

# Maritime Security and Vietnamese Perspective

-----  
*Paper Presentation in the SCA joint-project workshop on  
Ocean Security in Asia, Dawhoo – Hanoi, Vietnam, Mai 2005*

Dear...  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to be here today at the interesting workshop jointly organized and supported by the Science Council of the Asia (SCA), the Science Council of Japan and Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (MOSTE) to discuss the important subject on Maritime Security in East Asia Seas. For the reason of limited time and knowledge, our presentation will be restrained only on the Maritime security in the Bien Dong Sea and Vietnamese case.

## 1. Maritime security in the Bien Dong Sea

The concept of security was traditionally considered to be synonymous with “military security”. Due to the rapid changes that the world has experienced after the end of the Cold War, this concept has been explained largely. Buzan *et al* have suggested five general components of security: military, environmental, economic, societal and political security.<sup>1</sup> There are two mainstreams of scholars: one emphasizes at the national security, another on common security. However, because of the global integration process and peaceful movements, the national security can not be separated with the common security. In other words, the struggling for a common security will bring advantages for the national security.

At seas, the concept of maritime security has followed the same way. For long time the maritime security has been interpreted narrowly as the maritime security of a state: protection of territory from seaward aggression, or protection of national maritime interests. Recent years have seen an increasing focus on: proliferation of mass destruction weapons and ballistic missiles; the remaining legacy of the Cold War; rapid military power build-up; territorial and sovereign disputes; confrontation surrounding maritime rights and benefits; and illegal activities such as piracy and armed violence at sea<sup>2</sup>. Maritime security covers not only national but also bilateral, regional and international interests. In the undividable liquid volume, the maritime security has been ensured by both national and regional efforts. Legally speaking, there are already plenty of international instruments, conventions as well as bilateral and regional agreements to deal above-mentioned issues. Among those, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 (hereafter the 1982 Convention) plays a vital role in the establishment of a new legal order at sea. The scope of the Convention, often referred to as the “constitution of the sea”, covers all sea and ocean spaces with its resources, living and non-living; all users of ocean spaces and its resources; all legal activities including navigation and overflight, laying cable and pipeline; obligations for fighting against illegal activities such as terrorism, hijackings, the smuggling of arms, the illegal fishing and dumping, the illegal discharge of pollutants. The Convention provides also for a binding and comprehensive system for a settlement of disputes. It is undoubtable to say that in the world closer and closer independency the maritime security will be guaranteed by the full implementation of the 1982 Convention from each nation and the community in the whole.

---

<sup>1</sup> Buzan Barry, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO. Lynne Rienner, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Hideaki Kaneda, *Japanese Perspective on Regional Security*, SEAPOL- Inter-Regional Conference, Bangkok on March 21-23, 2001 on “Ocean Governance and sustainable development in the Pacific Region”, p. 429.

According to CSCAP Memorandum N<sup>o</sup> 5 of February 2001, illegal activities comprise: piracy; maritime terrorism; drug trafficking; human smuggling; maritime theft and fraud (including container crime); illegal fishing; and offences against the marine environment.

The Bien Dong Sea (the East Sea or the South China Sea)<sup>3</sup> encompasses a portion of the Pacific Ocean stretching roughly from Singapore and the Strait of Malacca in the Southwest, to the Strait of Taiwan (between Taiwan and China) in the Northeast. Like other seas, the Bien Dong Sea is a unique ecosystem and a repository for valuable natural resources such as oil and gas<sup>4</sup>. However, it's distinguished with others by other some interesting features. Firstly, it's largest with an area of 648,000 square nautical miles, which is more than twice the area of the Sea of Japan. Secondly, It's unique sea to link the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Over half of the world's merchant fleet (by tonnage) sails through the Bien Dong Sea every year, especially through Strait of Malacca, the second biggest strait in the world. This sea provides the most fuel transportation by sea from Middle East and Africa for Japan, China, South Korea and other power nations. Thirdly, it's surrounded by ten coastal states, some of the world's most rapidly industrializing countries and some having economic growth rates highest in the world. Their economic growth, in one hand, depends on exploitation of fish and oil resources, and in other hand, degrades the marine environment. Fourthly, the Bien Dong sea is alone in having two important archipelagoes, Paracels and Spratlys, spread over a large area. The disputes over the ownership of those islands and the right to control its surrounding waters are most complicate dealing with most claimant parties in the world. In exception of those disputes, the region is known as an area having great number of maritime delimitation. Finally, piracy and armed robbery are rising in the region with about half of the world's reported cases of piracy have occurred in this area<sup>5</sup>. The Bien Dong sea constitutes an arena for competing security interests. Over the years it has become increasingly clear that the Bien Dong issues need to be treated in a comprehensive manner by all the states bordering it. In addition, the transboundary issues such as marine pollution, management of straddling stocks need to be solved by the coastal states cooperation.

