

**Tufts Seminar 2021**

**CHINA AND THE WORLD**

**Briefing Paper – Vietnam**

COMMITTEE: Olivia Schenker: Head of Delegation, South China Sea

Representatives:

Charlotte Robbins: Korean Peninsula

Elissa Adamson: Taiwan

Madeleine Klass: Climate Change and Global Health

Kareem DaCosta: Trade and Technology

Fabiha Rafrain: Development

Stephanie Bromberg: Governance, Human Rights, and Social and Economic Justice

Representatives: Olivia Schenker, Charlotte Robbins, Elissa Adamson, Madeleine Klass, Kareem DaCosta, Fabiha Rafrain, Stephanie Bromberg

## **Introduction**

### **Olivia Schenker: Head of Delegation**

Since the reunification of Vietnam after the American War, we have become a robust, independent nation with a rapidly growing economy. Our economy and society have flourished since the implementation of the Doi Moi (“open-door”) reforms, which aimed to establish a “socialist-oriented market economy.” These policies encouraged privately owned businesses to build a private sector and overturned collective farming practices. Our modern, globalized economy is a direct result of the Doi Moi policies and the government’s focus on exports for economic growth. Reforms have also led us to dominate trade in Southeast Asia, but with an increasing dependency on foreign markets and investment, which has made it difficult for us to build a self-reliant economy, formulate and express our opinions in the region, and protect our resources and land, specifically in the South China Sea (East Sea). China’s aggressive and expansionist actions have led to conflict and tension in the region, disrupting trade and illegally taking our territory. Along with these issues, we face the certainty of economic and physical destruction by climate change and the possibility of nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula. Overall, we ask for peaceful, long-term solutions to all these issues in compliance with international law while respecting regional nations’ rights and interests.

## **Key Points**

- We stress the importance of maintaining peace, stability, and security in the East Sea to protect the rights and interests of nations, per the 1982 UNCLOS and international law. These goals should be the international community's shared interest, and the Southeast Asian states must show their commitment to the development of harmonious relationships between countries and cooperation in the East Sea and the region.
- We support peaceful communication between North and South Korea, but understand that peaceful reunification is improbable as the two countries are too different. We wish that parties concerned could exercise restraint for the sake of peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and in the region.
- We view Taiwan as a province of China rather than an independent country. We support Taiwan’s exclusion from the UN and the WHO, however we will continue trading with Taiwan. Additionally, the rise in Chinese nationalism and growing tensions between China and Taiwan are cause for concern as the US has already indicated support for Taiwan, which could lead to a multilateral war.
- We have made great progress in creating effective environmental policies and are hoping to use both adaptation and mitigation methods to build on those foundational ideas. Additionally, we hope to develop our economy sustainably through these

environmental laws and work alongside other nations in projects that ensure a safer future for younger generations.

- We have managed to contain the Covid-19 virus within the nation through effective lockdowns, educational campaigns, and social distancing guidelines. As vaccine distribution begins, we ask the international community to allow developing nations to buy these necessities to protect our populations from the virus and its strains.
- We are committed to trade liberalisation and entering trade deals with many different countries in order to continue expanding export markets, increasing foreign direct investment, and improving the business environment and competitiveness of the economy to help boost Vietnam's GDP. We believe trade deals are key to strengthening relations with many countries and international organizations, but we also remain firm on its goal of building an independent and self-reliant economy.
- Over the past 30 years, we have undergone immense economic development, growing into a lower middle-income country with one of the fastest growing GDPs in the region. But, it is critical that we strengthen our profit-producing assets and diversify our economic and diplomatic partners so that we can maintain our economic growth and safeguard our sovereignty.
- The protection of human rights and the freedom of all our people, especially freedom of religion, is important to us. Human rights are the objective of our entire country.

### **Background Information**

As a country with over 96.2 million people that lies on the Eastern portion of mainland Southeast Asia, Vietnam has grown to become a crucial player in the region. Our strategic adaptation of ideas and institutions brought by major civilizations has helped propel us to become a highly populated and diverse nation with a rapidly growing economy. The development of our Vietnamese heritage was an overlapping interaction between local culture, Chinese and regional cultures, and Western culture that was never fully assimilated by a foreign civilization. Historical and modern interactions with China and other dominant societies were instead adopted and localized to form our community.

Beginning in 300 BCE, China's southward expansion reached the tribal communities of the Viets. Under Chinese rule, Vietnamese learned from China, such as technological and administrative innovations, making us one of the most advanced Southeast Asian people. Chinese traditions heavily influenced our society, mostly the aristocracy who preserved Chinese customs, beliefs, lifeways, and gender relations.

At the time, the Chinese government attempted to fully assimilate us, the Vietnamese people, into sinic life by implementing the Chinese language, traditions, and customs. However, the Chinese's failure to incorporate our people demonstrated the presence of our strong heritage in the region before China's rule. Therefore, the post-Chinese period was marked by resistance from us, the Vietnamese people, against sinicization and Chinese authority.

Historians agree that our cultural community was established around 750 BCE and later flourished. The region contained its own distinct characteristics but was still influenced by Southeast Asian customs because of the Southern Mongoloid and wet-rice culture's common racial roots. Many local cultures near modern-day Vietnam joined together to form our traditions and community's beginnings, which blossomed into a nation. Our modern Vietnamese values grew under nationalism and Marxist-Lenin thinking in the 1930s and 40s.

Through its millennium-long control of and influence over the region, China became the main contributor to our rich heritage and its early development. The Chinese connected our nation to international maritime trade, bringing new goods and establishing communications, which promoted internal development. Also, we received knowledge of philosophy, administration, and literature from China. During this time, economic, political, and cultural responsibilities took hold. The beginnings of diverse culture and population created distinct groups within our country, those in the lowlands and those in the highlands.

After we, the Vietnamese people, pushed the Chinese out of the country in 938 CE, the Ly Dynasty came to power, and they obtained and maintained independence from China. While Vietnam became a tribute state to China, this was a period of massive development for our country. During this time, known as the "Golden Age of Vietnam," our state expanded its territory and formulated our own culture, breaking away from our past Chinese rule.

