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Joint Press Communiqué on the Viet Nam – Holy See Working Group (21-22 August 2019)

A meeting of the Viet Nam – Holy See Working Group was held on 21-22 August 2019 in the Vatican City State. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. To Anh Dung, Head of the Vietnamese delegation, and Under-Secretary for Relations with States, Mgr Antoine Camilleri, Head of the Holy See delegation, co-chaired the meeting.

The two delegations had in-depth discussions on Viet Nam – Holy See relations, including on matters related to the Catholic Church in Viet Nam. The two sides noted with satisfaction the positive developments in the bilateral relations in recent years, especially the frequent contacts between the two sides following the seventh Meeting of the Viet Nam – Holy See Joint Working Group held in Ha Noi in December 2018 and the consultations between the Viet Nam Inter-agency Working Group and Archbishop Marek Zalewski, the Non-resident Papal Representative to Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese delegation reiterated that the State of Viet Nam has been increasingly improving the execution of the consistent policy of respecting and ensuring freedom of belief and religion, creating a conducive environment for the activities and development of the Catholic community in Viet Nam. The Holy See expressed its appreciation for the assistance of the State to the Catholic Church, and reaffirmed the desire of the Catholic faithful to live up to their vocation to be good Catholics and good citizens in order to contribute validly to the development and well-being of Vietnam, in fidelity to the teaching of the Church and with due respect to the applicable laws of the country.

The two delegations also discussed issues related to the ecclesial situation in Viet Nam. They reached agreement on ways to promote further the relations between Viet Nam and the Holy See in the immediate future and, in particular, on the main principles underlying the Regulations on the status of the Resident Papal Representative and the Office of the Resident Papal Representative in Viet Nam, in view of the setting up of the Office at the earliest possible date.

The two sides also expressed their commitment to continuing dialogue based on trust and respect for the mutually agreed principles governing the bilateral relations. They underscored the importance of further promoting contacts, including at high levels, between the two sides.

On the occasion of the visit to the Vatican, the Vietnamese delegation was granted an Audience with His Holiness Pope Francis, and paid courtesy calls on the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and the Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher. These meetings were held in a cordial atmosphere of goodwill and mutual respect.
