

Alternative (NGO) Report submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women for the consideration of the Seventh and Eighth Reports of
the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam during its 61st Session

SUBMITTED BY:

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

With the Support of:

Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Congress of World Hmong People

Contact Information:

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)

Avenue Louise 52

1050 Brussels

Belgium

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FOCUS ON:

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SECTION A: Introduction to the Report

This Alternative Report was compiled and submitted by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) on the occasion of the 61st Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (henceforth, "the Committee"). UNPO is an international organization devoted to the promotion of democracy, non-violence, human rights, tolerance and environmental protection among indigenous peoples, oppressed communities and minority groups worldwide.

This report discusses the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (henceforth, CEDAW or "the Convention") to evaluate compliance with and implementation of the provisions of the Convention by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam ("Viet Nam"), with regard to the particular cases of the Degar-Montagnards, Hmong and Khmer Krom communities.

The Alternative Report highlights the marginalization and discrimination faced by Degar-Montagnard women. The violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms raises serious concern as their freedom of religion is continually suppressed, while women and girls are deprived of their right to reproductive health. This report also underlines the discrimination and marginalization faced by Hmong women, who are victims of violent repression and discrimination due to their religious beliefs. Finally, this report will tackle the human rights violations suffered by Khmer Krom women, who face unjust and illegal repression for trying to defend their land ownership, struggle to stay in school and face health issues such as blindness, caused by the lack of sanitation.

Following a brief introduction to the Degar-Montagnards, Hmong and Khmer Krom communities, this report will discuss the articles of the Convention that the Vietnamese Government is breaching, providing recommendations on how to rectify and/or prevent abuses. The final section of the report summarizes these allegations and the consequent recommendations, in order to offer a synthesis that can be useful during the discussions between the Committee and the delegation of Viet Nam at the 61st Session.

SECTION B: The Degar-Montagnards, Hmong and Khmer Krom

The Degar-Montagnards

The Degar people, around 1 million, inhabit the Central Highlands of Viet Nam. Over 2,000 years ago, the Degar resided in northern Viet Nam and the eastern coastal plain, where their communities were characterized by shared resources, strong kinship and developed systems of education and justice. The Degar were eventually pushed into the Central Highlands, where they still live today, by waves of Vietnamese and Cham peoples, up to the late 1600s.

Since the reunification of Viet Nam, the Degar Montagnard people have experienced gross violations of their human and more specifically indigenous rights. They are victims of systematic abuses aiming to separate them from their ancestral territory, as well as limitations to their freedom of religion, and to their right to health, education and self-governance.

The Hmong

The indigenous Hmong people live in the ChaoFa region of Northern Laos and have been historically subject to forced repatriation, targeted killings and discrimination. The presence of Hmong communities in Viet Nam is the result of large-scale emigrations from the Yellow River and Yangtze River regions in China during the 18th and 19th centuries. Many have also fled Laos' repressive policies during the 20th century, resulting in large concentrations of Hmong communities in Viet Nam.

The Hmong live predominantly in the Northern Highlands of Viet Nam. Due to their participation in the "Secret War" and their collaboration with the American forces, they face retaliation and persecution throughout the country. Among the biggest issues for the Hmong are the Vietnamese and Laotian Government's agreements to coordinate military efforts to detain individuals and families seeking refuge in Viet Nam and forcibly return them to Laos, where further abuse awaits.

The Khmer Krom

The Khmer Krom have traditionally resided in southwest Viet Nam, primarily in the Mekong Delta (Khampuchea Krom in the Khmer language), where approximately 80% of the eight million population currently lives. They have inhabited present-day Viet Nam since the beginning of the first century and have risen to prominence under the Khmer Empire in the ninth century.

However, Viet Nam continues to refuse recognition of the Khmer Krom as an indigenous people of the Mekong Delta. They are denied the right to freely practice their religion and pass on their culture, and are generally treated as second-class citizens.

In this Alternative Report, UNPO has decided to focus on the challenges faced by women from the Degar-Montagnard, Hmong and Khmer Krom communities. A number of urgent actions are requested that should be undertaken by the Vietnamese Government in compliance with its obligations under CEDAW.