## Issues

### **Committee on the South China Sea**

**Representative: Olivia Schenker**

How does your country view the state of affairs in the South China Sea?

- The South China Sea (East Sea) is vital to the maritime security and development of the region and the world for continued growth. We support peaceful, long-term solutions that adhere to international law and UNCLOS. Vietnam hopes that all countries involved in the matter will maintain peace, stability, and cooperation for the sake of common benefits in compliance with the 1982 UNCLOS. The region's situation is perilous because of the U.S. and China's involvement, who are competing for a dominant role in the area. The ASEAN should support Vietnam and the Philippines in their affairs in the region.

What are your goals in the South China Sea?

- Vietnam has full sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, located in the East Sea, and rejects the claims of sovereignty over these waters by China. We have repeatedly stated our historical ties and legal foundation concerning the Paracel and Spratly Islands, supporting our assertion of sovereignty and administration per international law. Therefore, we reject China's claims and actions in the area to protect our legal rights and de-escalate tensions. We also claim the operation of the Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig contained in our exclusive economic zone (EEZ). We strongly oppose China's illegally placed Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig that violates Vietnamese waters' sovereign rights.

What do you see as each actor's goals in the South China Sea?

- China aims to be the dominant power in the region and exclude the U.S., making Southeast Asian governments comply. The involvement of the two major powers poses an even more significant threat to the region's stability. They lay claim to the islands in the East Sea, which they believe to be within their territory's scope.
- Many countries in the region, such as Japan, the Philippines, and Malaysia, have concerns about China's unlawful maritime actions in the East Sea. Most have continued conflict with China over disputed territory China claims to be theirs. The governments agree these issues must be addressed through peaceful negotiations per international law and UNCLOS.
- The United States views China's actions in the South China Sea as illegal, increasing support for Southeast Asian countries. The U.S. rejects China's maritime claims in the East Sea and has a strong interest in preventing China from taking control of the region.

What direct role, if any, has your nation played in the situation?

- Many Vietnamese and Chinese boats of all kinds, military and occupational, have had frequent confrontations consisting of ships colliding, firing of water cannons, or chasing over the Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig's operation. In these cases, Chinese ships have deliberately attacked Vietnamese ships, jeopardizing the lives of our local fishermen. We have had many peaceful solutions to the conflict seen in the East Sea.

What is your nation's stance on the legitimacy of the Nine-dash line?

- China's so-called nine-dash line, a delineation based on maps from the 1940s after the Republic of China took control from Japan, is unlawful, and we reject their claims to the territories in the East Sea. Vietnam has a clear legal and historical basis for our sovereignty over the islands, which are within our domain as outlined by the 1982 UNCLOS. China's actions have led to increased tensions and unsafe maritime conditions. China now aims to replace the nine-dash line, which was rejected by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, with the "Four-Sha," which claims even more land in the East Sea. China argues that the islands are archipelagos, when in fact they are rocks that cannot sustain human or economic life, and, therefore, the islands are not entitled to an exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Consequently, the use of straight archipelagic baselines to join the outermost points of the islands to define baselines and waters to form archipelagic waters, territorial waters, economic zones, and continental shelves is unlawful. All of China's claims to these islands are proven false by the 1982 UNCLOS and international law.

What has your nation said about the building and militarizing of islands by China in the South China Sea?

- Vietnam believes China's building and militarization of the islands in the East Sea should be met with pressure on the CCP to stop to prevent escalation in the region immediately. China has undermined our authority over the Paracel and Spratly Islands by initiating military exercises northeast of the island. This action disputes the conclusion reached by the two countries and threatens maritime stability in the region. Since 2014, China has built artificial islands atop waters belonging to Vietnam, which contradicts the 1982 UNCLOS and political agreements between China, ASEAN, and Vietnam. China's

actions have threatened peace, security, stability, and environmental biodiversity in the East Sea.

Do you see UNCLOS as relevant to the South China Sea?

- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the legal framework for all sea activities. We consistently stress sovereignty and jurisdiction over our territorial waters, as stated in the 1982 UNCLOS. We believe UNCLOS to be the only legal basis with regulations on the territorial rights of waters between Vietnam, China, and all states surrounding the East Sea.

What was your nation's reaction to the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on Philippines v. China over UNCLOS?

- The Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on the Philippines v. China over UNCLOS sided with the Philippines, rejecting China's nine-dash line and their territorial claims in the area. The obstruction of Philippine ships by the Chinese was illegal under international law. We support the court's ruling and believe China's actions in the East Sea are unlawful. The PCA must be vigilant in their implementation of this ruling to ensure China abides.

What economic activity(ies) in the South China Sea is(are) important to your nation (fishing, natural gas/oil, shipping)?

- Fishing is a form of income for many of our citizens, mostly those that are poor. Consequently, governments need to provide safe conditions for fishermen while operating in their traditional fishing ground. Due to the conflict, seafood production in the East Sea has declined and changed, and should more arise, activities in the area would cease.
- Tensions have reduced tourism and investors in the area. The East Sea holds valuable oil and gas deposits within our jurisdiction that are currently under illegal operational authority by China per international and national laws. Also, the East Sea is a major international trade route that is now under economic threat. We request that countries maintain peace and security in the region to benefit all those involved in maritime economic activities.

Should there be a military conflict in the South China Sea, how would it impact the security of your country?

- The use of force in the East Sea would have far-reaching destabilizing and disruptive effects. The maritime conflict has already impacted the security of our fishermen who have been harassed or detained while operating. If military violence occurred in the area, the lives of our fishermen would be at risk. Given the interdependence of the world's economy, any political instability in the region would disrupt the currently stable Southeast Asian security environment and impact nations' economic growth inside and out of the area of conflict, with bilateral trade likely suffering the most. Therefore, the military dispute would stunt Vietnam's and the other ASEAN countries' overall growth.

Do you believe that your nation would participate in the conflict?

- We once again stress the importance of peace, stability, and security in the region to protect all countries' interests and economic activities. While we will not allow China to claim Vietnamese Islands in the area illegally, we would prefer to find a peaceful, long-term solution to these issues in accordance with international law. We see political and economic order in the region to be the top priority to preserve economic benefits in the East Sea. We request that all parties' lawful rights and interests be respected, states obligated to observe international law, per the UNCLOS, should demonstrate their willingness to expand peaceful relationships between nations.

