



Message from  
HE Nguyen Tan Dung  
Prime Minister of the  
Socialist Republic  
of Vietnam

It is indeed a great honour for me to pay an official visit to your wonderful country at a time when our two sides are cheerfully celebrating the 35th anniversary of our diplomatic relations (11 September 1973).

During that time, especially the past 15 years, the relationship between Vietnam and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has increasingly expanded in all economic, political, educational, cultural and development cooperation areas. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is now our important partner in trade and investment, and one of Vietnam's top ODA donors. The UK's development assistance has made positive contributions to poverty reduction in Vietnam and in this context our country has been recognised as a model in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. We are grateful therefore to the Government and people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for that invaluable assistance extended to us.

Thanks to the comprehensive reform (Doi Moi) launched since 1986, historic successes have been recorded in the country. Vietnam was formerly known to the world as a symbol of the struggle for national independence, freedom and reunification. And the country has now become a beacon in the region with our dynamic economy, a stable society, and our position as an ideal destination for foreign businessmen and tourists. For many successive years, the Vietnamese economy has sustained a high growth rate of 7.5 per cent per year. In 2007, the figure was 8.5 per cent, a record high in the past 10 years.

Vietnam has shifted to a market

economy and fully integrated into the world. So far, over 80 countries and territories have invested in Vietnam in 9,500 projects with over US\$100 billion. In 2007 alone, more than US\$20 billion in FDI, and US\$5.4 billion in ODA were committed. The UK is now the EU's third biggest investor in Vietnam with total capital of US\$1.4 billion. Vietnam's export have recorded an impressive growth rate of 18 per cent per year, totalling nearly US\$50 billion in 2007. Vietnam is also a popular tourist destination for foreigners. There were more than 4 million visitors in 2007, a rise of more than 16 per cent over the previous year.

The country's national security, political and social stability have been firmly maintained. The Vietnamese people are delighted with the achievements recorded and have strong confidence in the development path and policy of the Party and the State. People's quality of life has been substantially improved. GDP per capita in 2007 rose tenfold compared to that of 1988. With poverty brought down from 58 per cent in 1993 to below 15 per cent in 2007 based on international criteria, Vietnam has accomplished the Millennium Development Goal in poverty reduction 10 years ahead of the deadline. This was welcomed by the United Nations and the international community.

In external affairs, Vietnam now enjoys good relations with all countries and has economic, trade and investment ties with more than 220 states and territories, and with major economic centres in the world. Vietnam is now an active member of the ASEAN, ASEM, APEC and other economic organisations. In early 2007, Vietnam was admitted into the WTO as its 150th member and elected as a non-

