

**STRIVING TO FOSTER, PRESERVE AND PROMOTE
QUINTESSENCE OF THE PROGRESSIVE VIETNAMESE
CULTURE RICHLY IMBUED WITH NATIONAL IDENTITY**

*(Remarks by H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the
Communist Party of Viet Nam at the National Cultural Conference,
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*Comrade leaders and former leaders of the Party, State and Viet Nam
Fatherland Front,*

Distinguished delegates,

Dear all comrades,

Today, we meet in the capital of Hanoi, “*where rests the country's thousand-year soul*”, “*where converges, crystallizes and shines the culture and civilization of the nation*”, “*the capital city of human conscience and dignity*”, “*the city for peace*”, a “*urbane and courteous*” metropolis, and a city of “*time-honoured culture and heroism*”. We solemnly organize the National Cultural Conference, with a view to translating into reality the Resolution of the 13th National Party Congress on culture. This is *of paramount significance in many ways*. I am truly glad and excited to be here for the following three rationales:

- The important role and position of culture. Culture is the *soul and backbone* of the nation, and it embodies the identity of the nation. *So long as culture remains, so will our nation.*

- It has been 75 years (24 November 1946), since a National Conference on Culture was last held on such a scale.

- The Conference follows the Party Congress, and meetings of the National Assembly, the Government, the Fatherland Front, and Internal Affairs institutions. It will soon be followed by the Foreign Service Conference and the Party-Building and Rectification Conference. It is as I often speak: “The superior - subordinate unanimity”, “One voice speaks, a hundred respond”, “One mind top to bottom”, “Smooth sailing across length and breadth”.

Let me begin by conveying my best greetings, fondest salutations and finest congratulations to the delegates, distinguished guests, and all comrades. May our Conference be a great success!

Dear comrades,

We are all aware that culture is a very broad subject, and may be viewed through different lenses and different approaches in all their diversity. There are, to date, some 200 different definitions as to what culture is. But one may largely

understand culture in two ways: a broad sense, and a narrow sense. *Broadly speaking*, culture refers to the level of spiritual and material development of mankind in each specific historical period, such as the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Dong Son culture, or the wet rice culture. *Narrowly speaking*, culture refers to the spiritual undertakings of a society, consisting of education, science, literature, arts and morals (which means way of life, conduct and how one treats others, just to name a few). Culture also encompasses both tangible (historical sites, cultural buildings and heritages, and monuments of culture: the pyramids, village halls, temples and shrines) and intangible (folk verses, songs, shanties and festivities, the traditions and customs of each country, each area, each nation, each locality) elements. Here we mostly discuss culture in its narrower definition.

Regardless of whether we assume the broad or narrow definition, when we speak of culture, we speak of the best and finest things, distilled, crystallized and tempered into the highest, noblest and most exceptional of values. These are humanistic, altruistic, progressive and full of love and kindness (As we say: a cultured man, a cultured family, a cultured nation, a cultured lifestyle, a cultured conduct). Conversely, we call such things that are evil, petty, cowardly, illegal and despicable, cultureless, uncultured, and anti-culture. The happiness of man lies not solely in the accumulation of money and wealth, or the pursuit of good food and fine clothing, but is also made manifest in the richness of the soul and a life immersed in affection, kindness, goodness and fairness.

Vietnam has a long-lasting history of over four thousand years. We have undergone countless changes and turmoil, both natural and man-made. Through this process, we have accumulated, created and built up a wealth of values and cultural identities unique to Viet Nam - here lies the soul of Viet Nam. At the same time, we have been absorbing and in turn giving back to the shared culture of humanities. Deeply aware of the position, role, significance and importance of culture in the development of Viet Nam and her people, as early as in the first *Political Platform* of the Communist Party of Viet Nam in 1930, the Party made a mention of the need for national cultural development. In 1943, even before Viet Nam regained independence, the Party established the “*Viet Nam Cultural Platform*”, identifying that “Culture is one of the three key areas (political, economic and political)”, and charting the course for cultural development in three lines: *National - Scientific - Popular*. These guidelines and philosophies of the Party in this critical document created a source of revitalization, rallying the intellectuals, writers and artists alongside the broad mass of people. It is this coalition that harnessed the role of culture, reaching a common perception, thought and way of organization, evoking the aspiration of the entire nation in the struggle for national liberation, preparing the spiritual and material forces for the

success of the August Revolution that created the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the first state of workers and farmers in Southeast Asia, in 1945.