**Committee on the Korean Peninsula**  
**Representative: Charlotte Robbins**

How would you describe the current situation on the Korean peninsula?

- Tensions are high on the Korean peninsula and have escalated since Pyongyang cut all communications lines and demolished the inter-Korean liaison office in North Korea on June 16, 2020. This office was established in 2018 to facilitate diplomatic relations between the two Koreas. The KCNA (Korean Central News Agency) revealed Pyongyang's plans to release 12 million propaganda leaflets into South Korea in response to the scattering of anti-North Korea leaflets in the countries' border in early June. South Korea came forward and stated that the move was conducted by several nongovernmental organizations. Vietnam consistently and persistently supports peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and factors dialogue for peaceful settlement of all matters. We wish that parties concerned could exercise restraint for the sake of peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and in the region.

What level of concern do you have about the situation on the peninsula?

- There is a high level of concern on the peninsula, which can be attributed to the rise in North Korean nuclear tests. This leads to a sense of unpredictability and destabilization within the region. The situation on the peninsula should be of much concern

How would you describe the Six-Party Talks?

- The six-party talks were a series of multilateral negotiations held intermittently since 2003 and attended by China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States for the purpose of dismantling North Korea's nuclear program. The talks were hosted in Beijing and chaired by China. The disjointed process has been hindered over the years by North Korea's repeated missile tests and other provocations. Progress reached a stalemate when Pyongyang walked out of negotiations in 2009 and, a year later, revealed a vast new uranium enrichment facility to U.S. scientists. In recent years, other participants, notably China, have called periodically for a resumption of the process. The United States has been reluctant to resume negotiations, however, insisting that Pyongyang first honor past commitments to dismantle its program before relaunching discussions with other parties. "The Six-Party Talks have yielded little progress in denuclearizing North Korea," said Scott Snyder, a Senior Fellow on Council on Foreign Relations.

How would you describe the relationship among North Korea, South Korea, and China?

- China and North Korea have a mutual aid and cooperation treaty, which is currently the only defense treaty either country has with any nation. It is North Korea's biggest and most important trading partner. The relationship has been strained in recent years because of North Korea's nuclear program and due to the impoundment of Chinese fishing boats. China maintains an embassy in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang and a consulate general in Chongjin. "While the Chinese certainly would prefer that North Korea not have nuclear weapons, their greatest fear is regime collapse," writes Jennifer Lind, a professor at Dartmouth University.
- China-South Korea relations have shown some signs of improvement after late October 2017, when Beijing and Seoul announced their shared desire to put their relationship back on a positive track. But rather than achieving a lasting détente, the two countries have simply reached a new stage in an ongoing negotiation over Seoul's approach to regional security. As Asia's fourth-largest economy, South Korea exported goods worth over \$136 billion to China in 2019, comprising a quarter of its total exports.

How are these relations informed by historical memory?

- All three nations are bound together by a shared history, an overlap in cuisine, religion, and common language, legal systems, and ties that reach back thousands of years. The imperial examination system was also introduced to Korea, which came from China.

Should there be a role for additional actors?

- It is unclear whether Vietnam would like additional actors to intervene. At this point, Vietnam is still considering potential changes to the present situation

What is your role, or what would you like your role to be in the Korean Peninsula?

- Vietnam embraces international law in this regard and consistently advocates for nuclear non-proliferation on the Korean Peninsula by publicly denouncing North Korean nuclear ambitions. Vietnam pursues a policy of non-isolation with North Korea perpetuating efforts to bring North Korea into the international community and ease regional tensions. But with little substance to an increasingly distant bilateral relationship, it is hardly in a position to play a major role as a mediator between the Kim regime and the United States.

What are the implications of North Korea's nuclear program for the region?

- North Korea has an active nuclear weapons program, and although Kim Jong Un has pledged to end nuclear weapon tests, it is still a threat to the region,

Are you concerned about North Korea's nuclear weapons? Why or why not?

- North Korea (aka the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or DPRK) is the only country to have withdrawn from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue a nuclear weapons program and possesses an increasingly sophisticated nuclear arsenal. The international community imposed tough sanctions on North Korea following a series of weapons tests in recent years, and trade between Vietnam and North Korea is "small and inconsistent," according to our foreign ministry. North Korea's unpredictable usage of nuclear weapons makes them a great concern for the region and the world.

Where do you think North Korea fits into China's grand strategy?

- North Korea fits into China's grand strategy as they are a beneficial communist political ally and remain to be important investors in their future as a world power.

Should human rights or social and economic justice be a concern when dealing with North Korea?

- We would rather leave human rights out of the equation, and deliver economic justice.

Are you in favor of Korean unification? Why or why not?

- Vietnam is not in favor of Korean reunification because its relationship with South Korea and North Korea is too convoluted to become unified. We understand how different the countries are and do not see a position where the countries would be united as one, although we are in favor of peaceful communication.

Do you think the resolution of the tensions on the peninsula should be a concern for all of Asia?

- The tensions in the peninsula should be a concern for all of Asia, as every country in Asia relies on South Korea for trade to an extent. North Korea runs missile tests in close proximity to other Asian countries as well. However, countries that are not as tied economically or politically to either country should be less concerned with the tensions in the region. While the tensions in more distant areas might not be as pressing, they still are of concern.

What are the main issues preventing a peaceful unification?

- Although Kim Jon Un has pledged an end to weapons tests and agreed to dismantle the Punggye-ri nuclear testing site, potential nuclear threats should still be of concern. In response, South Korea has halted the propaganda that blares over the demilitarized zone, which separates the two states. South Korea and North Korea remain technically at war since only an armistice was signed. In addition to the threat of nuclear weapons and propaganda, the two nations are extremely different and therefore hard to unify; Kim's priority is to safeguard his dynastic regime, which will be hard to unify with democratic South Korea. Economically, North Korea, which is largely agrarian, has less than 1% of South Korea's GDP. Vietnam has consistently supported any and all efforts to promote dialogue and uphold peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, urging each party to earnestly observe the United Nations Security Council resolutions, actively strive and make practical contributions to the maintenance of peace.

