

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FOR UNDV 2019

by

President of the National Viet Nam Buddhist Sangha's Executive Council
Most Ven. Thich Thien Nhon

Paying Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha

Your Holiness, Most Venerables, Venerables, Members of the Sanghas

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the course of history more than 26 centuries ago, at Lumbini garden, in ancient India (now in Nepal) an event of extreme importance in the history of humanity was the birth of the World-Honored One who delivers the message of wisdom, understanding and compassion towards building an equal society, without class, a peaceful society, without war conflict and hostility. He has introduced the Middle Way and the combination of compassion and wisdom is an effective solution to solve conflicts between peoples and peoples, between countries and countries in the world.

Today, that truth of the Enlightened Master - Shakyamuni Buddha continues to be the lodestar that has brought meaning to the lives of millions of millions of people around the world. The United Nations has decided to celebrate the sacred Vesak every year in order to promote the spirit of compassion, wisdom and peace that the Buddha has transmitted to us.

In the context of a world facing conflicts, terrorism, war, inequality, ecological environment crisis and climate change, together with the accelerated development of science and technology and impact of industrial revolution 4.0, every aspect of life and traditional structures is changing. In this situation, more than ever, we must work together

to promote the core values of Buddhism with the spirit of tolerance, selflessness, forgiveness, harmony and peace through the Eightfold Noble Path to contribute to solving global problems and challenges.

The truth is that with all things becoming connected, everything can be erased geographically, communities and nations become increasingly interdependent, the world gradually begins to look like a global society. Therefore, to solve the problems posed, it is necessary to have a global leadership. This leadership must ensure equality, reconciliation of interests and dissolution of conflicts between beliefs, economies, cultures, social classes, or territorial states as well as balance the environment and ecosystem.

The main theme of the United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) 2019 is “The Buddhist approach to global leadership and shared responsibilities for sustainable societies” shows the great stature and sense of global responsibility of Buddhism. This is responding to the current volatile situation on many aspects of life in the world and the belief that Buddhism can play a major role in being able to contribute to solving these problems.

In the global sustainable development program of the United Nations to 2030, the aims are to eliminate poverty, ensure a healthy life and improve welfare, guarantee quality education, gender equality and promote growth, sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, response to climate change, securing resources and biodiversity, promoting peaceful societies, revitalizing partnerships for global sustainable development.

The international academic conference celebrating the United Nations Vesak 2019 aims to foster co-operation among global communities and world Buddhist organizations in order to develop Buddhist solutions to the global crisis, leading to the goals that the United Nations pursues. Other perspectives of conference include:

- (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,

(v) Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development.

Celebrating the Day of Vesak is an opportunity for all of us to ponder and celebrate the humanistic values of Buddhism, through the life of the Buddha that teaches us the true happiness of every human being, not only to find in material things, but instead, to find peace in the mind. On the national level, instead of pursuing unlimited growth, there is a growth in spiritual wealth, peace, happiness, respect and environmental protection. Examining our core ideas and teachings such as the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the doctrine of Karma and the Law of cause and effect, Buddhism has many advantages in participating with global leadership and having shared responsibilities for sustainable societies.

The message from the UNDV 2019 in Viet Nam calls for world Buddhist leaders to unite and engage in action and share effective solutions for social challenges in our present age. The UN Day of Vesak 2019 will bring goodness, collective wisdom and a unified voice of world Buddhism, creating inspiration towards the social incarnation, serving human life, liberating suffering, bringing happiness, prosperity and sustainable development for humankind on this planet.

On behalf of the Central Viet Nam Buddhist Sangha, I am sincerely grateful to the World Buddhist Leaders including Sangharaja, Supreme Patriarch, Leaders of Buddhist Sanghas, all Buddhist traditions and organizations from over 115 countries and territories who have gathered here at the UNDV 2019 at Tam Chúc Temple, Hà Nam, Viet Nam.

I am also grateful to the Heads of States, the United Nations and international organizations, diplomatic missions, Leaders of the Party and the Government, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front who attended and had messages celebrating Vesak. By attending you have shared happiness with the monks, nuns, Buddhists of the Viet Nam Buddhist Sangha in the Buddhist year 2563 which is extremely special, dignified and solemn, contributing to honoring the value of Vietnamese

Buddhist tradition, which will always accompany with the Vietnamese people for many millennia and continue to contribute to building a beautiful country of Viet Nam with peace, sustainable development and international integration.

In the infinite inspiration, as if receiving the aura emanating from the Buddha's golden body, the Compassionate Father, I sincerely wish the Respected Venerables, monks, nuns and all Buddhists a peaceful and happy Buddha's Birthday, countless goodness, the fulfillment of the Buddha's good works benefitting life, in the spirit of propagating the Dharma, serving sentient beings is a practical offering to the Buddhas on the occasion of the UNDV 2019.

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