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Foreign reporters in Viet Nam are “reporters and editors working for foreign newspapers.”(1) Up to now, the number of foreign reporters working in Viet Nam is quite large, mainly from major news agencies and newspapers in the world. Foreign reporters in Viet Nam have advantages in expertise, modern technical means, and fast reporting speed. They understand the needs and know how to convey information as required the international public. In addition, because the common language is English, the news broadcasted by foreign reporters in Viet Nam can quickly spread around the world.

To create a legal corridor for foreign reporters' activities in Viet Nam, on October 23, 2012, the Government issued Decree 88/2012/ND-CP, Regulation on activities of information and press of foreign press, foreign representative agency and organizations in Viet Nam. On March 19, 2014, the Ministry of Information and Communications issued Circular 04/2014/TT-BTTTT, on guidelines for Decree No. 88/2012/ ND-CP dated October 23, 2012 on press activities of foreign press agencies, foreign representative agencies, and foreign organizations in Viet Nam. Up to now, foreign reporters in Viet Nam have been given very favorable conditions to report on Viet Nam, especially on major events that attract international attention.

## **1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum 2017**

Foreign correspondence at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Meetings 2017 (APEC 2017), especially during the November 2017 Summit in Da Nang was successful in all aspects. Under close direction of the Chairman of the APEC 2017 National Committee on consistency of press information in general, foreign correspondence in particular, information about the APEC Summit, ministerial

meetings, senior official meetings and information on the implementation of supporting activities as well as sideline activities during the APEC 2017 had been strict, synchronous, and unified, providing a comprehensive look at the event.

To prepare for reporting activities of international press agencies and news agencies, in 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated with the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Information and Communications and relevant agencies to work on the licenses, immigration procedures, card registrations, management as well as operation guidance for more than 4,000 reporters, including 2,000 foreign correspondents for the Summit Week in Da Nang. The Subcommittee for Communication and Culture made thousands of direct contacts with relevant agencies and reporters to complete the above procedures. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up more than 100 scenarios and detailed programs for reporters; developed and issued "Press Handbook"; participated in the planning of accommodations and bus/shuttle travel for reporters at all APEC 2017 events.

The modern infrastructure system, technical equipment of the Press Centre provided favorable conditions for reporters and press agencies. During the Summit Week, the Press Center was set up on a large scale (over 13,000m<sup>2</sup>) with modern facilities (high-speed Internet, international satellite broadcasting center, studio, free video signal of the host country...). The General Control Room of the Press Center provided a fast and smooth transmission of the host signal (HB) to 67 press rooms of various countries, the international APEC Secretariat and international media agencies; provided live feed from event locations for reporters to follow and exploit; ethernet Internet was installed to avoid interruption of Wi-Fi Internet connection. The center coordinated with Viettel and VNPT to ensure 500 wired network nodes in the reporters' common working area. Activities at different locations were directly reported by VTV to the Press Center for reporters (about 40 activities were broadcast live). Good logistics, security, healthcare and information services were also provided to reporters during APEC Economic Leaders' Week.

During the APEC Year 2017, the number of international and Vietnamese reporters registered and participated in reporting reached a record number compared to other major external events we had hosted such as APEC 2006 and ASEAN 2010. At the APEC Economic Leaders' Week, almost major media outlets such as Reuters, AP, AFP, CNN, CBS, CGTN, Itar Tass, Kyodo, Xinhua News Agency, and France 24, etc. were present. In particular, during the Week, 10 reporters from 7 stations and newspapers of the Vietnamese community in the United States returned home to report, including those who were previously prejudiced against Viet Nam as Little Saigon Television, Nguoi Viet newspaper. These reporters objectively reported on the APEC Economic Leaders' Week activities, highly appreciating the change of the country and Viet Nam's position on international stage through the organization of APEC summit. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with relevant units also licensed and well managed a number of reporters from major news agencies and Vietnamese stations with a history of writing negative articles about Viet Nam.

With the efforts in foreign correspondence at APEC 2017, culminated with the APEC Summit Week in Da Nang, the diversified communication work met all the desired goals. The reception, management and guidance of more than 4,000 reporters made a good impression, with no unfortunate mistakes. Viet Nam seized a great opportunity to promote a dynamic and potential developing country of unique cultural identity, friendliness and hospitality. Communication activities at APEC 2017 were carried out very well, creating a "positive image effect". Vietnam's successful hosting of the 2017 APEC Year honored the image, position and prestige of Vietnam. Thanks to effective information and communication work, this result was spread widely among international public and Vietnamese people. Particularly, during the APEC Economic Leaders' Week, the name Viet Nam appeared intensively in the international media and more importantly, was associated with positive reviews, comments and news. There was almost no negative news about Vietnam on this occasion.