## **Committee on Taiwan**

**Representative: Elissa Adamson**

Briefly describe the history of Taiwan and Mainland China.

- Taiwan is officially recognized as part of the Republic of China by the global community, yet they have been governed independently since the former Chinese aristocrats were exiled to the island in 1949. China views the island as a province following the One China Policy that the global world recognizes. The 1992 Consensus binds Taiwan and Beijing based on an understanding that was reached in 1992 between

the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Nationalist Party. Taiwan is still governed independently of the CCP by President Tsai Ing-Wen.

How would you [Vietnam] describe the status of Taiwan now?

- Taiwan is a province of China that is currently rebelling against the mainland. Taiwan must be united with the mainland once again.

Is Taiwan an independent country? Why or why not?

- Yes, Taiwan is an independent country as they have been governed independently from China since 1949. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) recognizes Taiwan as an independent country but Vietnam, like most countries, recognizes them as a province of China. However, Taiwan has the elements of statehood that international law requires, meaning that they have maintained diplomatic ties with at least 15 countries.

Does Taiwan have international standing in such bodies as the United Nations or the World Health Organization? Why or why not?

- Taiwan does not have a standing in the UN or the World Health Organization, and China has barred Taiwan from being accepted into the WHO. The WHO shares the belief that Taiwan is a province and not an independent state, meaning that the PRC should represent Taiwan in all international organizations.

Why does China want to “reunify” with Taiwan?

- Beijing insists that there is only one China and Taiwan is inherently a part of China. Due to the 1992 Consensus Beijing states that an understanding was reached between the two countries, and Taiwan is bound to be a part of China. Any further separation would be in direct violation of the 1992 Consensus.

Describe China’s “One Country, Two Systems” constitutional principle. Why and how was this principle devised?

- “One Country, Two Systems” was created by Deng Xiaoping after he became the leader of China in the 1970s. Hoping to reunify China and Taiwan, he formed the “One Country, Two Systems” principle. This stated that Taiwan was allowed to keep their autonomy and rule themselves, even allowing them to follow a capitalist economic system, opposed to a communist one. Additionally, Taiwan was allowed to run a separate administration with their own army, if they remained under Chinese sovereignty. Taiwan rejected this proposal.

What is Taiwan’s interpretation of this principle?

- Taiwan's President Tsai and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), rejected this principle. The DPP does not accept “the Beijing's authorities’ use of “One Country, Two Systems” to downgrade Taiwan.” They view it as an attack and limitation on their independence. Taiwan is prepared to use physical force, as a last resort, to prevent reunification.

Does your country recognize Taiwan? Why or why not?

- No, Vietnam does not recognize Taiwan. Instead we recognize the decree established in 1992 that there is only one China and Taiwan is a part of it. Vietnam and China have a longstanding relationship. We align with China and do not recognize Taiwan as independent, and support China's effort to reunify the two countries.

What is your interaction with Taiwan?

- Vietnam has an open door trade policy (Doi Moi), which allows us to trade with Taiwan. However, as Vietnam and China have strong economic ties, Vietnam has reserved trade agreements with Taiwan. As Vietnam follows the One China Policy and does not officially recognize Taiwan, many of Vietnam's and Taiwan's interactions are conducted unofficially. We interact with Taiwan in the form of investment capital and trade.

Do you trade with Taiwan? On what scale?

- Vietnam and Taiwan have had a long trade relationship with each other, and it continues to expand and flourish. In fact in 2019, our trade increased 11% from \$16 billion US dollars in 1 year, with Taiwan as Vietnam's 6th largest trading partner.

Does Taiwan have a better technology sector than China?

- At the moment China's technology sector is stronger than Taiwan's. China has spent decades strengthening their economy and recruiting technology talent. Taiwan is hoping to do the same and following a similar path when it comes to China in the technology sector.

Does your nation support Taiwan's technology sanctions on China?

- Vietnam supports Taiwan's technology sanctions on China, as they support countries and leaders that take a strong stance against China.

How has Taiwan's perspective on its identity changed over time?

- Taiwan's independence has led to a growing consciousness regarding the island's national identity. For several decades, there has been an ethnic divide between native Taiwanese and those who were exiled during the Cultural Revolution. In recent years, however, there has been a rise in an inclusive Taiwanese identity.

Has China's growing nationalism caused tensions in recent years?

- China's growing nationalism and dominance in the South China Sea has caused tensions between China and our country, Vietnam. As nationalism swells in both countries, we have become increasingly competitive for an influence in Southeast Asia's mainland, an area we dominated from 1970 to the 2000s. The rise of nationalism has increased the race for regional influence, generating tension. Our country, Vietnam, joined by Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines reject China's claim to the South China Sea and are slowly militarizing.

What is your nation's attitude on the recent US arms sale to Taiwan?

- The recent US arms sale to Taiwan indicates that if China and Taiwan resort to physical force, Taiwan could potentially have American support, changing the dynamic of the conflict. As such, we have indicated that we will strengthen our military and defense

relations with multiple countries to ensure mutual benefits for the region and the international community at large.

Do you think that the US has fueled tension between China and Taiwan? How likely do you think it is that China will “reunify” Taiwan through force?

- As the US continues to sell arms and vocalize their support for Taiwan and their independence, the US is fueling tensions between China and Taiwan. Not only is the US emboldening Taiwan by supporting them, but they are antagonistic towards China in the form of tariffs, angering China. President Xi is likely to do whatever it takes to reunify China and has stated that they are ready and willing to use force to take back Taiwan. These sentiments are concerning for Vietnam, and may lead to destabilization in the region. If the US becomes involved in the conflict over Taiwan it will likely become a multilateral conflict.

### **Committee on Climate Change and Global Health Representative: Madeleine Klass**

Briefly describe the Paris Agreement and your country’s view on climate change.

- On October 31st, 2016, Vietnam ratified the Paris Agreement and has taken crucial steps in the last four decades to improve the nation’s response to the environmental challenges currently facing the world. We see this as both a regional and international threat and are eager to work alongside other nations to come up with effective solutions to prevent further environmental disasters from taking place.
- We want to utilize both mitigation and adaptation when creating plans for the climate crisis. In order to continue developing the nation, we must develop strategies that are economically beneficial.