During the nine years of resistance against the invading French colonialists, under the mantra of “*culturalization of resistance, and resistance through culture*”, “*build a new life*”, Vietnamese culture then truly became the moral support that brought together all resources for the resistance war, playing a key role in the “earth global-shaking” victory at Dien Bien Phu which “resounded across the five continents” in 1954.

Following the historic triumph in Dien Bien Phu, the entire country focused its efforts on two strategic tasks: to build socialism in the North, and struggle for national reunification. Our Party paid constant attention to cultural work, mobilized and encouraged writers, artists and those working in cultural domains to play their role in the development of the new culture and new human being. The 3rd National Congress of the Party in 1960 identified the goals of the socialist revolution concerning culture and applied this perception in the making of a progressive and practical culture of Viet Nam in service of the socialist revolution and the constant improvement of the people's material and spiritual life. Our Party placed emphasis on the development of the arts, the press, publishing, radio service, films, libraries and conservation of museums, and enhance their ideological, combativeness and mass character. Meanwhile, our Party also paid special attention to mass culture, establishing cultural institutions and activities at the grass-root level, raising the people's educational level, shaping a new cultural life, reforming old-fashioned habits and ways of living, and developing new ones.

The leadership of the Party from 1960 through 1975 was a contributor to the role that Vietnamese culture played in fulfilling the dual task of *nation-building and resistance*, calling to action all branches of the cultural front among the entire public in the patriotic resistance war against U.S. imperialism, culminating in the grand triumph of Spring 1975 that reunified the Fatherland under one banner. The ardent and touching calls of President Ho Chi Minh: “*We would rather sacrifice all than forfeit our nation to subjugation, than submit as slaves! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom!*”; “*Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese nation is one! Rivers may run dry, mountains may erode, but this truth shall never change!*” have become a sacred way of life for each Vietnamese and a sacred core of the Vietnamese culture. “When the enemies come, women shall also fight!”, or, going further “If all we have left is the belts on our pants we'll keep fighting!” (said sister Ut Tich). And yet: “Once the enemies are trampled unto the black earth, shall we throw away swords and guns and be kindly once more!”

The 4th National Party Congress gave its high praise to the contributions of the Vietnamese cultural and artistic services in the resistance against the U.S., and held that Viet Nam's cultural and artistic service had earned its place “*among the pioneers of the culture against imperialism and feudalism all over the world today*”. Our beloved President Ho Chi Minh is not merely an ingenious leader and great teacher of the Vietnamese revolution and an exemplar among the international communist and workers' movement, but also *an exceptional man of culture*, honored with the title of *Great Man of Culture of the world* (alongside Nguyen Du, Nguyen Trai, Chu Van An, and, as of yesterday, Nguyen Dinh Chieu and Ho Xuan Huong).

The 1975 - 1985 period was pivotal, as we shifted from war to peace. Viet Nam then had to address a myriad of war legacies, restore economic, cultural and educational facilities devastated by war, and work to reunify both institutions and establishments for culture in the whole country. Our compatriots all over the country shared joys and sorrows in this time of great hardship, fully placed their trust in the leadership of the Party. This helped us overcome the challenges caused by the socio-economic crisis and the complex international landscape of that period.

Moving on to the Doi Moi era since 1986, under the leadership of the Party, we have embarked on a journey of holistic renovation of all aspects of social life, from economic and political domains to cultural, social, security, defense, and diplomatic fields. On culture alone, our Party issued a great many resolutions, decisions and directives of paramount importance in order to place emphasis on cultural development in a new period. Taking stock of the achievements in cultural development over the first years of the Doi Moi process, our Party issued the Resolution of the 4th plenum of the 7th Central Committee, followed, most prominently, by the Resolution of the 5th plenum of the 8th Central Committee in 1998 on the development of a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the national identity. These Resolutions are of strategic significance for the development of the Vietnamese culture in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization. Our Party selected eight areas on which to focus its leadership, notably human development, and the most prominent of that is how to build ideology, morality, way of life, and a healthy cultural environment. In the *Platform for National Development in the Transition to Socialism in 1991* and the *Supplemented Platform developed in 2011*, our Party identified the building and development of a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the national identity as one of the most fundamental characteristics of the socialist polity that we are building. The Supplemented Platform clearly stated that [We must] build and develop a progressive

Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the national identity, that fosters comprehensive development and unity in diversity, that is immersed in the humanistic, democratic and progressive spirit, so that making culture become closely linked and integral to social life as a whole, and become a *strong spiritual bedrock and important endogenous power for development*. This was followed by Resolution 33 of the 9th plenum of the 11th Party Central Committee in 2014 on the building and development of the Vietnamese culture and people, to meet the need of sustainable national development. In this Resolution, the Party continued to reassert the positions and tasks set by the Resolution of the 5th plenum of the 8th Central Committee, while adding and stressing new issues. The Resolution clearly stated the purpose, role and mission of culture. Our Party pointed out the overarching goal as follows: To develop a well-rounded Vietnamese culture, aiming towards *Truth - Goodness - Beauty, immersed in the spirit of the nation, humanism, democracy and science, to make Culture truly the spiritual bedrock of society and an important endogenous source of power*, in pursuit of an affluent people and a strong nation that enjoys democracy, fairness and civilization. Our Party stressed that the cultural sphere must be on the same footing as the economic, political and social domains. The Resolution made it clear that the signature characteristics of a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with national identity are: nationhood, humanism, democracy and science. It also stressed that the core task of cultural development is to develop human beings that enjoys dignity and a virtuous way of life. In this Resolution, our Party charted a number of new tasks: to nurture culture in the political and economic spheres, to develop the cultural industry and augment the cultural market. The Politburo of 12th Party Central Committee issued Conclusion No. 76 76-KL/TW on continuing to implement the Resolution No. 33-NQ/TW of the 11th Party Central Committee on the development of the Vietnamese culture and people to meet the need of sustainable national development.

I had to recount the entire process briefly as such to stress this: Since its establishment, the Communist Party of Viet Nam has always attached importance to the role of culture, and given utmost attention to the development of culture in the process of national liberation and construction, especially during the transition to socialism. The Party's perception of culture has become more comprehensive, thorough and deeper. Our Party holds that: *Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and an endogenous strength, and an important driver for national development*. We have identified that *a holistic development of culture in harmony with economic growth and social progress is a fundamental direction of the process of building socialism in Viet Nam*, and a demonstration of the superiority of our regime. To put it profoundly yet

concisely, Uncle Ho said: “*Culture illuminates the path for the people.*” The culture that we develop is a *progressive one, richly imbued with the national identity*. Its core elements include national independence and socialism. Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought play a key role in the spiritual life of the society. It must *inherit the noble cultural traditions of the Nation while selectively absorbing the cultural achievements and quintessence of the world, and striving for a civilized, healthy society that serves the real interests and dignity of human beings, and enjoys an increasingly higher level of knowledge, morality, physical fitness, life standard and aesthetics*. At the same time, our Party holds that human beings are the subject and the centerpiece in our development strategy; the development of human beings is both the goal and the engine of the Doi Moi process; the development of education, training, science and technology is a top national policy; the protection of the environment is among issues of existential importance and the indicator of sustainable development; and the building of happy and progressive families as healthy and resilient cells that build up society, alongside gender equality, is an indicator of progress and civilization.

Our Party asserts that the focus of cultural development is the development of *human beings with dignity* and the development of a *healthy cultural environment*. Attention must be given to the relationship between culture and politics, between culture and the economy. Culture must be instilled within the Party and the political system. Public servant and public service culture must be developed, especially ethics within public service, and due attention must be given to the responsibility of Party cadre and members to set an example. The Party has also identified that the subjects of cultural development are the following: *the Party leads, the State administers, the People are the creative actor, and intellectuals and artists shall play a key role*. It stressed the importance of harnessing every resource from the state and society, domestic and foreign, for cultural development.

Accordingly, our Party's understanding of cultural development in the Doi Moi period has been gradually augmented, advanced and become better-rounded, more comprehensive and deeper. This is a very fundamental premise for us to grasp and translate into reality.

Distinguished delegates, dear comrades,

Reflecting upon the achievements in the development of Vietnamese culture under the leadership of the Party, especially over the past 35 years of Doi Moi, we have every right to take pride in the contribution of culture to national salvation and building. The most striking achievements that we must stress are, we have gained a more well-rounded and deeper understanding of culture in all areas and

all formats, and created an increasingly diverse and rich portfolio of cultural products to meet the new, manifold demand of society. Many traditional cultural values and heritages of the nation have been well-inherited, preserved and built upon. Culture in politics and economy have garnered initial attention and proven to be an effective and active contributor. The cultural industry and market have witnessed promising developments. International exchange, cooperation and integration in this area are seeing new progress. The development of the Vietnamese people is gradually becoming the centerpiece of the socio-economic development strategy. We have placed emphasis on the fight against those that are wicked, evil, and backward to rebuke and repulse them, and on combating wrongful views and conduct that would do harm to culture and way of life. Many exemplars in patriotic emulation, and the movement of “*All-people Solidarity in Building a Cultural Lifestyle*” were given commendations and took root in everyday society. This has helped reinforce trust of the broad public in the building of the Vietnamese culture and the larger cause of nation-building and national development.

Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of the leaders of the Party and State, to warmly congratulate, commend and thank you, for the enormous achievements of the entire Party, people, Party cadre and members, and most of all, of the intellectuals, writers, artists, and all forces participating in the cultural front in the period thus far.

However, apart from these achievements, we must also look directly at the limitations, shortcomings, problems and weaknesses in the cultural field, and find their causes and address them. A most striking limitation and weakness repeated on multiple occasions for a long while now is that culture has not been deeply understood, nor given due attention vis-a-vis the economic and political domains, by various levels and sectors. It has yet to become an internal source of strength and driver for sustainable national development. The role of culture in the development of human beings has not been properly identified, and seems to focus overly much on its function of *entertainment*. There is a lack of cohesion between the development of different dimensions of culture, and the process remains one-sided and superficial, lacking depth and substance. There is also a lack of cultural, literary and artistic works of sufficient prestige to reflect the stature of the Doi Moi process and command a positive influence on national and human development. The cultural environment is still polluted by social ills, corruption and wrongdoings. The gap in cultural enjoyment between parts of the country remains large. There remain considerable difficulties facing the cultural life in ethnic minority, remote, border and island localities. Many invaluable national cultural heritages risk degradation and loss, even extinction. Leadership,

administration and management of the cultural sphere remain disorganized and tardy, especially in the institutionalization of Party lines and direction on cultural matters. Investment for cultural purposes is yet appropriate, spread too thin and lacks effectiveness. The quantity and quality of officials working directly in the cultural sphere have yet to meet the developmental needs in the new period. Introduction and dissemination of Vietnamese cultural values abroad remain limited, and we have yet to fully harness the cultural quintessence of mankind. Proper attention has not been given to, nor active measures taken, to preserve, protect and build on the noble and unique cultural values of the nation. There have been cases of tasteless, senseless and unfiltered imitation of foreign practices (which, if I were to be harsh, can be considered “uncultured” or “anti-culture”).

We have been tardy in addressing these weaknesses and shortcomings, despite repeated mentions in a wide range of Party documents and resolutions. Such weaknesses and shortcomings have left adverse implications for socio-economic development, and for the development of human beings and the cultural environment of our country.

There are both external and internal reasons to these shortcomings, out of which the larger part is due to causes from within. Most notably, while performing our leadership and administrative roles, we have yet to grasp a full, deep and comprehensive understanding of the Party's cultural line of action, especially during the Doi Moi period. The methods for leading and administering the cultural field have been slow to update, and have yet to fully adapt to the changes and development of the cultural sphere in the period of accelerating industrialization, modernization and international integration. There is a lack of cohesion, vigor and resolve in the institutionalization and realization of the Party's line on culture. There remain issues with organization and personnel work in the cultural sphere. The responsibility of the Party, organizations at different levels in the political system, and Party cadre and members in the leadership over cultural development is yet high. We must deeply analyze these causes so as to address them and accelerate the revitalization and development of the Vietnamese culture in the future.

Distinguished delegates, dear comrades,

As we look to the year 2045, the centenary of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam - the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam today, we find the Vietnamese culture faced with new opportunities and challenges. The monumental, historic achievements over the 35 years of Doi Moi thus far have created new standing and new strength for Viet Nam, increased her comprehensive national power and international prestige, and continually bolstered the people's trust. These are

important premises upon which we build and defend the Fatherland, and develop a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the national identity. In all humility, we may still say this: *Never before has Viet Nam enjoyed such fortune, strength, international standing and prestige, as today.* This is a phenomenal advantage for us to bolster national pride and the desire to revitalize and ameliorate Viet Nam's culture in the new stage. On the other hand, the shortcomings and weaknesses in the process of socio-economic development and cultural development thus far will also be major obstacles to future cultural development. The impacts of globalization, international rivalries and the struggle in the sphere of culture and thoughts will also become fiercer, more complex. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, and digital technology, digital society and digital culture both usher in new opportunities and challenges for developing and nurturing culture. At the same time, we are also facing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, particularly climate change and epidemics. First and foremost, we need to contain, adapt to and live with the COVID-19 pandemic, and at the same time, we should work to protect the health of the people and foster socio-economic development.

