneself and others.

(14) *Open Educational Resources* – training materials (especially MIT’s Open Course Ware...) developed by major universities and freely published on Internet as recommended by UNESCO.

(15) According to Decision No.09/2005/QĐ-TTg dated 11 January 2005, the average student/lecturer ratio should be 20/1. Therefore, if the student number has an annual increase of 10% by 2010, about 64,500 academics will be required (currently there are only about 28,500 university academics). The current student/lecturer ratio in colleges is acceptable but there still exists mismatches in training qualification levels. The practice-oriented expansion of universities will become increasingly challenging. Therefore, it is needed to address the issue of filling additional lecturer positions with different options.

(16) The current legal document on lecturer’s working norms was developed 30 years ago during the subsidy-based period (Decision No.1712/QĐ-BĐH dated 18 December 1978) (!), with many apparently inappropriate articles. This shows the evidence on the standstill in the organization and personnel management in higher education system. It is needed to establish appropriate norms in the new context, for example: 1) Clear definition of each title and the relationships between various titles. 2) Clear specification of scientific research, academic activities, scientific exchanges, participation in workshops/conferences, professional in-service training, practice, fieldwork, etc. These are important activities for the improvement of lecturer’s professional skills. 3) Regulation on the maximum out-of-university working duration (for permanent academics) (e.g. the working hours spent on other teaching contracts should not exceed one third of standard or regulated duration like in other countries).

It is needed to look at other countries’ the experience in the establishment of academics’ long-term leave with salary for academic exchanges, scientific research and fieldwork (similar to *sabbatical year* applied in universities in some countries, academics will, every 7 years, have 1 year of leave with full salary for the above-mentioned activities).

(17) Due to a long period of infrastructure difficulties, no working space with sufficient facilities has been allocated to lecturing staff who are subsequently only present during their teaching classes. This *unusual* phenomenon is considered as usual thing by academics and some managers (!). It is important to get rid of this. Actually, academics in all universities over the world must spend their considerable university-based time to meet with their students, colleagues, and to participate in other university activities. Young academics must be strictly managed in terms of working duration; and experienced academics can plan for their university-based activities.

In order to achieve this, universities need to plan for allocation of working space with minimum facilities for their lecturing staff (e.g. minimum 6m²/person with landline

telephone and Internet connection computer). At the same time, it is important to regulate the tasks for meeting students and participating in social activities...

(18) The teaching-related assessment by the collection of student opinions is not a routine within the lecturing staff community. However, this is considered as usual and important activity in many countries. The information from students is relatively accurate, especially when opinions are collected from a big enough number of students. Student feedback allows academics to have more objective perception on their own improved teaching, and managers to be better informed of teaching and learning quality. Apparently, this activity enhances the lecturer's sense of teaching responsibilities, and creates the momentum for improved teaching. The experience shows that if academics and students are well prepared, and assessment findings are subtly treated, the assessment will be very effective.

(19) *Cost sharing* is the most important solution to higher education finance [9]. There are four types of stakeholders in cost sharing, i.e. the State, parents, students and community. Previously, the majority of rich European countries (France, UK, Germany, etc.) planned for elite higher education with the perception that higher education was a public service in which students did not have to pay tuition fees and the Government had to bear most of higher education costs. The US is a country which has early introduction of mass higher education and cost sharing policies for the above-mentioned stakeholders. The same cost sharing model has been also applied in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, where students even have to bear most of costs because they do not have private foundations like in the US. During the last decade of 20th century, European countries strongly implemented mass higher education and changed their cost sharing policies in tertiary education: establishment of many private universities and collection of small tuition fees in public universities. Several years ago, the British Government announced the removal of tuition fee-free tertiary education. It has been considered as a signal for major transformation in higher education financing in the UK, and reflected international trends. Recently, Germany also announced the removal of tuition fee-free policy for tertiary education.

There are several reasons for cost sharing trends in tertiary education, in which learners have to pay for a significant portion: a) Increasing needs for tertiary education; b) Trends towards reduced State financing for tertiary education; c) Citizens do not wish to pay a lot of taxes; d) Increasing agreement that higher education provides more benefits for individuals than for the society. Therefore, it is fair that those who benefit from higher education will have to pay more. The public budget should be spent on universal purposes and other public benefits [9].

(20) At present, one of solutions to cost sharing in higher education in many countries is *High Tuition-High Aid* [10]. For Vietnam, this solution can be partially applied within specific context as it has several advantages: increased social equity and *in consistency with socialist orientations*. Regarding tuition fee, the State should not regulate very low cost threshold which prevents universities from having minimum conditions for quality assurance. The State should allow those who benefit from higher education to pay for a

significant portion of their future investment. Poor students and those who benefit from special policies should be provided with *satisfactory* support through scholarships and credits. A part of scholarship funds can be used to pay for university-based activities carried out by students as this is the way to provide support to the most needy people. The proposed policies on tuition fee, scholarships and credits will provide *much better equity* than the existing ones.