Briefly describe the current Covid-19 pandemic and how it is affecting your country. Do you think the two are related? Why or why not?

- Vietnam’s competent response to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in low numbers of virus-related deaths. Early on, we emphasized the need for social distancing and instituted effective lockdowns which prevented an astronomical curve from forming.
- Our effective policies and communication strategies have also been heavily supported by the public. In a poll conducted by the English newspaper *The Independent*, it was reported that approximately 94% of our population believes the government on matters related to the Covid-19 virus.
- We see this time period as a fight against the virus and measures to prevent its spread are interpreted as patriotic acts, creating a sense of national unity. A portion of our younger population has taken it upon themselves to volunteer in hospitals and quarantine zones to help the nation continue controlling the virus.

How would you describe your policies on climate change?

- Vietnam has made tremendous strides in the last forty years in creating effective environmental strategies to achieve our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) as a

member of the Paris Agreement. NDCs are commitments states make individually while thinking about their international counterparts abilities as they collectively try to achieve the Paris Agreement's goals. Such policies will help us to build a strong foundation for the economy to grow and reach our goal of becoming a developed nation by 2045.

- The National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC), which came into practice in 2011, is one of the many national policies we have enacted and is centered on adaptation. This policy's goals are to provide security to the population regarding food, energy, water, and more. Additionally, it lays out a plan to establish a sustainable economy and raise awareness for more environmentally-safe options in daily life.
- The National Committee on Climate Change (NCCC) is another tool to help further our implementation of environmental policies. This organization is responsible for coming up with environmental plans and managing operations and resources to effectively tackle the climate crisis.
- We have recently revised our 1992 Law on Environmental Protection. The original law promoted eco-friendly policies for individuals to take on within their provinces. The newly approved amendments give more responsibilities to local communities to participate in monitoring factories and other projects within their regions; institute new environmental taxes, and encourage the population to buy more sustainably.

How would you describe your region's policies on climate change?

- Vietnam is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) consisting of ten members, many of whom will face the extreme effects of climate change. We appreciate the work of our fellow member states in reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions and hope to continue making action plans that will help with mitigation and adaptation.

Are they integrated or individual by county?

- Vietnam's government is responsible for creating laws that will help the nation achieve its environmental goals nationally. But within each province People Committees monitor the progress of their implementation. The public is also eager to participate in environmental projects. Many prefer to not use plastic bags and new waste systems have been established to replace old unsustainable methods.

Do some countries contribute more to climate change than your country?

- While we are not one of the major contributors to the environmental crisis, we have an important role to play in reducing our carbon footprint and building a more sustainable economy. Additionally, we hope that more developed nations will continue to make green policies and work alongside Vietnam to secure their younger generations' futures.

What challenges does climate change pose for your country?

- Vietnam is a low-lying country which causes it to be vulnerable to floods as sea levels rise. Many in the Mekong Delta region have lost their houses and been forced to relocate due to soil erosion on river banks, extreme storms, and floods. The area also acts as a source of food and trade for Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations. This region provides a variety of fresh produce, but a change in climate would make it more vulnerable to floods which would damage crops.

- Vietnam has a limited supply of clean, fresh water. From 2015 to 2017, the Mekong River Delta experienced a disastrous drought while fresh water resources were tarnished due to saltwater intrusion. Such events threatened our food security greatly and may become more common if the climate crisis worsens. This would cause our economy to be largely reliant on other nations, preventing its own development. If agricultural jobs in rural regions of Vietnam are threatened due to natural disasters, rural-to-urban migration may take place which would cause our cities to be overpopulated affecting their infrastructure, resources, and more.

What are you most concerned with regarding climate change?

- Vietnam will be greatly affected by climate change due to our geographic position, and we are deeply concerned for the socio-economic issues that might ensue if the international community does not begin instituting effective policies.

How has the pandemic affected your country?

- Vietnam has taken careful steps when launching lockdowns and organizing social distancing guidelines which has proven to be extremely effective. This has allowed our economy to grow and the nation hopes that the GDP will continue its upward trajectory by six percent in 2021.

Evaluate the WHO's response to Covid-19.

- We feel that the World Health Organization has been very helpful in our management of Covid-19. We appreciate the WHO's shipments of medical equipment and other important necessities to areas in the Pacific Islands.
- Vietnam asks the World Health Organization and the international community to establish methods for transporting vaccines to developing nations in order to stop the spread of the virus globally. We hope vaccines will be sold at reasonable costs so that developing nations are able purchase enough to ensure the safety of their population.

Evaluate China's response to Covid-19.

- Vietnam can only speak on its own response to the virus. We have worked extremely hard to prevent the spread of the disease within our jurisdiction which has proven to be very effective.

## **Committee on Trade and Technology**

**Representative: Kareem DaCosta**

- Vietnam is one of the most open economies to international trade in Asia. Vietnam's main trading partners are the U.S., Japan, China, and South Korea. Vietnam's economic model is currently heavily dependent on foreign investment and exports. Our main investors are Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. China currently dominates trade in Southeast Asia, followed by the U.S., the EU, Japan, and South Korea.