Amid new opportunities and challenges, an objective demand of our revolutionary cause is the need to continue building, preserving and developing a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the national identity that may truly be *“the spiritual bedrock”, “the driver for growth”, and “the lantern that illuminates the people's path forward.”* We must harness the cultural values and the strength of the Vietnamese people, kindle the aspiration to develop a prosperous country, and create a comprehensive source of national strength, if we are to make use of opportunities and overcome challenges and successfully realize the goal of making Viet Nam a *socialist-oriented developed country* by the mid-21st century.

It can be said that cultural development is *one of the key issues and a striking element in the documents of the 13th National Party Congress.* This was the first time that the *documents of the National Party Congress saw the Party making a comprehensive and in-depth discussion of culture,* from the theme of the Congress, to the approaches, goals, key lines of action and objectives, and strategic breakthroughs. The Congress documentation stressed that a core and overarching direction shall be: *“To evoke the spirit of patriotism, the will to strengthen the nation’s resilience, and the aspiration for building the country towards prosperity and happiness. To harness the comprehensive power of the entire political system alongside the Vietnamese culture and people. To combine the power of the nation with the power of the time, making full use of internal*

resources and harnessing external resources, among which endogenous power, especially the power of human resources, is the most important".

To foster, preserve, reinvigorate, and promote our national culture, we need to perform well the following core tasks:

First, further rouse the spirit of patriotism, resilience, and solidarity, and the aspiration for prosperity and happiness of the entire nation; and fully harness the Vietnamese people's cultural values, strength and devotion to foster internal strength and create a driver for breakthrough, in order to fulfill the national development targets by 2025 and 2030, with a vision towards 2045, which were put forth at the 13th National Party Congress.

Second, develop the Vietnamese people in the course of Doi Moi, development and integration. It should be grounded in suitable norms, in connection with preserving and upholding the values of the Vietnamese family, and those of our culture and nation. It should also harmoniously combine traditional values with the values of the times, namely: *patriotism, solidarity, resilience, faithfulness, honesty, responsibility, discipline, and innovation*. Such values, with *affluence, happiness, progress, and civilization* at the core, have long been cultivated by Vietnamese families, and bolstered by the progressive Vietnamese culture enriched with the national characteristics of *nationhood, democracy, humanity, and science*. They were also built upon on the foundation of national values - the highest goal of our people: *Peace, unity, independence, prosperous people, strong nation, democracy, fairness civilization, and happiness*.

Third, promote comprehensive and holistic development in cultural domains, foster a cultural environment, and enrich the cultural life of the people. To this end, it is necessary to preserve and uphold traditional cultural values, and take in the cultural quintessence of mankind, while effectively cultivating new cultural values. It is also important to foster a healthy and civilized cultural environment in connection with keeping up the uncompromising fight against the evil, the uncultured and anti-culture and upholding the values of Truth - Goodness - Beauty. In addition, we need to ensure that the people can enjoy a joyous, healthy and happy cultural life, and address the gap in development level and cultural enjoyment among regions in Viet Nam.

Fourth, ensure the people's role as the subject of innovation and beneficiary of culture. To this end, we need to respect and protect the cultural diversity of the people, including that of ethnic groups and regions, and launch extensive and substantive cultural movements. It is also necessary to improve the conditions for people's cultural enjoyment in ways that ensure equality, while

upholding and encouraging the pioneering role of intellectuals, artists, writers, and those working in cultural domains.

Fifth, give priority to cultural and moral values in building the Party and the political system, and staunchly combat corruption, negative phenomena and wrongdoings so that our Party and political system would remain a beacon of morality, civilization, conscience and dignity of the Vietnamese people. In this connection, we need to take into consideration cultural values in leadership and management, and encourage officials and Party members, particularly strategic-level officials and leaders, to serve as models for emulation in line with the Ho Chi Minh Thoughts, morals and lifestyle. It is also critical that we strengthen the Party's leadership capacity and the efficiency of State management, promote active participation of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and other socio-political organizations in cultural development.