From the regional point of view, the regional States of the Bien Dong Sea lunched a series of multilateral initiatives in order to booster their national security and stability. From the view that all issues rising from the Bien Dong sea are subjects of the 1982 Convention and, in consequence, the strict implementation of the 1982 Convention by surrounding states is good way to settle those issues in giving a common maritime security for the whole region and each nation, this article goes to review the implementation of the 1982 Convention in Vietnam.

## **2. Vietnam and the Law of the Sea**

Bordering the Bien Dong Sea, Vietnam's coastline extends for some 3,260 kilometres in length and occupies a large area of sea waters. The costal zone of Vietnam cut across several ecological and geographical units. These ecosystems provide the Vietnamese population with food and income. Since the ancient time Vietnamese people and governments have perceived the crucial important role of the Bien Dong Sea to its economic developments as well as military defense purposes.

Being a coastal state signing the 1982 Convention very early, Vietnam always supports, and takes the lead in the region in, the application of the 1982 Convention to settling related marine issues. The process of formulation and implementation of the marine legislation in Vietnam has always accorded with the spirit of the 1982 Convention in order to more efficiently exploit the strengths of the sea for national development and defense. The 1982 Convention has brought about both opportunities and challenges to the country.

### **2.1. Law of the Sea in Vietnam in the Post-1982 Convention**

---

<sup>3</sup> The South China Sea is known in Vietnamese as East Sea or Bien Dong sea. However, for the purpose of this workshop, the Bien Dong Sea will be used through out.

<sup>4</sup> The South China Sea may be an important source of oil and natural gas. According to a 1995 study by Russia's Research Institute of Geology of Foreign Countries, the equivalent of 6 billion barrels of oil might be located in the Spratly Islands area, of which 70 percent would be natural gas. On the other hand, Chinese media outlets have referred to the South China Sea as 'the second Persian Gulf,' and some Chinese specialists have asserted that the South China Sea could contain as much as 150 billion barrels of oil and natural gas.

<sup>5</sup> MARAD, 1996.

Due to its historical conditions, before 1977, Vietnam had not fully participated in the process of formulating international law on the sea. However, this did not prevent Vietnam from quickly catching up with this process, assimilating and creatively adopting the contents of the third Conference on the Law of the Sea and the 1982 Convention to the expansion and protection of its marine interests.

With the historic May 12, 1977 Declaration, Vietnam took the lead in the region in establishing a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles. The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam clearly stated the principles for delimiting its territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of Vietnam in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 Convention. Together with the 1977 Declaration, the Vietnamese Government's November 12, 1982 Declaration on the baseline used for measurement of the breadth of Vietnam's territorial sea created a basic legal foundation for the building of Vietnam's system of marine legislation. The 1982 Declaration on the baseline, though having a number of points in need of revision to comply with the Convention, has played an important role in expanding Vietnam's sovereignty and jurisdiction over its seas, breaking the blockade by some external forces, contributing to firmly maintaining the country's independence and autonomy.

Since 1989 after it initiated the open-door policy, Vietnam has endeavored to build up a comprehensive system of marine legislation in line with the spirit of the 1982 Convention, such as the 1989 Ordinance on Protection and Development of Aquatic Resources, the 1990 Maritime Code, the 1993 Petroleum Law... These instruments have contributed to creating a stable legal order, regulating Vietnam's marine activities. In this period, the contents of the 1982 Convention were also used as a reference for Vietnam to make its decisions on the accession to a series of international marine agreements.