- The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) was a trade agreement created by the U.S. and signed by 12 countries on the Pacific Rim, including Vietnam. The United States has left the TPP, but the other 11 members have continued with the deal.
- The goal of the TPP is to create a fully integrated economic area and establish rules for global investment. To deepen economic ties between the signers, the agreement slashes tariffs and fosters trade to boost economic growth.
- Prominent provisions of the TPP are 1) the elimination or reduction of tariffs, 2) the liberalization of services trade, 3) investment rules to protect investors from unfair treatment, 4) intellectual property protections, and 5) labor and environmental standards.
- The RCEP is a Chinese-led partnership between 15 Asian countries that joins together several of the largest economies in the world such as China, Japan, and South Korea. The free-trade region established by the deal accounts for 30% of the global economy, one-third of the global population, and reaches 2.2 billion consumers.
- Members of the RCEP agree to the prohibition of certain tariffs and unified rules of origin (for determining the national source of a product) throughout the bloc to help facilitate international supply chains and trade within the region.
- The RCEP lowers tariffs on goods traded between the signatories, advances economic integration by adding more free trade agreements, and provides rules governing e-commerce.
- Vietnam is participating in the TPP and RCEP because they have had net positive effects on our economic development, namely by expanding export markets, increasing foreign direct investment, and improving the business environment and competitiveness of the economy. However, our goal of building an independent and self-reliant economy suffered a setback due to increased dependence on foreign markets and investment: our manufacturing sector is especially dependent on Chinese raw materials and equipment. Additionally, the trade agreements have presented challenges for some domestic industries, such as agriculture, due to the reduction of tariffs making Chinese goods more competitive in our domestic market.
- The trade agreements have allowed Vietnam to enhance and consolidate relations with many countries and international organizations, improving effectiveness of cooperation with both neighboring countries and global powers like China and Japan. The U.S.'s withdrawal from the TPP has presented a challenge to the U.S.-Vietnam relationship.
- There has not been major domestic opposition to the agreements besides the industries, such as agriculture, that will face increased competition and will ultimately have to lower their prices due to the reduced tariffs.
- U.S. stipulations in the TPP were very stringent. In order to be included in the TPP, Vietnam had to agree to make space for independent trade unions, outlaw child labor, give private firms more opportunity to compete with the state sector, strengthen environmental controls, and allow unencumbered access to the internet. However, since the U.S. has left the agreement, we now have greater freedom of operations.
- The CPTPP, a free-trade agreement between 11 countries around the Pacific Rim including Vietnam, will result in a lower GDP growth rate than the CPP (6.79% to 1.1%),

but the trade agreement will still bolster our economy and will lead to policy reforms. Labor-intensive industries such as garments and footwear will benefit the most from increased exports. Additionally, the CPTPP helps members reduce dependence on major economies such as the U.S. and China since neither country is in the agreement, one of Vietnam's goals.

- The Asian supply chain suffers from scarcity of supply chain professionals, increased consumer diversity, and fragmented supply chains. These make it difficult for countries to properly integrate their economies and reduce barriers to trade.
- Vietnam mainly exports phones, textiles, electronic goods/computers, footwear, and machinery (such as the automobile market). We primarily import electronic goods/computers, machinery, phones, fabrics, and iron/steel.
- We export electronic equipment, optical/photo/technical/medical apparatuses, edible fruits, cotton, and footwear to China. We primarily import electronic equipment, machinery/nuclear reactors, iron and steel, plastics, and fabric from China. China is our biggest import (\$83.3B) and export (\$53.8B) market and it makes up 22% of our imports/exports.
- Vietnam primarily exports intermediate goods.
- There have not been any significant impacts of trade liberalization on labor allocation or income differentials between workers in different sectors.
- The conflict in the South China Sea has not seriously impacted Vietnam's trade. However, China's recent unlawful intrusion into our territorial waters--which are internationally recognized as ours by the Law of the Sea--in order to drill for oil has heightened tensions between us and China. We hope that this intrusion on our sovereignty can be resolved diplomatically, but we are willing to involve legal institutions if necessary and are confident we would prevail in any such case.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to calls for supply chains to become more resilient. Shortages caused by temporary trade restrictions highlighted the weaknesses of supply chains, which may lead to a rise in economic nationalism, resulting in manufacturers worldwide being put under pressure to increase domestic production, grow employment in home countries, reduce dependence on foreign sources, and rethink the manufacturing strategies that involve minimizing the amount of inventory held in their global supply chain (i.e. the just-in-time system). The pandemic has led many Vietnamese companies to begin developing additional, alternate sourcing options, better understand the financial and operation health of their suppliers, and change contractual terms to provide companies with added flexibility and downside protection.
- We believe that heightened tariffs and similar measures as a response to the alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang would disrupt global trade. We have not seen sufficient evidence of alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang to warrant actions that would hamper our trade with China.

- Our economy is one of the most energy-intensive in the world due to government policies that indirectly subsidize energy prices. Electricity consumption in Vietnam has increased by approximately 13% annually.
- Vietnam relies primarily on coal, followed by oil, for our energy production. We also use natural gas, biofuels, and hydro power to a lesser extent. 35% of Vietnam's installed power generation is from coal-fired plants, a ratio that will likely stay unchanged for the next 5 years according to our Ministry of Industry and Trade. However, one of our priorities is to develop renewable energy sources and gradually reduce our reliance on traditional sources of electricity in order to protect the environment.
- Vietnam is a net exporter of energy. We export 15% of our total energy consumption. In 2020, our coal imports rose sharply (53.8% in the January-June period) and we have become more reliant on coal imports for its electricity production. Our government is committed to reducing reliance on coal and boosting renewables.
- Vietnam has 2360 rivers totaling more than 10 km and is the 7th biggest exporter of water. However, due to a lack of physical infrastructure and financial capability, many parts of our country are facing water shortages, especially rural areas: only 39% of the rural population has access to safe water and sanitation. Despite this, we are 100% self-sufficient in terms of water and will likely not need to rely on foreign imports if we are able to build the required infrastructure to transport water throughout the country. As water becomes scarcer and global population increases, water exports may become an increasingly important part of our overall economy.

### **Committee on Development**

**Representative: Fabiha Rafradin**

Briefly describe your country's policies on development, as well as any major successes or failures

- Our development over the past 30 years has been remarkable. In 1986, the Doi Moi reforms initiated a broad-based economic transformation, which included agricultural reform, opened our nation's closed economy to the international market, and initiated pro-business reforms; this spurred rapid economic growth, revolutionizing Vietnam from one of the world's poorest nations into a lower middle-income country.
- These reforms were accompanied by a wide-ranging social agenda, led by the expansion of education, healthcare, and electricity, with a clear goal of leaving no citizen behind. Between 1990 and 2015, poverty rates declined from over 70% to under 6% of the population, and education and health outcomes improved significantly as well. In fact, our nation has outperformed many developed countries in the 2012 and 2015 Young Lives longitudinal study and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

- Our growth performance has also been underpinned by significant infrastructure development; we have been able to provide basic infrastructure access to our fast-growing industrial and manufacturing base, and most of our general population.
- Between 1990 and 2015, our per capita GDP tripled, and in 2019, our economy, which is supported by robust domestic demand and export-oriented manufacturing, continued to show fundamental strength and resilience. Our GDP grew by an estimated 7%, which was one of the fastest growing rates in the region.