Sixth, build a digital cultural environment compatible with the digital economy, digital society, and digital citizenship. This should enable culture to regulate the sustainable development of our country amid the 4th Industrial Revolution. It is necessary to quickly develop the cultural industry and create a healthy cultural market.

To reinvigorate and step up cultural development, and cultivate the Vietnamese people based on the above directions, in the time to come, we need to take bold and effective actions in the following areas:

First, we should improve the Party's awareness and leadership, and the State's governance in cultural affairs, so as to meet the people's aspiration for cultural and human development in building socialist-oriented market economy, accelerating modernization and industrialization, and increasing engagement in far-reaching international integration. We need to continue to come up with new measures in carrying out the Party's leadership and the State's governance, in order to reach a consensus in both mindset and action in promoting cultural development from the central to grass-root level. Party Committees and authorities at all levels need to thoroughly understand and strictly adhere to the guiding principles of the Party in terms of culture, and build upon such foundation to outline programs and plans to best harness resources for cultural development. It is critical that we move away from an "economic-oriented" approach, which focuses primarily on economic interests, rather than cultural values. We also need to uphold the view that "*culture needs to be on equal ground with economic, political, and social matters.*" The 13th National Party Congress determined that Viet Nam's overall development strategy in the time to come is to promote reforms, as well as rapid and sustainable development, in a comprehensive and synchronized manner. All relevant tasks need to be

holistically implemented. And in such endeavors, *economic development is the core, Party building is a key factor, cultural development is the spiritual foundation, and safeguarding of defense and security is a constant and critical mandate*. These are fundamental guiding principles that need to be strictly and vigorously implemented by all sectors and at all levels.

Regarding state governance, it is necessary to expeditiously improve the slow transformation of the Party's guidelines, positions, and principles into concrete and feasible legal instruments and policies on cultural and human development. The restructuring of the cultural management apparatus needs to be accelerated from the central to grass-root levels. Suitable arrangements and policies need to be made in ways that take into account the unique characteristics of cultural and artistic activities. It is also essential that we make increased investment in cultural development by utilizing the state budget in an appropriate manner and mobilizing social resources, both at home and abroad. In diversifying cultural activities, the State needs to give priority to making investment in the mainstream of revolutionary culture, for it serves as the core, the guiding principle, and the primary inspiration of cultivating individuals that are strong-willed, pure of heart, and sincere in affection, thereby fostering the underlying spiritual foundation of the society.

Second, we need to enhance capacity building for cadres in charge of cultural affairs, so that they can fulfill the demand for and mandate of cultural development of Viet Nam in this new phase. We also need to prevent unsystematic and arbitrary assignment of officials in cultural affairs both at the central and grass-root level. This is because the Party has constantly reiterated that “Cadres constitute the root of all work.” Governance and management work pertaining to cultural affairs requires not only political qualities, but also relevant expertise, an extensive understanding of intellectuals and artists, a long-term and in-depth vision, and the capability to call upon all strata of the society to participate in cultural formulation and development. Special attention should be paid to *training and nurturing the growth of intellectuals and artists working in cultural, literary and artistic domains*. This group plays a vital role in our cultural development endeavors in particular, and in our revolutionary cause in general. President Ho Chi Minh once said “In order to fulfill their noble duties, writers and artists must uphold revolutionary morals, elevate their spirit of service to the people, and maintain an attitude of humility. They must also truly mingle with the masses, and strive to acquire political knowledge and improve their professional capabilities”. (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, volume 10, page 647). Incentive policy reform for writers, artists and cultural workers should also be conducted, and their talents and dedication to the development of the country's culture

should be honored. In addition to improving the cultural life at the grassroots level, it is necessary to focus on fostering and developing cultural quintessence, nurture great talents in diverse forms of culture and arts, and encourage the penning of masterpieces. This shall in turn fully reflect the country's great innovation and reforms, and play a positive role in cultivating the current Vietnamese culture and enriching our people's life.