Section C: Compliance with CEDAW

Article 3: Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Among the human rights and fundamental freedoms protected by CEDAW is the freedom of religion or belief. According to Nguyen Thai Binh, former head of the Vietnamese Government's Committee for Religious Affairs, "Viet Nam recognizes and upholds the moral and cultural values of belief and religion, and considers belief and religion a spiritual need of the people, and religion followers an integral part of the great national unity"¹.

Yet, in July 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Mr Heiner Bielefeldt reported scheduling and then cancelling visits to the provinces of An Giang, Gia Lai and Kon Tum, as he had received reports that some individuals he had planned to visit had been "under heavy surveillance, warned, intimidated, harassed or prevented from traveling by the police"². According to Mr Heiner Bielefeldt, "serious violations of freedom of religion or belief are a reality in Vietnam"³.

¹ Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "VN, Cambodia discuss role of religious affairs", 16 December 2010, <http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns101217091748/view>

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Press statement on the visit to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief", 31 July 2014, <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14914&LangID=E>

³ Christian Solidarity Worldwide & Stefanus Alliance International, *Freedom of religion or belief in Vietnam – The alternative report*, 2014

On 17 May 2008, the Vietnamese Government sent about 200 riot police and soldiers equipped with helmets, shields, electrical batons and teargas to block roads and trails surrounding the village of Ploi Rwai, commune of Ia Khuol, in the province of Gialai. They arrested a Christian Degar-Montagnard woman, Ms R'com H'Glah, age 43, and took her to the prison of Cu Pah. The reason for her arrest was her refusal to join the Evangelical Church of Vietnam and the fact that she had been encouraging people in the area to pray and read "God's words"⁴.

Since the beginning of 2015, the Congress of World Hmong People received many concerning calls from the regions of Dien Bien Phou, Moung Ghe, Lao Cai and La Caus by Hmong women, mostly Christian, who were facing harassment due to their religious beliefs. They reported that local authorities pressured them to convert back to the more traditional Animist cults. According to a Hmong man living in the country, "local authorities rape the women on their way to the farm and force them to convert to Animism or they will continue to rape. The women are very scared now and we, the men, cannot do anything. If we report to the local authorities they come to beat us up and we do not know what to do. I recall a woman called the Heaven for help, which is all we can do here."

Another citizen reported: "The community is being watched carefully and the authorities search for the women when they are out for shopping and return home. We the Hmong here suffer great oppression and control from the Authorities. We cannot raise our voices at all. Every time a visitor comes, we have already been told not to say anything wrong or else we will be punished afterwards"⁵.

The Vietnamese Government has a tendency to use gender equality as an excuse to prevent the preservation of ethnic minorities' cultures. In its report, Viet Nam uses expressions such as "outdated", "obsolete" and "backwards" to designate ethnic minority traditions, especially concerning marriage and family relationships⁶. This attitude is contrary to the fundamental right of indigenous peoples to preserve and promote their cultural heritage and traditions.

Recommendations:

- End any kind of repression against ethnic minorities exercising their freedom of religion and belief;
- Allow ethnic minorities to preserve and promote their culture and traditions

⁴ Montagnard Foundation Inc., "Montagnards: Practicing Religion Against State Repression", 28 May 2008, <http://unpo.org/article/8195>

⁵ Calls received and made by the Congress of World Hmong People in 2015 with Hmong citizens in Viet Nam.

⁶ Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*, Seventh and eighth periodic reports of States parties due in 2011, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, United Nations, 2014

Article 10: Education

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education.

In paragraph 131 of its report, Viet Nam mentions its 2005 Education Law, which includes provisions on the teaching and training of spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities in education centers⁷. However, and despite these provisions, the Khmer-Krom are reportedly not allowed to freely learn and use Khmer. The way Khmer is currently taught does not allow the students to learn it at a mother language level. Khmer classes are only provided for two or three hours a week, therefore most young Khmer girls are unable to read or write in their own language⁸.

