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STATEMENT OF VIETNAM

By H.E. Ambassador, Dr. PHAM QUOC TRU, Charge d'Affairs a.i.
At the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Religion or Beliefs
28th Session of the Human Rights Council
Geneva, 10 March 2015

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to thank Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt for the presentation of his report. However, we deeply regret that the report failed to correctly reflect the real situation in Viet Nam. That's why we submitted our comments as contained in the UN document A/HRC/28/66/Add. 4.

Mr. President,

Today, around 95% of the Vietnamese population practices a religion or belief among the major ones in the country such as Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, etc... Viet Nam's vibrant religious life and her people's enjoyment of religious freedom is an apparent reality that has been widely recognized by the international community. This is also a result of our consistent policy and tireless efforts in promoting and protecting freedom of religion and belief in our country. Freedom of religion and belief has been enshrined in our Constitution and protected by our laws. Our government has been doing its best to facilitate religion and belief practices, while promoting unity, harmony and ensuring equality and non-discrimination among religions and beliefs.

Mr. President,

By inviting Special Rapporteur Heiner Bielefeldt to visit Viet Nam, we wished to reinforce our constructive cooperation with the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures. We did expect him to be updated with the real situation of religious freedom in Viet Nam and to make objective assessments and constructive recommendations in compliance with his mandate. We provided the most favorable conditions for him and tried to meet all his requests. Representatives from our diverse

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institutions met and had open and frank discussions with him. He could also make visit to 8 religious organizations, a number of worshipping places, and a detention camp. During his visit, our government always respected the principles set out by the HRC resolution 5/2, including particularly the SR's independence and privacy. *We would like to reaffirm that there were no such harassment, threat nor reprisal against the persons who met with the SR as the SR just mentioned. We deeply regret about this inaccurate misleading information, and probably misunderstandings.*

While acknowledging that there is room for further improvements, we are of the view that our efforts and achievements in the promotion of freedom of religion and belief should be reflected by the SR in an objective and comprehensive manner. We are, however, deeply disappointed by the SR's imbalanced and partial approach based on inaccurate information, biased observations and selectivity. His report did not reflect correctly the true panoramic picture of the religion and belief life in Viet Nam, and most of the conclusion and recommendations are inappropriate, *we are, therefore, unable to support them.*

Mr. President,

Viet Nam will spare no efforts and resources to better ensuring the enjoyment of freedom of religion and belief for our people. Additionally, we always have a strong belief in the importance of dialogue and cooperation as the most effective measure to reduce misunderstandings and differences. Viet Nam is strongly committed to implementing her international obligations on human rights, her UPR's accepted recommendations, including recommendations on the realization of the right to freedom of belief or religion. In this connection, Viet Nam confirms its goodwill and continued cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms, including with other Special Procedures in the future.

I thank you, Mr. President. /.