

*Nguyen ANH TUAN,  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Ukraine*

## **VIETNAM AND UKRAINE: BRILIANT RELATIONS IN NEW PERIOD**

Vietnam and Ukraine officially established diplomatic relations on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, 1992, following Ukraine's declaration of independence on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August the previous year. Yet the relations between Vietnam and Ukraine did not just begin in 1992. The two countries had enjoyed a traditional friendship and cooperation long before that auspicious day. These relationships have been fostered and reinforced by the tireless work of many generations of Vietnamese and Ukrainians. The Ukrainian people had accorded enormous and effective assistance to Vietnam in both spirit and material in Vietnam's struggle for peace and national independence as well as the post-war national construction. Throughout those fiercest years of war, thousands of Ukrainian advisors and military experts crossed the vast distance to Vietnam, contributing their heart and mind to the victory of the Vietnamese people's resistance war against the Americans. Tens of thousands of Vietnamese people, including many who have been holding important offices in all fields in Vietnam, had received their training in Ukraine, which endowed them with both knowledge and skill. They have been making active contributions to the building and development of our Vietnamese motherland. The people of Vietnam, consistent in their affection and gratitude, always treasure such gifts that the Ukrainian nation and people have given to them.

Over the last 26 years, the traditional friendship and comprehensive partnership between two countries have been upgraded into a Comprehensive Partnership. This has opened up a new period of robust development for our relations, which became deeper and more comprehensive than ever before. Ever since then, the bilateral relations between Vietnam and Ukraine has grown rapidly in all areas, including economics, politics, security, trade, science, education and humanitarian cooperation, among many others.

However, for many reasons both internal and external, during the period of 2012–2016, bilateral relations in both political and economic terms were suspended. Relations between two countries have been recovering with the meeting between the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc on the sideline of Davos World Economic Forum (Switzerland) on January 20, 2017. The two parties defined mutual interest in the strengthening of political dialogue between Ukraine and Vietnam<sup>1</sup>.



*23 січня 2015 року в м. Ханой відбулися урочисті збори Асоціації дружби «Україна-В'єтнам» та колективу Посольства України у В'єтнамі*

*On January 23, 2015 a solemn meeting of Ukraine-Vietnam Friendship Association and staff of the Embassy of Ukraine to Vietnam took part in Hanoi city*

Following this meeting, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin paid a visit to Vietnam on 4-6 September 2017, during which he held a meeting with the Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh. During their talks in Hanoi on September 6, the two ministers shared the aspiration to continue promoting the close political ties between Vietnam and Ukraine including the exchange of visits, particularly high-level ones, as well as the close cooperation at multilateral forums<sup>2</sup>.

While discussing specific measures to push forward economic, trade, education-training, labour, culture, sports and tourism ties, the ministers noted with pleasure that bilateral trade turnover has grown continuously since 2016, with an increase of 12% in 2016 to US \$ 264.2 million and a 19.1% year-on increase over the first seven months of 2017, during which the export volume of Ukraine was US \$ 48.6 million, experiencing a rise of 14.5%<sup>3</sup>. However, the direct investments by the two country's companies into each other have been modest, of which Vietnam's investments into Ukraine was only for US \$ 2.4 million in cumulative capital with 4 projects in 2016. Ukrainian investments to Vietnam were larger but were only at US \$ 24 million with 4 projects<sup>4</sup>.

The Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister also requested the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry and related agencies to continue assisting Vietnamese nationals residing in Ukraine and noted that Ukraine's stability and development was very important to the Vietnamese expatriates living in the country. At the same



*У межах міжнародної співпраці в галузі сільського господарства Надзвичайний і Повноважний Посол Соціалістичної Республіки В'єтнам в Україні Нгуєн Ань Туан відвідав із робочим візитом село Пустоварівка, 21.07.2018 р.*

*Within the framework of international cooperation in the field of agriculture the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Ukraine Nguyen Anh Tuan visited the village of Pustovarivka during the working trip, 21.07.2018*

education, and science-technology. In addition, the two countries agreed to review necessary documents and mechanisms in order to facilitate bilateral cooperation and discussed the simplification of immigration procedures for the two countries' citizens to increase bilateral exchanges<sup>6</sup>.

Under the instructions of the two countries' leaders, the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ukrainian-Vietnamese Intergovernmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (Joint Commission) was held on October 9–10, 2017 in Kyiv, Ukraine<sup>7</sup>, after the negotiations during the Davos World Economic Forum. At the meeting the two parties discussed the ways and mechanisms to boost bilateral cooperation in different areas. It was agreed that both Ukraine and Vietnam need to be more active in using their intergovernmental mechanisms of development cooperation and in promoting direct business exchanges. Both stressed the need to step up the exchange of delegation and information sharing, and to encourage enterprises to expand export proposals and participate in investment projects in each country.

Furthering the success of the Joint Commission, on 11 October 2017 the Embassy of Vietnam in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) co-hosted the forum "Vietnam–Ukraine relations in the new period" in Kyiv<sup>8</sup>. The event was designed to boost the comprehensive cooperation and friendship between Vietnam and Ukraine, promote networking between Vietnamese and Ukrainian businesses, facilitate business community of the two countries to meet each other and to sign agreement or MOU between them, and to provide support for overseas Vietnamese (OV) in Ukraine<sup>9</sup>.

time, the Vietnamese side stressed the importance of increasing engagements in defence, culture, and science-technology, and suggested increasing in the number of delegations for the exchange. Vietnam is willing to invest in Ukraine's strong sectors<sup>5</sup>. For the Ukrainian side, Minister Klimkin said bilateral ties were thriving across sectors, including people-to-people diplomacy. He proposed Vietnam expedite the signing of several agreements to facilitate trade and economic ties, adding that Ukraine wants to expand bilateral cooperation in technology transfer in mining, shipbuilding and aviation; Ukraine welcomes Vietnamese investments in telecommunications, defence,