In paragraph 144 of its report, Viet Nam affirms that "classes are organized in remote areas to provide opportunities for ethnic minority boys and girls to attend school. Gender equality has been achieved in primary education"⁹. However, according to the UN Viet Nam Brief on Young People 2012-2016, published in 2013, the poorest and most vulnerable young people – including youth from ethnic minorities – are falling behind their counterparts in terms of access to and completion of schooling.

There are deep-rooted disparities in completion and literacy rates among the different regions and groups at all levels of education¹⁰. The Viet Nam Population and Housing Census 2009 revealed that while the secondary education completion rate in the Red River Delta was 96.3%, in the Central Highlands, where minorities like the Degar-Montagnards reside, it was only 79.2%. As for the literacy rate for the 15-24 age group in the Red River Delta and Northern Uplands, it was 99.3% and 92.8% respectively, while ethnic minority groups such as Hmong (37.7%) and Khmer (73.5%) have considerably lower rates. 4.9% of the Kinh – the majority ethnic group in Viet Nam – aged 15 or older have a junior college or higher education qualification, while only 1.1% of their counterparts from other groups do.

Disparities can also be seen between genders, with 6.7% of women having never attended school in 2009, versus 3.5% for their male counterparts¹¹. Thus, women from ethnic minorities are the worst off in terms of education, suffering from a double discrimination.

Even though classes are organized in the most remote provinces of the country, the percentage of Khmer-Krom girls dropping out of school has increased alarmingly in recent years. They leave school to help their parents work on the farm or search for a job to support their families who often struggle financially. Without education, the future of these girls is compromised. Poor, uneducated, and lacking opportunities in the rural areas in which they live, Khmer Krom girls are often forced to travel outside of their provinces, where they become victims of human trafficking¹².

⁷ Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*

⁸ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*, 2015

⁹ Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*

¹⁰ UN Viet Nam, *UN Viet Nam Brief on Young People 2012-2016*, 2013

¹¹ Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census – Major Findings*, 2009

¹² Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

It has to be recognized that some Khmer Krom girls receive scholarships from the Government to attend university or vocational schools. Yet, after graduation, many of them cannot find a job related to their field of study. They often lack a network or the money that is required in a corrupt hiring system¹³.

Very few Khmer-Krom women hold a Master's degree or a PhD and, due to State-organized discrimination, they do not benefit from the scholarships that the Government generously offers to the thousands of students studying abroad. International efforts to support Khmer-Krom students in their education are also blocked by the Government¹⁴.

Recommendations:

- Allocate more scholarships to Khmer-Krom girls in order for them to attend vocational school or university so they can access the job market;
- Tackle the issue of corruption in the hiring system by setting up controlling procedures and making recruitment processes more transparent;
- Provide equal opportunity for indigenous women to access the job market by tackling the issue of discrimination and setting up national campaigns to combat widespread stereotypes about ethnic minorities;
- Provide equal opportunity for indigenous peoples to access education, especially graduate and doctoral programmes abroad by distributing scholarships on the basis of merit rather than ethnic origin.

Article 12: Health & Reproductive Health

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

Article 16: Reproductive rights

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a bases of equality of men and women:

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.

In its report, Viet Nam underlines that its system of social services has improved and that "priority investment has been given to remote, mountainous, border and island areas and ethnic minorities" (paragraph 224)¹⁵. Nevertheless, in 2014, the free health care programme from which the Khmer-Krom benefited, which allowed among others for women to get free health check-ups during their pregnancies,

¹³ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

¹⁴ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

¹⁵ Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*

was revoked¹⁶. According to the Vietnam Women's Union, rural and ethnic minority women lack opportunities to get access to healthcare services¹⁷.

Since 2003, in the provinces of Soc Trang and Bac Lieu, 3,000 Khmer-Krom people, mostly women, have been affected by blindness in one eye, and in some cases, in both eyes. These problems have arisen because of contaminated drinking water, largely polluted by pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. This issue has already been raised by UN agencies such as the World Health Organization, but no action has been taken by the Government to prevent it from happening again, and no financial assistance has been provided to the victims¹⁸.