## **2. World Economic Forum on ASEAN 2018**

The successful organization of the World Economic Forum on ASEAN 2018 (WEF ASEAN 2018) in Ha Noi (from September 11-13, 2018) was partly attributed to the communication work. WEF 2018 in Viet Nam was the WEF ASEAN conference that

received the most attention compared with the previous ones. Correspondence was implemented effectively, meeting the needs of reporters. The Subcommittee on Communication and Culture cooperated with the WEF, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Information and Communications and relevant agencies to grant permits and carry out immigration procedures, registration cards, to manage and guide activities for more than 400 domestic and international reporters.

The Subcommittee for Communication and Culture closely coordinated with the Subcommittee for Security and Health in reviewing reporters registered to report so there were no incidents or complicated problems in the process of reporters' management. Relevant agencies such as the Central Committee for Communication and Education, the Ministry of Information and Communications, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closely coordinated and directed the preparation of information, personnel review, and prevention of incidents or complex problems. At the same time, the Sub-Committee presided over the development and implementation of detailed scripts and activities of reporters; developed and issued "Press Handbook" to serve reporters at all conference venues.

The WEF 2018 in Viet Nam was the WEF ASEAN that attracted the greatest media attention ever with more than 13,500 related news articles, an increase of 480% compared to 2017, more than 8 million readers, 19.5 million views and shares on Facebook and Twitter, an increase of 260% compared to 2017. Notably, news articles about Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc were mentioned the most with 4,121 times, then the President of Indonesia with 1,903 times(2). Positive information about Viet Nam such as economic development achievements, excellent ability to organize large multilateral conferences were spread in the region and around the world. WEF comments, advertising value from news was estimated at about 22 million USD. In addition, the fact that Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc gave two exclusive interviews to Bloomberg (USA) and Strait Times (Singapore), two leading press agencies of the world and the region, conveyed the message about the solid position of the Vietnamese economy, our ability and willingness to accept the opportunities and challenges that the 4th industrial revolution brings; that was of great significance in reinforcing the world businesses' confidence in Viet Nam's economy.

The foreign correspondence in collaboration with the media at WEF 2018 met all the goals. The reception, management and guidance of more than 400 reporters made a good impression, with no errors or unfortunate incidents, and took advantage of the opportunity to promote to the world a dynamic and potential Viet Nam with a unique cultural identity, friendliness and hospitality. Communication activities at APEC 2017 were carried out very well, creating a “positive image” of the host country, thereby honoring the image, position and prestige of Viet Nam.

### **3. US-North Korea Summit in Hanoi**

The 2nd US-North Korea Summit in Hanoi from February 27 to 28, 2019 was an important and unprecedented international event held in Viet Nam, attracting special attention of the press, regional and international public. For Viet Nam, as the host country, this was the event of the shortest preparation time, the highest security information, of many complex requests arising at the last minute, and of the highest number of reporters. The number of foreign reporters in Viet Nam was on record (along with nearly 600 Vietnamese reporters, there were 2,600 foreign reporters from 218 press agencies from 37 countries and territories, including 13 reporters from 8 press agencies of the Vietnamese community in the United States attended and broadcast the news).

Communication work was focused, with the policy of high-level communication, harmony, objectivity, demonstrating Viet Nam’s comprehensive foreign policy for peace, cooperation and development and at the same time, on this occasion, promoting our country, people and achievements in all aspects. It was estimated that within 30 days (from February 6, 2019 when the US President announced that Viet Nam was the venue for the second summit), there were more than 46,000 news articles with the keyword “Hanoi/Summit/Trump/Kim/Viet Nam” on various websites (excluding print and television newspapers and radio).(3) The media value was huge compared with a 30-second-advertising video on CNN in a week of US\$100,000.(4) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated with relevant ministries, sectors, localities and businesses to implement the tasks and directions of the Politburo and the Prime Minister, successfully organized communication activities and foreign correspondence which were highly appreciated internally and externally.(5)

Singapore wished Viet Nam to share its experience in organizing and supporting foreign press activities.(6)

At the 2nd US-North Korea Summit, foreign reporters were greatly supported, from event registration, immigration, card issuance, temporary import and re- export of equipment, etc. to working conditions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urgently built a website in just one week for foreign press agencies to register to attend and provided necessary information for reporters such as basic information about Viet Nam, relevant regulations, operation instructions; created a free video/photo archive about Viet Nam for reporters to use. Within 3 days, the Guard Command coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Communications to complete the issuance of all cards for foreign reporters (2,650 cards). Procedures for temporary import and re-export of equipment and licenses to use frequency and satellite equipment were implemented for dozens of international news agencies.

The International Press Center at the 2nd US-North Korea Summit with the largest scale and the most modern facilities ever was set up and operated smoothly. It was actively and urgently set up within a short period of time since the premises were allowed to be used. This was the International Press Center with the largest scale ever (more than 30,000 m<sup>2</sup>), operating 24/24 (for the first time) officially for 4 days from February 26 to March 1, 2019. The organizations involved in the establishment and operation of the International Press Center closely coordinated with each other and tried their best to ensure on time establishment and smooth operation. The most modern telecommunications infrastructure was fully provided with the satellite TV system, 8 international transmission lines with speed of 10 Gigabytes/s, wired Internet system with speed of 10Mbps and Free WIFI and power supply of 7200 Kva. All reporters, the USA and Korean embassies appreciated the world-class modern International Press Center, good working conditions in all aspects, dedicated support, and many free utilities and especially appetizing foods. Many international reporters who had worked at international events, including the 1st Summit, shared that the International Press Center in Hanoi was perfect in every detail, surpassing their expectations; they felt that it was a "home that is always there to welcome them" during their stays in Hanoi.

