

# CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FOR UNDV 2019

by

Supreme Patriarch of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha  
His Holiness Thich Pho Tue

Vesak is the most sacred event to mark the Buddha's three most important life stages. It was on this day that the Buddha was born, Buddha attained enlightenment, and Buddha entered Nirvana. It is one of the rarest events in the history of humanity, which was well explained in the Nikaya Scriptures: "A unique being, an extraordinary person arises in the world for benefit and happiness of the people, for compassion, for welfare, for the benefit and happiness of gods and humans. It is Tathāgata, the fully awakened Buddha". Buddha is a great enlightened teacher. The Buddha spread a message of peace, happiness and compassion for humanity and introduced the path which each person must take leaving behind greed, hatred and delusion, for attaining enlightenment through the training in ethical discipline, meditative concentration and wisdom. This path will lead to welfare and liberation for all.

This year, joining the joyful atmosphere with the Buddhist community worldwide on grand Vesak Day, it is a great honour for the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha to host the 16th United Nations Day of Vesak. On behalf of the Supreme Patriarch Council and Executive Council of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, as well as all Vietnamese Buddhist monastic members and devotees, I warmly welcome United Nations dignitaries, Heads of State, Ambassadors, Sangharajas, Presidents of Buddhist Sanghas, leaders of Buddhist organizations, Buddhist scholars and practitioners from all 115 countries and territories who are here in Vietnam to celebrate the UN Day of Vesak. This is the third time that Vietnam has been given the chance by the UNDV to host his sacred event.

It is a precious opportunity to strengthen our faith in Buddha's teaching of liberation, in order to promote the value of the legacy that the Blessed One left to humanity in the priceless doctrinal system such as wisdom, compassion, the doctrine of selflessness, nonviolence, peace and sustainable development.

It is an honor to welcome leaders from the homeland of Buddha, Buddhist countries, leaders of Party, State and Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee to attend the 16th United Nations Day of Vesak celebration in Vietnam, and together discuss the successful implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for a world of peace, stability and prosperity.

The history of 2000 years of Vietnamese Buddhism has proven to be engaged Buddhism. Since the age of independence of Vietnam from the beginning of the 10th century, under the Dinh, Tien Le, Ly, Tran dynasties, Buddhism had become the dominant ideological foundation in political, economic and societal affairs and played a key role in shaping the spiritual and cultural identity of the Vietnamese people. The Thi'en (zen) masters and senior monks, who were also outstanding leaders, great diplomats of history and rendered great merit to the national construction and defense. The golden age of Buddhism was also the prosperous period of our nation.

The National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha inherits and promotes the historical values of Vietnamese Buddhism and these values always accompany the nation. Looking back at the international integration process of Vietnam, we would have been pleased to know that Vietnam has made a positive, proactive and responsible contribution to the international community, which can be recognized and appreciated by the United Nations. The fact that the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is hosting the United Nations Day of Vesak celebration this year has affirmed that. At the same time, the role and position of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is affirmed in international integration.

The main theme of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 is "Buddhist approach to global leadership and shared responsibilities for sustainable societies", while other subthemes cover: (i) Mindful leadership for sustainable peace, (ii) Buddhist approach

to harmonious families, healthcare and sustainable societies; (iii) Buddhist approach to global education in ethics; (iv) Buddhism and the Fourth industrial revolution; and (v) Buddhist approach to responsible consumption and sustainable development. Thereby, a worldwide Buddhist community offers the most basic and practical solutions which are derived from the human mind, to participate successfully in the implementation of the global Sustainable Development Agenda that the United Nations is working towards.

I believe that, the 16<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day of Vesak celebration, held in Tam Chuc Buddhist Convention Centre, Ha Nam province, Vietnam will be a grand success. I wish that all distinguished guests, Buddhist dignitaries, intellectuals, Buddhist compatriots enjoy a peaceful Vesak season in the Dharma, with unlimited peace and happiness! prosperity!

Supreme Patriarch of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha  
**His Holiness THICH PHO TUE**