Third, more attention should be paid to the preservation, enrichment and promotion of national cultural values, tangible and intangible cultural values of regions, localities and ethnic minorities, in line with absorbing the cultural quintessence of the times. The "soft power" of the Vietnamese culture should be further developed, contributing to elevating the national synergy. To date, our country has 166 museums, including 4 national museums with more than 3 million artifacts, 3,486 total national-ranked relics, including 1,626 historical relics, 105 special national sites, 288 national intangible cultural heritages (in Hanoi alone there are 21 festivals), 27 tangible and intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO (2 of which are in Bac Ninh province: Quan ho folk songs and Ca Tru). It is an invaluable asset passed on to us by our ancestors and our forefathers for thousands of years, a unique legacy of our nation. Therefore, we bear the responsibility to preserve, treasure and foster this legacy. Otherwise, it will be a dishonor to our history, and ingratitude to our ancestors and forefathers. President Ho Chi Minh, prior to his passing, reminded us: "If you wish to honor your Fatherland, you must love our folk songs!" (Composer Tran Hoan, in his moving songs: "The words of Uncle Ho before his passing" and "In Moscow I heard the Vi-Giam folk singing")

Fourth, focus should be put on building a sound code of social conduct, promoting positive values of fine customs and traditions of the family and society, and upholding the spirit of mutual compassion and solidarity, with respect for benevolence, justice and social morality. These are well reflected in our sayings: "As a crimson cloth draped upon a mirror stand, there shall be love among those of the same land", "Like winter melons and gourds growing on the same trellis, so should humans, different though we may be, love one another", "Love others as if ourselves", "Like a cover of leaves, the poor will help out the poorer", "When a horse falls sick, the whole herd will abandon its grass", "Respect the elderly and you will achieve longevity", "Siblings are akin to limbs of the same body", "Respect the elders, dote on the younger", "Love your wife who shares your hardships, than other women living the life of luxury", "When a husband and his wife are of the same mind, there is nothing they cannot achieve; When friends are of the same mind, they can achieve anything", "A clean fast is better than a dirty breakfast", "Honesty is the best policy", "Be deferential to the

teachers and respect their discipline”, “A word of greeting is more satisfying than a feast”, “A good name is sooner lost than won”, maintaining the “homeliness” and “rusticity” (“*Chan que*”, a poem by Nguyen Binh written in 1936), and upholding loyalty, faithfulness and compassion (the poem “*Viet Bac*” by To Huu written in 1954). Close attention should also be paid to developing codes of conduct in public agencies, in the community, particularly on the cyberspace, and among artists, to name a few.

We must remain steadfast and persevering in combating corruption, negative phenomena and degradation in political ideology, morality, and lifestyle. We should also “eliminate selfishness,” for it is the root of corruption, wrongdoings, and moral degradation in sectors and agencies in charge of cultural affairs. Cadres and Party members should focus on complying with regulations, so as to serve as paragons for the people. It is also necessary to strictly observe the Resolutions of the 4th Plenums of the 11th and 12th Party Central Committee, and the Conclusions and Decisions from the recent 4th Plenum of the 13th Party Central Committee on the building and rectification of the Party and political system.

Esteemed deputies and comrades,

Today’s National Cultural Conference is an important opportunity for the entire Party, People and Army, particularly those in charge of cultural affairs, as well as intellectuals and artists nationwide, to thoroughly, comprehensively and cohesively review the Ho Chi Minh Thought and our Party’s guidelines, policies and positions, particularly those of the 13th National Party Congress on constructing, preserving and building upon the values of an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with the Vietnamese identity. Together, we should be deeply and fully aware of the particularly important role and position that culture holds in the building and defense of our Fatherland, and in realizing the aspiration for national development, prosperity and happiness, in line with the process of Doi Moi and our nation’s glorious history and culture which has been cultivated over a thousand years.

It is my heartfelt wish that after this Conference, our cultural work will witness new and more vigorous breakthroughs and progress, achieve greater effectiveness, and mark a new milestone in revitalizing and strengthening the Vietnamese culture in the new era. Viet Nam values time-honored culture and talent, and has had a long-standing tradition of patriotism and revolution and an united, industrious, and innovative population. This, coupled with a dedicated and talented group of intellectuals and artists who uphold a high sense of responsibility towards the people, the Party, the Fatherland, and the future of the nation, and the vigorous and holistic engagement of the entire political system,

gives me confident that we will overcome all challenges to successfully revitalize and build a progressive Vietnamese culture richly imbued with the Vietnamese identity. Such endeavors would bring greater glory to our nation and people, and foster unrivalled strength to ensure that Viet Nam will continue to thrive, our people ever happier, and our nation ever more prosperous, living up to our thousand-year history of culture and heroism, and making Viet Nam be on a par with powers around the world. Only then can we say that our Conference today is a meaningful, resounding and substantial success.

May I wish all Party and State leaders, esteemed delegates, comrades and all our fellow Vietnamese good health, happiness and greater success!

Thank you very much!