

INTERVENTION

**BY H.E. MR. NGUYEN TAN DUNG,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE S.R. VIET NAM**

ON 'SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT'

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than ever before, achieving sustainable development has become an urgent need of global scale for each and every country in the international community today. The experience of the past half of a century has shown that the current growth and development models might not guarantee long-term, balanced and steadfast growth and contain potential risks and uncertainties. The global economic and financial crisis itself worsens such climate and as such, all continents, countries and individuals are faced with no small impacts, namely increasing unemployment, diseases, poverty, degrading eco-environment and widening development gap among and within countries.

As it becomes evident, sustainable development is the only answer. The development experience of many countries reveals that sustainability is ensured only if the development models could incorporate three inalienable components, namely economic development, social development and environmental protection. These are the three facets that support and complement each other and require close, adequate and harmonious combination. The human factor must be the drive and the centre of sustainable development with economic development being the core task. Socio-economic development is inseparable from environmental protection and improvement to meet the rising material and mental needs of all citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are delighted to note that a number of ASEM members are pioneering sustainable development models. Joining the initial efforts of the EU, Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and other members, ASEAN is striving to ensure sustainable development in individual nations and the Association as a whole. This endeavour is reflected in ASEAN's building of its economic, political and security and social and cultural communities towards an ASEAN Community of self-reliance, dynamism and sustainability by 2015. At its Summit last April, ASEAN leaders adopted a Joint Statement on Recovery and Sustainable Development aimed at sustaining high growth,

stabilization of macro-economic balances, environment protection and improvement of the quality of life for ASEAN people.

Viet Nam advocates fast growth coupled with sustainable development. Economic growth is promoted in parallel with social progress and justice, environmental protection, comprehensive human development and democracy. This has been key to Viet Nam's high average annual economic growth of 7.3% in the last decade, placing Viet Nam among the top economic performers in the region and enabling it to graduate from the low-income developing country status. Viet Nam has been able to carry its growth momentum forward and maintain macro-economic stability. Together with the international community, we continue to commit ourselves to promoting sustainable development models, which is an overarching requirement for socio-economic development in the time to come.

Ladies and gentlemen,

ASEM could help turn our two continents into a driving force for global sustainable development. To make this happen, I would suggest the followings:

First, to further the idea of building an Asia-Europe comprehensive, equal and mutually beneficial strategic partnership for sustainable development, we need to enhance cooperation to narrow the development gaps among members and regions, share experience in and support the formulation of development strategies and long-term sustainable development models and improve the social safety net for the disadvantaged and most vulnerable groups in society. At the same time, we need to foster economic, trade and investment cooperation and technology transfer among ASEM members, to increase ODA, to fight protectionism and to make joint efforts to conclude the Doha Round next year.

Second, ASEM needs to enhance cooperation and provide more assistance to its members in the implementation of programs at sub-regional and regional levels for sustainable development and protection of natural resources, water resources and biodiversity as shown in the Greater Mekong Sub-region Cooperation Programs.

Third, with its vast potential and significant position, ASEM should make its practical and worthy contributions to the global efforts in the implementation of internationally recognized goals, including the MDGs. We need to join hands in implementing the outcomes of the UN Summit on MDG last September and making good preparation for the COP 16 in Mexico in December as well as the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012.

On that note, Viet Nam together with the Republic of Korea, Finland, the UK and Germany propose the organization of the “ASEM Forum on Green Growth” and “ASEM Forum on Social Safety Net for All”. I hope that all ASEM members will actively join in these initiatives and contribute to ASEM cooperation towards the common goals mentioned above.

Thank you very much.