What are the key issues on development that your country needs to focus on?

- A productivity-driven development model that combines innovation with balanced development and allocation of private, public, human, and natural capital will be key to achieving our goal of becoming a high-income economy by 2045.
- Our commitment to economic reform has been a major contributor to our remarkable economic success, but some of the forces that propelled our nation's growth are now slowing. In order to continue thriving, we need to strengthen our profit-generating assets.
- In order to do so, we need to prioritize fostering a supportive business environment and encourage competition to ensure that resources flow to the most productive and innovative businesses. We also need to prioritize the improvement of the efficiency and sustainability of our infrastructure. In addition, it is important that we promote university and vocational-technical education, as well as provide individuals facing barriers entering the labor market, such as ethnic minorities, with greater opportunities to increase our productivity and economic growth. Lastly, we must accelerate our efforts to develop a sustainable, green economy to combat the potential impacts of climate change.

Have you received external support for development? From what countries and/or organizations and for what projects.

- We have received and continue to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds. Our major donors are The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Japan, South Korea, the United States, and the Netherlands. Since the 1990s, a majority of ODA spending has been used for large-scale infrastructure development to help restructure our economy through the use of modern production methods.

Briefly describe the reforms instituted under Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, and how this influenced China's rapid economic development at home. What policies were brought about in the 1990s and 2000s that allowed China to develop so quickly?

- Deng Xiaoping led the program of Chinese economic reform, which were economic reforms aimed to form a socialist market economy in the PRC.
- Reforms initiated in the 1970s and early 1980s involved the collectivization of agriculture, the Open Door Policy, which opened up the country to foreign investment, and gave permission to entrepreneurs to start businesses. Much of the reforms in the late 1980s and 1990s involved the privatization of much state-owned industry. This privatization continued under Jiang Zemin in the early 2000s, nearly all state enterprises were liquidated and their assets were sold to private investors.
- After three decades of reform, China's economy experienced one of the world's biggest booms, increasing 9.5% a year. These reforms also raised the standard of living in China,

allowed for the growth of ties to the world economy, and expanded personal and cultural freedoms for the Chinese people.

Why was Deng Xiaoping so committed to reform?

- Deng Xiaoping was committed to reform because he wished to bring the PRC, which was in extreme disorder due to the policies of the Mao era, back to order. Deng emphasized the goals of "Four Modernizations" in order to strengthen the fields of agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology, and thus rejuvenate the nation.

Does your country benefit from China's economic rise?

- Our economic liberalization, since the adoption of the Doi Moi, has helped our economy blossom. As a result, we have become increasingly linked with China for our economic growth and stability. China is our number one trading partner, and its transformation into a major economic power has led to an increase of investment in our nation. These investments have helped speed up our economic growth by creating jobs and raising salaries, and have aided in the development of our infrastructure as well.

Does China's economic rise provide any insecurities for your country?

- Our relationship with China has also caused us to become increasingly linked with it economically. Our over-reliance has caused China to grow more assertive both economically and territorially, as seen through our disputes in the South China Sea. This has made it imperative that we diversify our network of diplomatic and economic partners, as well as assert and advocate for our nation's sovereignty and rights.

How have the policies of Xi Jinping changed the way China is developing economically?

- Xi Jinping's policies have worked to increase the CCP's control over state-owned and private enterprises. Xi's Made in China 2025 plan is the "blueprint" for economic reform in China, and its goal is to displace US dominance in various sectors through focus on domestic innovation. Xi's implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and the "going out" strategy exhibits that the Chinese government is also committed to exercising greater international influence and establish itself as a world economic leader.

What is China's "going out" initiative, and why is this so important?

- The "going out" initiative is the PRC's current strategy to encourage domestic enterprises to make overseas investments. Increased investment abroad will permit Chinese companies to take advantage of opportunities in both local and international markets, and will thus raise the international competitiveness of Chinese goods. Overall, this policy may allow Chinese companies to become leaders in the international market.

How has the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) helped China spread its principles of economic development around the world?

- China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is working to build economic connectivity and cooperation across Asia and Europe, effectively expanding the nation's political and economic influence. In the long term, the BRI will help develop markets for China's products and reinforce China's economic standing on a global scale. The strong

interconnected nature of the BRI will allow China to easily spread its own economic principles across the world.

Has the BRI impacted your country?

- We support the BRI and its implementation in Vietnam because it will aid in fueling our nation's economic growth by providing additional funding for our infrastructure development. However, we must remain cautious about the economic, political, and strategic implications of the initiative as well because we do not want to increase our economic dependence on China. Though we remain cautious about the implementation of the BRI within our nation, we will continue to support the initiative as a whole.

What are your country's economic ties to China?

- China is our nation's top trading partner and invests heavily in our nation, especially in our infrastructure development.

How has your development been impacted by climate change? By the pandemic? By regional security concerns?

- Our nation's rapid growth and industrialization has had significant impacts on the environment and on our natural assets. Our increasing reliance on fossil fuels and the vulnerability of much of our population to climate impacts, makes our work to mitigate and adapt to climate change urgent. Our government is working to lower our nation's environmental footprint through strategies to stimulate green growth and better address the dangers of climate change.
- Given our deep integration with the global economy, our nation has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have shown remarkable resilience. The initial health impact of the outbreak had not been as severe in Vietnam as in other countries due to proactive measures that were implemented on the national level. Our economy also remains strong with a GDP growth rate of 2.91% in 2020. In addition, we are one of the few nations in the world not to expect an economic recession caused by COVID-19.
- In order to address security concerns in the South China Sea, we have modernized our military in order to close the gap between our own military capabilities and China's. We have also increased engagements with other nations, such as the US, South Korea, and India, in order to hedge against China's increased aggression in the South China Sea as well. In addition, we have opened up our seaports to the international community and have begun upgrading Cam Ranh Bay seaport to become a repair facility for most naval vessels. By using these strategies, we will be able to better defend our national sovereignty while also maintaining our economic relationship with China.

