Resolution of support of VINASTAS, the Viet Nam Standard and Consumers Association for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

The Viet Nam Standard and Consumers Association (VINASTAS) is an NGO, founded in 1988. The main task of VINASTAS is to promote the standardization, Quality and Consumers protection issues. VINASTAS activities cover all the country with its organisational structure comprising of local associations in provinces and cities, professional organisations, research institutes and testing laboratories. VINASTAS is a self-financed voluntary organisation, with no subsidiary from the government. Consumer protection is the problem of top interest of VINASTAS. VINASTAS is working for the equity and transparency of the market, for the interest of consumers. Consumer health and a healthy environment are problems of concern of VINASTAS. For long, VINASTAS is carrying out activities to struggle against the epidemic caused by tobacco. Since its very beginning, VINASTAS conducted a survey on tobacco smoking among consumers, organised seminars and workshops, issued articles on its magazine THE CONSUMER to give information, to make consumers aware of the harm of tobacco and to involve various local forces (including GOs and NGOs) into the common front in order to deal effectively with tobacco control. VINASTAS is pursuing continually this struggle to reach its goal of reducing and come to eliminate tobacco smoking in Viet Nam and in the world.

Whereas Viet Nam is a developing country with high smoking prevalence among men (more than 50% or about 20 million of men smokers). 7 million or 10% of the country population will die by tobacco related diseases, among them 3.7 million will die prematurely.

Whereas on August 14, 2000, the Vietnamese government by the resolution Nº 12/2000/NQ-CP has promulgated the "Policies to Prevent and Fight against the Harm of Tobacco, Period 2000-2010", aiming at reducing the tobacco smoking prevalence among men from 50% to 20%, among women to under 2% and from 26% to 7% among youth, ensure a free smoke environment for non-smokers. The resolution is regulating measures to lessen the demand of tobacco products, totally ban tobacco advertisements and marketing of tobacco under any form, controlling the tobacco tax and price, promoting tobacco cessation and reducing tobacco smoking in ceremonies and festivals. The resolution is also issuing measures to minimize the provision of tobacco products, to manage the distribution system, the import of tobacco, the smuggling across borders, to create other jobs for tobacco
workers and to substitute the growing of tobacco by other plants in rural areas. VINASTAS considers the resolution the high determination and the audacious decision of the Vietnamese government that must be strongly supported;

Whereas VietNam is a poor developing country that must be supported materially and spiritually to implement its policies of fighting against tobacco to serve its people and to do a bit for the common cause of tobacco control in the world;

Whereas the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), a legal instrument in the form of an international treaty in which the signatory states agree to pursue broadly stated goals would make an important contribution to international tobacco control efforts, given that the development of an international convention would facilitate and encourage countries, especially developing countries to strengthen their national tobacco control policies;

Whereas the FCTC outlines broadly stated goals, allowing for the possibility that parties to the convention will conclude separate protocols containing specific measures and concerning each of the goals stated in the framework convention;

Whereas the FCTC would be a useful tool for promoting international cooperation and coordination of supra-national aspects of tobacco control that can only be addressed through international cooperation;

Whereas non-governmental organisations have to play an important role in advancing tobacco prevention and control policy in Viet nam and in other countries;

Whereas the tobacco industry, especially transnational tobacco corporations is shifting its focus in developing countries, particularly in Vietnamese women and youth;

Be it resolved that VINASTAS wholeheartedly supports the tobacco prevention and control efforts of the Vietnamese government expressed resolutely through its decision on "Policies to Prevent and Fight against the Harm of Tobacco, Period 2000-2010" promulgated on August 14, 2000.

Be it resolved that VINASTAS strongly recommends:

- That the FCTC would be negotiated and signed as soon as possible for the interest of the mankind.
- That the FCTC could be negotiated parallelly with protocols between partner countries to accelerate the process of tobacco control in the world.
- That the FCTC and related protocols include specific provisions that parties may enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements and that these agreements could include more stringent measures than the FCTC or the protocols.
• That the FCTC and related protocols include specific provisions that establishes the convention as the minimum standard for global tobacco policies and allow countries to adopt stronger national policies.

• That a financial mechanism be put in place whereby high-income countries are obligated to provide financial assistance to low-income countries to implement the FCTC.

• That international community and member states be obligated to aid and assist non-governmental organisations in their tobacco control work to ensure community contribution and vigorous implementation of the FCTC and related protocols.

• That the FTC includes a binding method of dispute resolutions.

• That the FCTC and its related protocols be not affected by trade rules and intellectual property issues.

**Be it resolved** that the FCTC would include the following crucial areas: Tobacco price and tax policies; environmental tobacco smoke; protecting women, children and adolescents; smuggling of tobacco products; sale of duty-free tobacco products; advertising, promotion and sponsorship; testing and reporting of tobacco product ingredients; tobacco industry regulation; information exchange; health education research; agricultural policies; product regulation; prevention and treatment.

**Be it resolved** that the process by which the FCTC is negociated is vital to the integrity of the FCTC and VINASTAS recommends the following to be included in the process of the development of the FCTC:

- That the Viet nam delegation could include members of community organisations, NGOs concerned about tobacco control, women and youth.

- That the Vietnamese government will sign on to the FCTC in a timely manner once in has been adopted by the World Health Assembly.

**Be it resolved** that VINASTAS calls on the Vietnamese government to fully implement the convention and related protocols that include binding mechanism to ensure compliance,

**Be it resolved** that VINASTAS calls on the Vietnamese government to pursue national policies and legislation and not wait for the FCTC to be implemented.

Hanoi - Viet Nam
August 28, 2000
On behalf of VINASTAS
Dr DOAN PHUONG - President.