Foreign reporters were given the most favorable conditions when working at the 2nd US-North Korea Summit. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated with relevant agencies to create conditions for reporters to report on the US Presidential delegation arrival at Noi Bai airport, the North Korean delegation visit to Dong Dang. Adequate images and news on bilateral activities were well ensured. In parallel with strict control on security and safety for the delegations, the organizers still facilitated reporters' filming and photos taking on the roads that convoy passed, around the meeting locations and accommodation of the two delegations, creating a good impression on reporters. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security and the Hanoi People's Committee created conditions for foreign television agencies to set up outdoor live studios.

Unexpected situations in support of reporters working at the 2nd US-North Korea Summit were also well handled. In the early morning of February 26, 2019, the American Press Center was moved from Melia Hotel to the International Press Center at the request of North Korean delegation, at the same time ensuring working conditions for American reporters. In less than 2 hours, relevant units such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Office of the National Convention Center, Viettel, VNPT, and VTV urgently coordinated and completed the establishment of the White House press area with 350 working desks, high-speed Internet access, a television center with 6 host TV lines, satellite connections, 10 outdoor studios and a live TV location...

The close and drastic direction of the Party and State leaders was implemented seriously and expeditiously; the coordination between ministries, sectors at central and local levels and related units, the high sense of responsibility and great efforts from all levels of leadership to officials and employees, all created a synergy to ensure the 2nd US-North Korea Summit a great success.

Communication and media work in general and correspondence in particular at the 2nd US-North Korea Summit were implemented in accordance with the governments' policies, in diverse forms, to meet all the stated communication objectives. The reception, management and guidance of more than 3,200 domestic and international reporters made a good impression; the International Press Center operated without

errors or incidents. Viet Nam's excellent performance as the host at the second US-North Korea Summit showed that Viet Nam was capable of organizing international events, contributing to enhancing its international position and role in solving regional and international issues. At the same time, Viet Nam made use of this chance to promote Viet Nam image as a safe and friendly destination for tourism, and a potential partner for economic cooperation and investment and many comprehensive achievements in development. Before, during and after the Summit, news and photos related to the US-North Korea Summit, security work, reception, logistics and correspondence of the host country as well as the beautiful image of Hanoi, the hospitality of the local people... were well reflected in the international media.

In recent years, with the good implementation of the Party's guideline on foreign policy, the State's management and the active participation of the people, Viet Nam's image and national position have been increasingly enhanced in the international arena. Hosting external events is a way of converging various favorable conditions, seizing the opportunity to directly interact with people of global influence in the world, to receive international attention and proactive reports from international journalists and reporters... News articles written by foreign reporters about Viet Nam during international events are often topical and attractive. It is an important information channel introducing Viet Nam to the world. Foreign correspondence in external events held in Viet Nam plays a big role in informing the world about events that international public is interested in, thereby helping to quickly introduce Vietnam policies on internal and foreign affairs as well as the achievements of the Doi Moi process, culture, and customs of the Vietnamese people to the world. At the same time, good foreign correspondence at external events contributes to generating a positive feelings of the foreign press for Viet Nam.

On the other hand, information about Viet Nam through foreign news agencies and press is often considered objective, which is cited more by Western press and generates interest to international public opinion. Therefore, foreign reporters in Viet Nam is an important information channel that both quickly reflects the situation in Viet Nam and is highly persuasive to the foreign public. Organizing external events and attracting the attention of foreign reporters is a "golden opportunity" to build and

promote the national image. This is because, as mentioned by former Deputy Prime Minister Vu Khoan, "just one good article or report that honestly reflects our country, our people's life has manifold 'power' than the articles we write." (7)

### **Tài liệu tham khảo**

(1) Decree 88/2012/ND-CP, Regulation on activities of information and press of foreign press, foreign representative agency and organizations in Viet Nam

(2) WEF statistics as of September 26, 2018.

(3) According to independent assessment of Brand.24, Florida - the USA.

(4) As proposed by CNN.

(5) Both the United States and North Korea highly appreciated Viet Nam's support

for press work (the White House press, the US Embassy in Hanoi and the North Korean press delegation).

(6) The Singapore Embassy in Hanoi said that Singapore, as the host of the 1st Summit was complained while the foreign press's assessment of Viet Nam this time was completely positive.

(7) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, 70 years of accompanying foreign correspondents.

<http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/en/mofa/nr040807104143/nr40807105001/ns160408155642>.