



## OPENING SPEECH<sup>1</sup>

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*President of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam*

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam and the Vietnamese Lawyers' Association, co - organizers of this workshop, I would like to express our welcome and sincere thank to all of you who are here for the international workshop on “The South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development”, the first of its kind, held in Ha Noi, Vietnam.

Distinguished Guests,

From time immemorial, the South China Sea has taken on special economic and strategic importance as the area is the site of many very important sea lanes and endowed with diversified and rich maritime resources. Nowadays with integration and globalization, its importance has gone beyond the region and has drawn the attention of many nations amidst the tendency toward peace, cooperation and development existing as the mainstream of international relations. Realizing the tendency and being aware of the complexity of the situation in the South China Sea, the parties concerned have, in the main, striven for peace, stability and cooperation in the region. As a result, the last decade and more witnessed certain progress in their cooperative efforts to reduce tension and look for a peaceful solution to the disputes in the South China Sea. In this connection, mention can be made of the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea, the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, the first step toward a code of conduct in the South China Sea, and the 2005 Agreement for Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking in Certain Areas in the South China Sea between China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated version



It is noteworthy, however, that sovereignty and territorial disputes in the South China Sea have not been reduced. Quite the contrary, recent developments, especially assertion of sovereignty together with unilateral actions to gain effective control and disputes over energy and other natural resources have further complicated the situation.

Against such a background, the parties concerned should act together and find effective measures to mitigate adverse impacts of the situation in order to maintain a stable and peaceful environment, ensure the freedom of navigation, protect the environment and natural resources as well as to organize search and rescue for fishermen in the South China Sea. In other words, it has become more imperative than ever before to strengthen cooperation, to look for ways to resolve the disputes and deal with challenges in order to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea.

Distinguished Guests,

Greater cooperation for security, stability and development in the South China Sea needs the devotion, intellectualism and responsibility of scholars inside and outside the region. The presence at this workshop of many leading researchers on the South China Sea, and many well-known and objective scholars has testified to our concern over the future of the South China Sea. I believe that at this workshop we are all ready to share information about our in-depth studies on the South China Sea, contributing not only to improving understanding of the problem among scholars but also to raising the awareness of policymakers and the public about problems in the area, hence intensifying efforts by regional countries for peace and stability in the South China Sea in the interests of the parties concerned and those of peace, security and development in the whole region.

With those in mind, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam in cooperation with the Vietnamese Lawyers' Association has organized this first-ever workshop under the theme "The South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development". This is a purely scientific forum with the following set objectives

To develop a network of researchers on the South China Sea to share views, approaches, results of their studies from different perspectives of legal and political sciences and international relations etc;

To share our assessments and analysis of the implications of recent developments in the South China Sea on regional peace and security,

At a higher level, to make recommendations and put forward proposals for cooperation mechanism in functional areas and possible solution to the disputes,



Distinguished Guests,

The situation in the South China Sea will unfold with complexity and looms large as a threat to peace and stability in the area. Furthermore, we all accept the fact that final solution to the regional disputes cannot be worked out overnight. Therefore, all initiatives or actions for peace and stability in the South China Sea deserve our welcome and respect. I believe that policy makers and public opinion are looking forward, with great anticipation, to scientific, objective and realistic ideas put forth at this workshop. I also hope that these ideas will provide food for thought to governments of countries concerned in the search for possible solution to existing problems.

The workshop will center around three main areas:

- The importance of the South China Sea to regional peace and security, the South China Sea in the strategies of countries concerned;
- The origin and developments of the ongoing disputes from the perspectives of law, politics and international relations; implications of recent developments in the South China Sea on regional peace and security;
- The efficiency of existing regional mechanism to reduce tension and promote cooperation, the sharing of information on effective cooperation mechanism and practical measures to build confidence and mechanism to settle disputes among parties concerned.

The discussion should be straightforward, objective, constructive and forward-looking.

On that note, I wish to declare open the workshop “The South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development”.

I would like to wish you the best of health and may our workshop produce the results desired.

Thank you for your attention.

