

On 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2014, the Center for Women and Development (CWD) of the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) was officially granted the special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Two other Vietnamese organizations granted this status previously are the Vietnam Family Planning Association (2007) and the Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation (2009).

ECOSOC is the principal organ to coordinate economic, social and related work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, functional commissions and 5 regional commissions. It serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the UN system.

ECOSOC remains the only main UN body with a formal framework for NGO participation. The number of NGOs granted consultative status by ECOSOC had increased rapidly from 41 in 1946 to 4,000 in 2014.

As a unit under the VWU - an organization representing legal and legitimate rights and interests of women, the CWD is mandated to work for the development and advancement of Vietnamese women, especially disadvantaged groups, through its social-economic and development activities and services.

The fact that the CWD was granted consultative status by ECOSOC shows international integration efforts of the Center and the VWU. This opens up opportunities for the CWD and the VWU to attend international events, to give specialized inputs and supervise the implementation of relevant international commitments that Vietnam is attested to, to network and lobby, to express views at different international forums, thus contributing to ensuring the better enjoyment of rights by Vietnamese people, particularly women and children.

The year 2015 will be marked with many significant events at national and international levels to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN foundation, the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VWU foundation, to review 15-year implementation of the Millenium Development Goals and 20-year implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This is an opportunity for the VWU to review and draw experiences from the international integration process and make greater contributions to the goals of Equality, Development and Peace of the international women's movement and the common goals of the United Nations. /.

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