On June 23, 1994, at its 5th session, the IX<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Vietnam passed the Resolution on the Ratification of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Resolution reflected the determination of Vietnam, together with the international community, to build a just and equitable legal order for the seas, encouraging marine development and cooperation.

The ratification of the 1982 Convention has created a condition for officializing the international legal grounds for the delineation of the seas and continental shelf of Vietnam. Following the historic May 12, 1977 Declaration on Vietnam's seas, the system of marine legislation concerning Vietnam's rights and interests as well as activities and struggles of the Vietnamese State in every sea-related aspect all took the 1982 Convention as the basis. However, these were just unilateral statements and domestic legal instruments. With its accession to the 1982 Convention, Vietnam has full right to a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles, an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles, a continental shelf of at least 200 nautical miles, which is expandable to 350 nautical miles measured from the baseline or to 100 nautical miles measured from the isobar of 2,500 meters in depth, as recognized worldwide. This is a fundamental change in the country's geographical territory, being of an important significance to national sovereignty and marine economy development, and conforming to Vietnam's marine policies and strategies. Under the 1982 Convention, the area of the natural resources-abundant seas and continental shelf which Vietnam is entitled to is approximately three times larger than its mainland area. The Convention has served as a firm international legal basis for the struggle to protect Vietnam's seas and continental shelf as well as legitimate rights and interests on the sea, and to protect our sovereignty over Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes. It has also served as a common legal basis for the settlement of disputes over the maritime delimitation between Vietnam and its neighborly countries, contributing to creating an environment for stability, peace, cooperation and development in the Bien Dong Sea.

## **2.2. Implementation of the 1982 Convention**

### *2.2.1. Settlement of Marine Issues*

The 1982 Convention has allowed coastal states to expand their seas. At the same time, it has turned many countries sharing no common borderlines into marine neighbors sharing the maritime boundaries which need to be delimited. In this context, Vietnam has marine boundaries to be delimited with many regional countries, such as China (in the Tonkin Gulf), Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia (in the Gulf of Thailand) and Indonesia, has sovereignty disputes over Hoang Sa archipelago (with China), over Truong Sa archipelago (with China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei), and was concerned with maritime delimitation in the Bien Dong Sea, a sea which is covered mostly by the seas and continental shelves under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the related coastal states.

In Southeast Asia has signed the Agreement on Maritime Delimitation with Thailand on August 9, 1997, the Agreement on the Delimitation of Bac Bo (Tonkin) Gulf and the Agreement on Fishery Cooperation in Bac Bo Gulf with China on December 25, 2000, and the Agreement on the delineation of the continental shelves with Indonesia on June 26, 2003. The practice of maritime delimitation by Vietnam has contributed to diversifying international law on maritime delimitation i.e. application of median line and effect of island in maritime delimitation.

Vietnam has, however, not stuck to a rigid view. In negotiations to reach a final delineation solution, if deeming it necessary and on the basis of agreement, Vietnam and its counterpart countries may select the application of provisional arrangements in the spirit of Articles 74 and 83 of the 1982 Convention. Vietnam has had historical waters under joint management with Cambodia since 1982, has reached in 1992 an agreement with Malaysia on the joint petroleum exploitations in the overlapping area; has accelerated negotiations on the cooperation on joint petroleum exploitations in the overlapping areas of Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia (negotiations started in 1998). The form of joint exploitation has been also applied to delineated sea areas such as the Common Fishery Zone, the Transitory Fishery Zone with China in Bac Bo Gulf (effective from June 30, 2004). With its practice and experiences, Vietnam is a country which has the most joint exploitation agreements in the world (4 out of 20 agreements).