*Надзвичайний і Повноважний Посол Соціалістичної Республіки В'єтнам в Україні пан Нгуєн Ань Туан із робочим візитом у місті Васильків, 12.06.2018 р.*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Ukraine Nguyen Anh Tuan during the working trip to Vasylkiv city. 12.06.2018*

Ukraine is interested in developing cooperation with Vietnam, especially regarding granting Ukraine permission to export vegetable products into the Vietnam market. Ukraine also seeks to deepen its cooperation in the manufacture of machine-building products, energy cooperation, in particular in projects for the modernization, renovation and construction of new power plants in Vietnam. By the end of the year 2017, the Ukrainian side would decide on access to the Vietnamese market of Ukrainian products and expand the range of exports of Ukrainian goods<sup>10</sup>. “Ukraine can export significantly more. Vietnam is a huge market for our exports. We continue increasing trade with Vietnam. Bilateral trade have to be somewhere in US\$2 billion, and this year we have only US\$500 million. It is insufficient result”<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, Vietnam is the only foreign country where Ukraine has a port (Ukraine is co-owner of the port of Lotus near the Ho Chi Minh City). Ukraine has huge untapped opportunities to expand our cooperation, increase trade both quantitatively and qualitatively<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, Ukraine and Vietnam agreed to resume negotiations and consultations on establishing a free trade area (FTA) between the two countries. The potential of cooperation between Ukraine and Vietnam is great, but so far the trade turnover is modest. In addition, we can cooperate not only in trade but also in the

area of implementation of joint investments and research projects<sup>13</sup>. We hope that with the potentials of the two countries and the long history of traditional friendship, the relationships between Vietnam and Ukraine will be further promoted and advanced<sup>14</sup>. Evidently, right after the Forum, a number of agreements among Vietnamese and Ukrainian enterprises had been signed in the fields of agriculture, mining, information technology, shipbuilding, footwear, and other areas.

May the Vietnam–Ukraine relations ever flourish and prosper. May health and success plentiful be with all of us, friends from all around this green earth, in our every endeavor.

<sup>1</sup> The President of Ukraine invited Nguyen Xuan Phue, Prime Minister of Vietnam to make an official visit to Ukraine at his convenience.

<sup>2</sup> Vietnam is grateful to Ukraine for supporting Vietnam's offer to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in the 2020–2021 tenure.

<sup>3</sup> See the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (August 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Trade and Commerce of Vietnam, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc, during the meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin on 6 September 2017, also stated that trade was a top priority of the Vietnam – Ukraine comprehensive partnership. He confirmed Vietnam has supported Ukraine's offer for ECOSOC membership for the 2019–2021 tenure and United Nations Human Right Council membership for the 2018–2020 tenure.

<sup>6</sup> Concluding the talks, the two Ministers signed a 2018–2019 consultation between the two Foreign Ministries and witnessed the signing of a cooperation agreement between the two Ministries of Justice, and a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam and the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> The Ukrainian delegation was led by the First Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Trade Maksym Nefiodov and the Vietnamese delegation by the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Hoang Quoc Vuong.

<sup>8</sup> The event was joined by the Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Hoang Quoc Vuong, who is also the Chairman of the Vietnamese Subcommittee of the Vietnam–Ukraine Intergovernmental Commission for Economic-Trade and Science-Technology Cooperation; the Ambassador of Vietnam to Ukraine Nguyen Anh Tuan; Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policies and Food on European Integration Olha Trofimtseva; Deputy Minister of Infrastructure Victor Dovhan; UCCI President Hennadii Chyzhykov, and the Ambassador of Ukraine to Vietnam Oleksii Shovkoplias. Representatives from over 60 Vietnamese businesses and 150 Ukrainian enterprises also attended the event.

<sup>9</sup> *Nguyen Anh Tuan*, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Ukraine, Speech at the Forum “Vietnam – Ukraine Relations in the New Period”, held in Kyiv on 11 October 2017. Addressing the event, the speakers briefed on the socio-economic situation and economic policies of their respective nation as well as cooperation potentials between the two sides and highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperative ties and the role of enterprises in boosting economic-trade ties between the two countries. In the meanwhile, representatives from ministries, sectors addressed businesses' questions. They also underlined the Vietnamese Government's cooperation orientations and measures to assist Vietnamese and Ukrainian firms and support overseas Vietnamese in Ukraine.

<sup>10</sup> *Olha Trofimtseva*, Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine on European Integration, Speech at the Forum “Vietnam – Ukraine Relations in the New Period”, held in Kyiv on 11 October 2017.

<sup>11</sup> *Oleksii Shovkoplias*, Ambassador of Ukraine to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Speech at the Forum “Vietnam – Ukraine Relations in the New Period”, held in Kyiv on 11 October 2017.

<sup>12</sup> *Victor Dovhan*, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine on European Integration, Speech at the Forum “Vietnam – Ukraine Relations in the New Period”, held in Kyiv on 11 October 2017.

<sup>13</sup> *Hoang Quoc Vuong*, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Chairman of the Vietnamese Subcommittee of the Vietnam-Ukraine Intergovernmental Commission, Speech at the Forum “Vietnam – Ukraine Relations in the New Period”, held in Kyiv on 11 October 2017.

<sup>14</sup> *Maksym Nefiodov*, the First Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Speech at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of Vietnam-Ukraine Intergovernmental Commission, held in Kyiv on 10 October 2017.