(21) The management of higher education under the mechanism of autonomy over the self-provision of public services, or profit- and non profit-based in non-public institutions within the globalization context is extremely complex: it is needed to create a competitive environment among universities and at the same time to ensure the common interests of the entire society. Currently, there is very small number of experts with formal training, and an absence of research institutes, in this area. Therefore, there is a very urgent need for the establishment of an institution which can both function the public policy research, and provide management skill training for higher education managers.

(22) Higher education is a social issue. Therefore, public opinion is very important. Many education-related distortions and misunderstandings are due to the lack of MOET's "public relations" activities.

(23) *Accreditation* is a new concept in Vietnam's tertiary education. The primary goal is to establish the understanding of quality control in the system, and to make quality assurance activities, including quality accreditation in higher education institutions, become a routine. Published and open quality accreditation findings will create the momentum for higher education institutions to achieve improved quality and increased social accountability.

The quality accreditation was planned to take place in 10 universities under the support of the Higher education Scheme. Then, the quality accreditation will be done in the next 10 universities so that the objective of 20% of universities accredited during 2005-2006 will be achieved as stipulated in Document [13].

(24) *Social accountability* is to keep stakeholders (the State, sponsors, students and their families, academics and other university staff, users of university products and services, and other relevant communities) well informed of university activities. The following aspects must be made public: operational objectives, property and operational mechanism, product/service content and quality, and equity in access and learners' rights. *Accreditation* is one of mechanisms for increased university social accountability.

(25) Globalization has created major challenges to education, especially tertiary education. However, higher education system has not been well prepared and ready for globalization trends and challenges. The Central Communist Party issued the Resolution on international economic integration. Various economic components have been (not very well) prepared for this. Nevertheless, education (especially tertiary education) – the sector which are greatly impacted by globalization – has not been prepared. The implementation of Vietnamese – American Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and upcoming WTO

membership (together with GATS) requires early preparation. Therefore, the development of international integration strategy for higher education is an urgent task in the coming time.

(26) Vietnam is one of the first signatories of Bangkok Convention in 1983 but hasn't ratified this Convention.

(27) The imported higher education has dual nature. First, training programs are of high quality and attached to the reputation of the degree-awarding universities. However, they are imported services and in many cases profited-based. Many higher education experts from developed countries have criticized the trend of unhealthy export of higher education by their own countries, which has created degree mills [11]. Therefore, careful consideration is required in terms of giving permission to the opening of foreign university branches. It is needed to set up strict license award procedures which should only apply to privileged universities. In addition, the opening of foreign university branches must follow serious quality accreditation process, which involve a third country's or an international quality accreditation organization. This is a necessary measure to protect the rights of Vietnamese learners.

(28) The initiative proposed by UNESCO "Academics across Borders – AAB" attached volunteer university academics (recently retired academics and young scientists who have desire to do teaching and research overseas); or the initiative recommended by Commonwealth University Association on Retired Academics Database – RAD [12].



REFERENCES FOR EXPLANATORY NOTES

- [1] *A Brief Guide to U.S. Tertiary Education*. American Council of Education, 2001.
 - [2] **Martin Trow** - *From Mass Higher education to Universal Access: The American Advantage*. In “Defense of American Tertiary Education”, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
 - [3] **Yantong Zhang**. *Searching for Quality Higher education in the Age of Mass Education and Globalization*. In “Indicators of Quality and Facilitating Academic Mobility through Quality Assurance Agencies”, UNESCO PROAP, NAAC, Bangalore, 2002.
 - [4] **Wim J. van der Linden, Ronald K. Hambleton**. *Handbook of Modern Item Response Theory*. Springer, 1997.
 - [5] **Omporn Regel**. *The Academic Certificate system in Tertiary Education: Effectiveness and Relevance in Developing Country*. The World Bank.
 - [6] www.bologna-berlin2003.de.
 - [7] **Arthur Levine**. *Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1978.
 - [8] *Synthesis Report on Trends and Development in Higher education since the World Conference on Higher education (1998-2003)*, UNESCO Paris, 2003.
 - [9] **D. Bruce Johnstone**. *Financing Tertiary Education: Who Should Pay?* In “American Higher education in the Twenty-first Century, Social, Political, and Economic Challenges”. Johns Hopkins Press, 1999.
 - [10] **Philip G. Altbach**. *Let the Buyer Pay: International Trends in Funding for Tertiary Education*. “International Tertiary Education”. Center for International Tertiary Education, Boston College. N^o 34, 2003.
 - [11] **Philip G. Altbach**. *The Perils of Internationalizing Tertiary Education: An Asian Perspective*. “International Tertiary Education”. Center for International Tertiary Education, Boston College. N^o 30, 2002.
 - [12] *Higher education in Asia and the Pacific 1998-2003*. Meeting of Higher education Partners, Paris, 23-25 June, 2003.
 - [13] *Report on Education* presented by the Government in the 6th Session, National Assembly Term XI, October 2004.
-