

STATEMENT OF THE FOUR FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATIONS WITH VIETNAM

Association d'Amitié Franco-Vietnamienne
Freundschaftsgesellschaft Vietnam
Association Belgique-Vietnam,
Association Suisse-Vietnam

On the 10th of August 1961, the US Air force began to spread chemicals on Vietnam. Several events will take place this year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of that dreadful act. The Vietnam War (1961-1975) is known for the massive bombing of North Vietnam. Less obvious and unknown for too long by the public at large has been the chemical warfare waged in the Southern part of that country from 1961 to 1971, whose consequences have been dramatic and long-lasting. The ecological disaster is huge and the human catastrophe bears on the economic, social, cultural and well-being of the whole Vietnamese population, affecting now the third generation.

The US government, as well as the US chemicals companies, has tried to escape its responsibilities, but things may begin to change. The 16th of July 2010, in Hanoi, the US-Vietnam Dialogue Group published a report, its fourth, made of two parts: a Statement and an Action plan. By its tone, the Statement is unusually candid, stressing the Vietnam's efforts to face the consequences of the chemical spreading and pointing also at the meager humanitarian aid procured by NGO, i the Ford Foundation included.

According to the Action plan, 300 millions USD should be spent during the next ten years to finance a list of projects detailed in four pages of the report. It is a rather ambitious plan and 300 millions USD will surely not be enough. Moreover, the Dialogue Group has no funds of its own and cannot decide for other bodies. Therefore, the consequences of the chemical spreading will not disappear soon. Still, one important fact is that the Dialogue Group is calling the US government to finance the largest part of the fund.

The humanitarian assistance of NGO cannot cope with the needs of the Vietnamese victims. It is at the governmental level that the energies must be mobilized and the reparations to the victims must be paid. The chemical firms must face their responsibilities and contribute to the reparations.

Meeting In Ivry (France), the 21st of May 2011, for the 50th anniversary of the France-Vietnam Friendship Association (AAFV), the representatives of the four following friendship associations with Vietnam have decided to work together to inform their public opinions about that tragedy, thirty five years after the end of the Vietnam War. They will do their utmost to convince their respective parliaments of the necessity to support, as quickly and massively as possible, the Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange/dioxin and Vietnam, as a country devastated by the defoliants.

IVRY, the 21st of May 2011