The US Department of State also reported that in Viet Nam, unmarried women have limited access to subsidized contraceptives because of the lack of Government-approved contraceptives in the country, but also because of the social stigma that is still attached to them¹⁹. Meanwhile, according to a 2006 study by the World Bank, there are some differences in knowledge about AIDS among the different ethnic groups. According to this study, ethnic minority women are 12% less likely to ever hear about the existence of AIDS, 18% less likely to have the correct perception of it, and 8% less likely to know about ways to avoid AIDS, than ethnic majority groups²⁰. Minority women are thus stuck in a situation where they both have difficulty in accessing contraception and lack information about AIDS and other sexually-transmittable diseases, making them more vulnerable.

In terms of maternal health, according to Minority Rights Group International, women from ethnic minority groups have higher maternal mortality rates than the national average²¹. In its report, Viet Nam acknowledged that "achieving the maternal mortality ratio of 58.3 per 100,000 live births in 2015 is a major challenge" and that "there must be attempts to reduce gaps (...) between ethnic groups to reduce maternal mortality in a region sustainably"²². UNPO encourages Viet Nam to continue working toward this goal.

Minority women in Viet Nam are also victims of violations of their reproductive rights. In 2001, the Montagnard Foundation reported 1,000 cases of Degar-Montagnard women surgically sterilized by the Vietnamese authorities through coercion, bribery, threats of fines or imprisonment. In addition, young Degar girls are reportedly being forced to receive injections meant to prevent them from getting pregnant. In 2011, the Foundation compiled the names of about 40 young girls from the village of Buan Plek who were allegedly detained at various times by medical teams, who injected them with "unknown substances". According to the medical teams, these injections prevent pregnancies. It was reported that soldiers intimidated and threatened the girls to undergo these injections. According to the Foundation, it is highly probable that these were injections of the hormonal contraceptive drug "Depo Provera". The

¹⁶ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*, 2015

¹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, *Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21*, paragraph 15, 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/VNSession18.aspx>

¹⁸ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

¹⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

²⁰ Hai-Anh Dang, World Bank, *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development – Ch. 8 Vietnam – A Widening Poverty Gap for Ethnic Minorities*, 2010

²¹ Minority Rights Group International, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011*, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e16d3592c.html>

²² Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*

Montagnard Foundation reports that "the extent of the abuse or investigations has not been presented to the public. The Vietnamese government has most certainly embarked on a policy of denial and cover up of any such abuses of family planning"²³.

Recommendations:

- Invite the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to investigate the situation of the 3,000 blinded Khmer-Kroms and provide medical assistance and financial compensation to them;
- Reinstall the free health care programme allowing those lacking the financial means to have access to basic health care, including check-ups for pregnant women;
- Disseminate information about AIDS and how to prevent it among ethnic minority women;
- Continue working toward the maternal mortality ratio of 58.3 per 100,000 live births, and focus more specifically on reducing maternal mortality rates among minority ethnic groups;
- Launch an independent investigation regarding the forced permanent or temporary sterilisation of Degar-Montagnard women and girls.

Article 14: Rural Development & Land Rights

2. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes

Land is of utmost importance for Khmer Krom. Today, most of the community are farmers in the Mekong Delta, a very rural area. Without land, many find themselves without any means to support their traditional livelihood of rice farming. Thus, land rights are also a precondition for their right to the preservation of their culture and right to a livelihood²⁴. However, land grabbing policies, which started in the 1970s continue to affect the lives of many Khmer Krom today and have a serious impact on women in particular.

The main obstacles to the recognition of women's rights to land are the lack of implementation of the Land Law, insufficient information by local authorities on the ground, widespread corruption and the lack of an impartial judiciary in Viet Nam²⁵. The Land Law was revised in 2003 and now entitles women to register Land Use Rights Certificates (LURCs) with their husbands, but this is not widely implemented, leading to the denial of women's access to land. As a consequence, widows are expropriated without compensation when their husbands die and banks refuse to give loans to widows. Ethnic minority women are particularly penalized because relevant regulations have not been translated into

²³ Montagnard Foundation, *Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for its 80th Session Review of Viet Nam*, page 6, 2012, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/MFI_VietNam_CERD80.pdf

²⁴ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

²⁵ Viet Nam Committee on Human Rights & Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH), "Alternative Report on the Implementation of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for consideration of the Combined Second to Fourth Reports of the Social Republic of Viet Nam – Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Viet Nam – Joint Report", 2014

their languages²⁶. The US Department of State reports that, even though the law provides for equal inheritance rights, cultural discrimination remains. According to the Department, women have limited access to land ownership and inheritance²⁷.