Regarding disputes in the Bien Dong Sea, Vietnam has taken initiative in seeking every opportunity for peaceful settlement in both bilateral and multilateral relations. A forum has been created for marine negotiations with China since 1993. In November 1995, Vietnam signed with the Philippines a document on 8-principle code of conduct in the Bien Dong Sea. Clause 7.16 of the Hanoi Declaration of the 6th ASEAN Summit (1998) proposed the ASEAN member countries to vigorously step up efforts in formulating a Code of Conduct in the Bien Dong Sea among the parties concerned. Vietnam and the Philippines have drafted the ASEAN Code of Conduct and have made great contributions to promoting ASEAN and China to iron out their differences to reach the first political document on the Code of Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the Bien Dong Sea on December 4, 2002. DOC is also the first legal document, opening the way for activities of marine cooperation among the related parties in less sensitive fields in order to build confidence and trust.

### *2.2.2. Enforcement of Law and Regulation at Sea*

#### *a) Unilateral Enforcement*

At present, Vietnam's sea has extended to the outer limit of its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf on the Bien Dong Sea, covering an area of about one million square kilometers. Activities of people and means on the sea have constantly increased and become more complicated. The rights and interests of the states on the sea are diversified and important, leading to fiercer and fiercer disputes over sovereignty and interests on the sea. This situation has posed an inevitable requirement to enhance the State management in order to protect Vietnam's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction as well as other legitimate rights and interests on the sea, to use and exploit the sea for economic development and national defense, to preserve peace and stability, promote international cooperation for the sake of peace and development.

The expansion of sea areas under national jurisdiction has given rise to new challenges to national security and defense, posing the demand to reorganize forces to meet the new marine management requirements. Apart from the Border Guard (organized under the March 28, 1997 Ordinance on the Border Guard), which is tasked to manage and protect sovereignty, security and order in the sea and on islands from the national marine border (the outer limit of the territorial sea) shoreward to the administrative boundaries of the border coastal regions, Vietnam is the first country in the region to create the Coast Guard. This force has the function of patrolling areas from the baseline outwards (the March 28, 1998 Ordinance on the Coast Guard and the Government's Decree No. 53/1998/ND-CP of July 21, 1998 on organization and operation of the Coast Guard). Vietnam has also actively cooperated with other countries in reducing violations at sea. Since 1997, the navies of Vietnam and Thailand have conducted eight joint patrols, established a hotline informing each other of violations for joint suppression. Vietnam has also similar plans of cooperation with China and the Philippines.

Marine search and rescue is an important requirement of the 1982 Convention for coastal states. Vietnam's National Committee for Search and Rescue was set up under the Prime Minister's Decision No. 780/TTg of October 23, 1996. It is responsible for directing and organizing the search and salvage of people and means (aircraft, vessels, petroleum facilities) in distress in the air, on the sea and adjacent areas between Vietnam and other countries.

#### b) Bilateral Enforcement

Vietnam has also intensified cooperation with other countries on combating criminal offenses on the sea, especially piracy. Particularly, the successful mechanism established between Vietnam and Thailand in ensuring order at sea in the Gulf of Thailand serves as a typical model which being extended to apply in other sea areas such as in the historic waters between Vietnam and Cambodia and in the Gulf of Tonkin between Vietnam and China.

Thai-Vietnamese Joint Committee on Fisheries and Order at sea has been established in March 1994. The Joint Committee has had 8 meetings since 1995. The competence of the Joint-Committee is in the following aspects: establishing joint patrols; establishing a contact channel for early warning of any potential violation of laws and regulations of either country; joint program of information dissemination to fishermen. The two sides reiterated the need for both sides to educate their fishermen in respect of fisheries laws and regulations of the other party; cooperation in the prevention of violation of fisheries laws and regulations; promotion of business cooperation in fisheries and related downstream industries between the two countries. This is considered to be a confidence building measure, which is eventually hoped to lead to the establishment of a desired order at sea; and conducting a joint assessment and management of marine resources in the Gulf of Thailand. In the same line, Vietnam and Cambodia signed an agreement to joint patrol in the "historic waters" of the two countries on 22 August 2002.

#### c) Multilateral Enforcement

This falls within the terms of maritime security cooperation referring to any cooperation between regional countries at sea with the objective of improving regional maritime security. This process is still underdeveloped in the Bien Dong Sea region. Although, regional common interest on maritime security is easily identified and existing multilateral framework such as ASEAN, APEC, ARF (and its CSCAP working group) are important forum for engagement of the regional countries on regional maritime security issues, there is no firm foundation for the establishment of legally-binding agreement.