**Committee on Governance, Human Rights, and Social and Economic Justice**  
**Representative: Stephanie Bromberg**

How would you describe your country's government and its way of governing your people?

- Vietnam is a socialist country led by the Vietnam Communist Government. We represent the interests of the working people and the whole nation. The people are represented in the National Body; its purposes are to legislate, decide on national issues, and supervise the state's activities. The Judicial branch is composed of People's Courts; the Supreme Court, the highest court in the nation, supervises lower courts.

Briefly describe your country's positions on human rights, social justice and economic justice.

- Vietnam's constitution bestows its citizens with equal rights and freedoms of religion, movement, and residence. (*"Citizens enjoy equal political, economic, cultural and social rights, and are equal before the law."*) Vietnam is committed to ensuring human rights for our people; The fact that a Vietnamese candidate has just been presented to the UN Human Rights Council is testament to our continued effort to promote human rights on the global stage.
- The Vietnamese people are the driving force for any socio-economic development policy. Our country has struggled under colonialism and suffered greatly in the fight for independence, so the Vietnamese people deserve freedom and equality.

Does your country elevate human rights over economic justice or economic justice over human rights, or do you see them as equal?

- Both human rights and economic rights are important in Vietnam's society. The recent realization of social, economic, and cultural rights in Vietnam has led to a nationwide goal of ensuring them. It is the aspiration of Vietnam to provide both human rights and economic justice to its people.

How would you describe ASEAN?

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an organization composed of 10 Southeast Asian countries with a goal of promoting regional peace and mutual assistance, while respecting each country's sovereignty. Vietnam is committed to comprehensive and efficient cooperation with ASEAN. Three Vietnamese diplomats have been part of ASEAN Secretariat leadership.

How would you describe the Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a collection of countries united in ensuring stability and security across Eurasia. The organization creates partnerships between countries to coordinate strategies, solve international issues, and meet regional needs. Vietnam is not part of the SCO.

What are the values of each and what is membership based on?

- ASEAN diplomacy includes consultation and consensus-building between Southeastern nations. Membership is based on being a Southeastern nation willing to cooperate and work together. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization maintains regional peace and stability, and it stimulates growth and development. A participating country needs to be prepared to represent the SCO and make compromises in order to work with every country. In 2011, Vietnam indicated its desire to join the SCO.

How does your country describe national sovereignty?

- National sovereignty falls to the Vietnam Communist Government; it is the government's job to rule the people, and if necessary, consolidate power for the good of the people. Vietnam's national sovereignty is based on our constitution promising governing for the people.

How does your country view the protests and activists in Hong Kong?

- Vietnam has no official stance on the protests in Hong Kong. During the protests, the Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs reached out to Hong Kong authorities to ensure the safety of our citizens.

Have any of the activists sought refuge in your country?

- Activists from Hong Kong have not sought refuge in Vietnam.

How does your country manage protests and activists?

- Vietnam honors all people and stands by its freedoms in the Constitution. However, the government will react to those who attempt to disrupt the social order or defame the Vietnam Communist Government; these unruly citizens will be brought to justice.

Have any of your citizen activists sought refuge in another Asian country?

- No, Vietnamese citizens have not sought refuge in another Asian country. Our country is tolerant of citizen activists and embraces the needs of all of our citizens.

Describe the situation in China's Xinjiang Province with the Uighurs.

- Some global news sources have reported that China is committing 'genocide' against the Uighurs in the Xinjiang Province; it is said that China is forcing the Uighurs into re-education camps, mass sterilizing Uighur women, and separating children from families. Vietnam does not believe that there is a serious human rights violation in China's Xinjiang Province with the Uighurs. Vietnam has no official stance on any events that may or may not be occurring in Xinjiang.

Describe the situation in Tibet.

- The conflict over land in Tibet between native Tibetans and the CCP is of little concern to Vietnam. Vietnam has not taken a stance on the Tibet situation.
- However, the international community believes that Tibet's sovereignty is in question. The People's Republic of China claims Tibet as part of their nation, since Tibetan land has traditionally belonged to China. The Tibetan government asserts that Tibet is an independent state, and the PRC is unlawfully occupying it. The Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, advocates for a non-violent solution to the problem, yet lives in India, in exile from Tibet.

Do you have similar issues in your country?

- Vietnam is a stable and flourishing country with no serious human rights violations. The United Nations has cited various human rights violations in Vietnam, including false accusations of repression of freedom of speech, harassment of activists, and media

control. This is all false reporting; Vietnam is committed to maintaining a free and harmonious country for its people.

How have you responded to the global concern about Xinjiang and Tibet?

- Vietnam is committed to ensuring human rights, but has not participated in the global concern surrounding Xinjiang and Tibet.

What is your opinion on the use of surveillance to monitor the actions of citizens?

- In order to maintain cybersecurity, Vietnam has the authority to check Vietnamese computer systems. Monitoring and surveillance is for the security, safety, and benefit of its people. Using surveillance on citizens ensures Vietnam's society is full of honest, loyal citizens who will work to maintain our great country.

What are the human rights implications of a techno security state?

- A techno-security state implies a strong military, internal security, and information control to boost cybersecurity. We agree with these principles; government control is essential to form a strong nation. A techno-security state in no way breaks any human rights violations; a techno-security state and human rights problems are mutually exclusive.

Do you import any Chinese surveillance technology?

- Some Chinese surveillance technology companies, such as Hanwa, have moved their manufacturing locations to Vietnam. We have a growing economy, and can support these types of companies.
- A 2017 Chinese seminar on cyberspace management was attended by Vietnamese officials. In 2018, cybersecurity laws similar to China's were passed in Vietnam. So although official Chinese surveillance technology has not been exported to Vietnam, we are modelling our cybersecurity and surveillance practices off those of China.

Does your government engage in censorship?

- Vietnam has authority to delete or block online data that may infringe on cybersecurity. Our government may inspect computer systems, monitor information, and oversee communication systems. Dishonest speech against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is illegal.