When women ask for their confiscated farmlands, they face oppression from the Government²⁸. On 9 January 2008, approximately 200 Khmer Krom farmers from the village of An Cu in the An Giang province, headed to the city of Long Xuyen to peacefully demand that their farmlands be returned. At least 20 of them were injured by the police, which used electric batons to hit the farmers. Among them were ten women, including Ms Neang Savong, who was beaten by the police while she was trying to go home and was denied access to a treatment at the Sai Gon city hospital²⁹. Another example includes Khmer-Krom citizen, Ms Ly Thi Huong, was involved in a land dispute with the local Vietnamese authorities of the district of My Xuyen, in the province of Soc Trang. In the evening of 24 February 2008, the Vietnamese authorities, armed with guns, knives, sticks and petrol, set her house on fire³⁰. Khmer-Krom women who had done nothing but peacefully protest against the unlawful seizure of their land by the authorities.

As far as rural development is concerned, Viet Nam affirms in paragraph 6 of its report that it pays special attention to vulnerable groups such as women and ethnic minorities through "appropriate policies", "incentives" to "protect, assist and facilitate their development and integration in social life". Thus, these groups have been able to access fundamental social services and "infrastructures in regions with difficult circumstances have been improved, in particular mountainous, distant and remote and ethnic minorities regions". Nevertheless, the Vietnamese Government recognizes that "rural women are still less privileged than men", and insists on the importance of "lending to poor women in remote areas and ethnic minority women in difficulties" to "help rural poverty alleviation" (paragraph 208)³¹.

The Vietnamese Government seems to be willing to make efforts for women in the field of rural development, yet, will women from minorities benefit from such initiatives?.

Recommendations:

- Invite the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association to investigate the situation of the Khmer Krom women who are land rights activists and who are repeatedly silenced for exercising their basic right;
- Allow Khmer-Krom women to freely file complaints to demand that their confiscated farmlands be given back to them;
- Continue working on initiatives to promote women's social and economic development in rural areas, without forgetting minority women who live in extreme poverty and are often left out of national initiatives because of the discrimination they face.

SECTION D: Closing Remarks

²⁶ United States Agency for International Development, *USAID Country Profile – Property Rights and Resource Governance – Vietnam*, 2013

²⁷ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*

²⁸ Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, *Alternative Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for the consideration of the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (CEDAW/C/VNM/7-8) during the examination of Viet Nam in the 61st Session*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Viet Nam, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention*

In 2011, the UN Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty Magdalena Sepúlveda underlined that "the most glaring disparities in income, employment, health coverage, education and access to other Government services have formed along ethnic lines"³². The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization recognizes and praises the efforts deployed by the Government to foster the economic and social inclusion of rural women, but questions whether these efforts also benefit ethnic minority women.

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization calls upon the Committee to urge the Government of Viet Nam to recognize structural and substantive challenges that Degar-Montagnard, Hmong and Khmer Krom women face in their daily lives. Women from ethnic minorities are exposed to higher levels of economic, social and health vulnerability, which require the enforcement of the gender-specific laws and initiatives benefiting ethnic minority women.

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization also calls upon the Vietnamese Government to establish independent investigations on forced sterilization and land grabbing cases outlined in this report, as these violations form a systematic pattern of abuse rather than representing individual isolated cases. More generally, transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed in order to ensure that ethnic minority women are positively affected by the laws and policies that the Government implements.

³² Human Rights Council, 17th Session, *Report of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona*, Mission to Viet Nam, 2011, <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5880557.29866028.html>