### 2.2.3. *Improvement of Legal Documents.*

Vietnam has quickly built a legal environment and applied effective measures for exercising the rights and fulfilling the obligations of a coastal state, a port state and a flag state, in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 Convention. The strategy on development of Vietnam's maritime sector from now till 2010 and 2020 serves as a basis for Vietnam to attain these goals. According to the master plan on Vietnam's seaport system (issued together with the Prime Minister's Decision No. 202/1999/QD-TTg of October 12, 1999), by 2020 Vietnam will have 114 seaports, compared to 90 at present. Vietnam's fleet will have more big ships which have technical specifications complying with the provisions of the 1982 Convention and the IMO marine conventions. The 1990 Maritime Code will be revised to better Vietnam's maritime legislation. Other laws related to maritime activities have been step by step improved, such as the Civil Code, the Civil Procedure Code and ship arrest procedure legislation.

With the duties of a flag state, Vietnam has promulgated numerous regulations concerning ships flying its flag, such as the Regulation on registration of seagoing ships and crew, issued together with the Government's Decree No. 91/CP of August 23, 1997, Circular No. 259/1998/TT-BGTVT of August 18, 1998 of the Transport Ministry guiding the implementation of Decree No. 91/CP, the Government's Decree No. 23/2001/ND-CP revising a number of articles of Decree No. 91/CP; Regulations on systems for prevention of marine pollution by ships (TCVN 6276:1997) and Regulation on safety of seagoing ships (TCVN 6278:1997), issued together with Decision No. 902/QD-TDC of November 7, 1997 of the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry (now the Science and Technology Ministry)... Technical safety certificate for ships, crewman's certificate, pollution prevention and control certificate have been prescribed and granted in accordance with Vietnam's laws and international maritime conventions. Vietnam's fleets have fully satisfied not only the conditions for operation in Vietnam's sea but also the conditions for entry, exit and operation in seaports and sea areas of other countries as well as in the high seas.

Vietnam has participated in the International Convention of the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). It has established a system of 14 coastal communication stations serving the communication between ships and between ships and the coast. This system has been connected to the international maritime communication system, assisting vessels operating on the sea in receiving and sending information in all cases, especially information on salvage. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) has been implemented with the setting up of the Vietnam Maritime Rescue Coordinating Center (VMRCC). Ship control has been conducted at seaports according to the regional Memoranda of Understanding on Port State Control (MOU on PSC). Heavier penalties have been meted out for violations of maritime safety and marine pollution prevention. Apart from the 1993 Law on Environmental Protection and the 2002 Ordinance on Handling of Administrative Violations, Vietnam has promulgated Decree No. 92/1999/ND-CP of September 4, 1999 on sanctions against administrative violations in the maritime domain.

In addition, Vietnam has acceded the nine IMO conventions (not to mention the Convention on IMO), including:

- The 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the 1978 Supplementary Protocol (MARPOL 73/78);
- The International Convention on Tonnage of Ships (Tonnage 69);
- The Convention on International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (Colreg 72);
- The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS 74);
- The International Convention on Load Lines (Load Line 66);
- The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW 78/95);
- The International Convention on the International Maritime Satellite Organization and the Operating Agreement on the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT and OA);

- The International Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA 88) and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located in the Continental Shelf;
- The International Convention on the Limitation of Civil Liability of Ship Owners for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC 1992).

Vietnam has signed many joint agreements among the ASEAN member countries concerning ocean shipping and maritime services such as the 1975 Agreement on the Facilitation of Search of Ships in Distress and Rescue of Survivors of Ship Accidents, the 1998 ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit, the ASEAN Framework Agreement in the Facilitation of Inter-State Transport.

Vietnam has participated in 17 maritime commerce agreements with Thailand (1979), Hungary (1979), Cuba (1983), Indonesia (1991), the Philippines (1992), China (1992), Malaysia (1992), Singapore (1992), Ukraine (1992), the Russian Federation (1993), the Federal Republic of Germany (1993), Rumania (1994), the Republic of Korea (1995), Poland (1995), France (2000), the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (2002) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (2002).

