

## VN embraces ...

(From P.1)

With its participation in the Francophone Community, Việt Nam is able to expand its relationship with many African countries - a region where Việt Nam has received much solidarity and mutual support in the course of its struggle for national liberation and independence.

Its economic relations and co-operation remain modest, while at the same time it could be able to make use of technical co-operation and support and human resource training, and enjoy part of the aid of the developed countries and organisations in the community, beneficial to national construction.

Together with the English, the French language is one of six official languages and one of two working languages used in the UN system.

Việt Nam lies in a region where English is the most used language, so the use of the English language is an inevitable requirement of the process of national industrialisation and modernisation.

The use of French apart from English and other foreign languages has made a contribution to expanding the chance of Việt Nam taking an opportunity to expand economic, scientific and technical co-operation and cultural exchange with the outside world, to help further develop the Vietnamese people's intellectual standards.

Participation in Francophonie has brought some practical benefits to Việt Nam in regard to international prestige, material benefits and experience gained from undertaking activities in a multilateral arena.

All Francophonie member countries, particularly African countries, have highly appreciated contributions made by Việt Nam, especially its experiences in national defence, construction and development.

Every year, the organisations in the community extend their considerable material, technical and experience assistance to Việt Nam in many fields. Each year alone, ACCT provides Việt Nam with tens of millions of French francs through co-operation projects in different areas.

## Việt Nam's preparations for the 7th Summit

Việt Nam was appointed the 7th Francophone Summit in Hà Nội in November 1997 at the 6th Summit in Benin in December 1995.

Việt Nam's appointment stems from interest in holding the summit within Việt Nam, and at the same time conforming to the expectation of the member countries in the community and the increasing profile of Việt Nam in international arenas.

The summit will be the first time that Việt Nam has ever organised an international conference of such paramount importance and at such a high level.

The satisfactory organisation of the summit will make a strong contribution to raising Việt Nam's international prestige, marking growth in international activities, and provide a practical way for Việt Nam to contribute to the community's lofty objectives.

The summit is also a good opportunity for Việt Nam to learn from experiences in the organisation of multilateral activities, and the training and fostering of a contingent of cadres and staff to prepare the necessary material basis to play host to other important international conferences such as the ASEAN Summit in 1998.

The summit is also a good opportunity for international friends to better understand the land and people of Việt Nam and the renovation cause of the Vietnamese people.

Last, but not least, the summit will provide investment, trade and tourist opportunities for Việt Nam.

Highly conscious of its responsibility in hosting the organisation of the summit, Việt Nam has conducted all preparatory works for the summit in an active and serious manner.

The then prime minister, Võ Văn Kiệt, issued a decision in March last year to establish the National Committee for the Organisation of the 7th Francophone Summit, appointing former deputy prime minister, Nguyễn Khánh, as its chairman.

The other members of the committee included leading representatives of appropriate ministries and branches and from the Hà Nội People's Committee.

French language training for the summit has been deployed at various levels, with some 2,000 people trained in total.

In regard to material and logistical preparations, Việt Nam has completed construction of an international convention hall (using French financing); a press centre; and, the repair and upgrading of the Friendship Cultural Palace, the Municipal Theatre and the VIP lounge at Nội Bài International Airport.

As for the content of the Summit, Việt Nam has been co-ordinating with the Standing Council of the Community and the concerned countries to prepare

documents and agendas for the summit.

Việt Nam has taken the initiative to hold this summit with economic co-operation as its key focus.

The March 1997 meeting of the Standing Council of the Community unanimously approved Việt Nam's proposed theme for the summit: "Strengthening Co-operation and Solidarity in the Francophone Community in the Interests of Peace, and Social and Economic Development."

They also agreed to the secondary theme of: "Developing Human Resources: the Driving Force and Focus of Development."

## Francophonie's relationship with Việt Nam

Since the 1970s, Việt Nam has joined various organisations under Francophonie.

ACCT (Agency for Co-operation in Culture and Technology) and AUP-WPFL are the two most important organisations in terms of the implementation of co-operation programmes within the Community, and have established regional representative offices in Việt Nam.

All the Community's organisations, particularly these two organisations, have given great assistance to Việt Nam through many co-operation projects in the fields of the environment, agriculture, education and training, research, health care and cultural areas.

## ACCT-VIỆT NAM

Since Việt Nam joined ACCT, the country has received many valuable materials and intellectual resources. Even during the difficult years of the 80s, the organisation maintained active co-operation in training, and scientific and technical exchanges.

From 1980 to 1985, ACCT helped hundreds of cadres from different branches to attend seminars, forums, practical courses and experience exchanges to France, Canada and some African countries. At the same time, the organisation also provided a range of office and technical equipment worth tens of millions of French franc to many research institutions and archive agencies.

After a visit by the ACCT General Secretary to Việt Nam in March 1991, relations between Việt Nam and ACCT have seen many new developments.

Asia-Pacific ACCT decided to open an office in Hà Nội in March 1994, preceded by the Asia-Pacific French Language Teaching Centre established in HCM City in 1993.

The Centre is a large project of regional character and holds four seminars and French teaching training

in Hà Nội and started up the operation of its City-based management board. Through this the organisation has extended its relations with Việt Nam, by signing agreements on the teaching of French in secondary schools throughout Việt Nam and support to French teaching programmes and scientific researchers in various universities, centres and institutes in Việt Nam.

AUP-WPFL has also implemented the following co-operation programmes:

- French language establishments universities: This programme is aimed at training a young generation who use French language in their research work focuses mainly on the pilot areas: technology, economics, trade, health and elementary science and law.

- In 1996, there were 24 educational establishments at the university level across the whole country (with 3,397 students about two hundred lecturers and teachers) were partners in the project.

- The Vietnamese-French Bilingual Programme: This programme started in 1994 with the aim of training a young generation who can master the French language or maybe learn to continue their studies in French language teaching colleges.

- This programme has set up a system of classes from the first year of elementary education to the final year of secondary education. In the 1996-1997 school year, 3 Vietnamese-French bilingual classes were set up with over 11,000 students and 300 teachers involved.

- The daily French programme: This programme aims to make French a language of advertisements and bill boards in urban tourist areas in Việt Nam like museums, hotels, restaurants etc.

- The French in enterprises programme: co-operation with Alcatel, BGI, La Vie, Proconco, Shneider, and Sài Gòn Tourist, this programme aims to train people to speak French people in these enterprises so that they can use the language in their daily work.

- French language in the press programme: This programme helps the Việt Nam Communist newspaper publish daily in French through financial and technical aid.

- French publications and research information: Provides information and documents to students, teachers and researchers of Việt Nam.

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