In the fisheries sector, the Ordinance on Protection and Development of Aquatic Resources, adopted by the National Assembly Standing Committee on April 25, 1989, was the first document on marine management after Vietnam embarked on the renewal process. The Ordinance was then replaced by the Fisheries Law, which took effect from July 1, 2004. The Fisheries Law, as well as sub-law documents currently in effect, have demonstrated Vietnam's sovereignty and sovereign rights over, as well as its obligations, in the capacity as a coastal state, towards, the exploration, exploitation, conservation and management of marine living resources.

The petroleum exploration and exploitation have not only boosted Vietnam's economic growth but also affirmed its sovereignty and sovereign rights in the continental shelf in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 Convention. With the 1993 Petroleum Law, the 2000 Law Amending and Supplementing a Number of Articles of the Petroleum Law and Decree No. 84/CP of December 17, 1996 guiding the implementation of the Petroleum Law, Vietnam has implemented policies to attract investment, offering numerous preferences to foreign petroleum firms, especially for off-shore areas with difficult exploration and exploitation conditions. Vietnam's petroleum exploration and exploitation activities have been carried out on the basis of mutual benefit, respect for sovereignty and sovereign rights over natural resources in Vietnam's continental shelf.

Regarding marine environment, on December 27, 1993, the National Assembly passed the Law on Environmental Protection. Under this law and its guiding Decree No. 175/CP of October 18, 1994, environmental protection has been regarded as a common objective and responsibility of the entire people. These documents have created a favorable environment for extensive and intensive environmental protection, including protection of the marine environment. The system of environmental standards has been publicized, serving as a legal basis for determining the responsibilities and duties of all subjects involved in the environmental protection.

### **3. Conclusions**

Being a coastal state, with a long coastline and many islands, lying along the Bien Dong Sea, a sea of an important strategic geographic position, Vietnam boasts a considerable marine status. The provisions of the 1982 Convention have enabled the country to expand its seas and enjoy numerous advantages in protecting its national security and developing its marine economy. Vietnam's strategy on advancing seawards, incorporated in many resolutions of the Party and declarations of the Government, and its marine activities are absolutely right, in tune with the general trend of international law in general and the 1982 Convention in particular.

However, there remain some constraints Vietnam has to deal with. They are Vietnam actually still lacks a sound marine policy, a uniform legal framework for Vietnam's marine activities strictly conformity with the 1982 Convention. In addition, Vietnamese marine control forces are relatively scattered, lack concentrated investment. Their functions are overlapped and performed ineffectively. To ensure maritime safety, Vietnam needs to establish soon safe navigational corridors, develop monitoring systems and apply measures to manage the right to innocent passage by foreign ships (especially warships and special ships), strengthen the natural resource and marine environment management system in the direction of integrated management.

In order to well manage natural living resources and create conditions for international cooperation on fishery, Vietnam should invest in and conduct as soon as possible surveys to figure out the catchable reserves, catch capability, species and fishing grounds, and plan conservation zones, no-fishing areas and seasons, and areas for aquaculture. It should adopt soon a policy on fishery development and cooperation in Bac Bo Gulf and the Bien Dong Sea in conformity with the 1982 Convention. The implementation of the Law on Fisheries requires a forecast policy and a rapid improvement of sub-law documents.

Moreover, Vietnam should also make efforts to cooperate on conducting marine scientific research and surveys to make navigational maps in service of the marine delimitation, planning and management.

Finally, the implementation of the 1982 Convention is also closely associated with the accession to international maritime agreements compliant with the 1982 Convention. There should be a plan as well as a roadmap for such accession. Vietnam should participate in the Agreement on the change of Part XI of the 1982 Convention and in the 1995 Convention on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which have been regarded as direct developments of the 1982 Convention. It should also continue to participate in specialized conventions on maritime shipping, fisheries, petroleum, search and salvage... in order to best ensure its interests on the sea, facilitate marine activities and expand international cooperation.