Thank you, Mr. President.

We would like to thank Viet Nam for engaging in the UPR. Viet Nam pursues a policy of controlling and “containing” religious communities. The 2016 Law on Belief and Religion requires the registration of religious communities in order to operate legally. Registered communities are closely monitored, while unregistered communities including Protestant Christians, independent Cao Dao and Hoa Hao groups and independent Buddhists remain suppressed. The mostly unregistered ethnic minority Christian churches in mountainous areas are especially affected by the government’s control and containment policy. Their members are subjected to severe harassment and violence by both authorities and the local population.

We deeply regret that Viet Nam has not accepted UPR recommendations to revise the 2016 Law on Belief and Religion. Contrary to Viet Nam’s assertion, this 2016 Law is not in conformity with international human rights standard. This was confirmed by the Human Rights Committee in its recommendations to Viet Nam in March 2019.

We also regret that Viet Nam did not follow up on any of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, following his visit in 2014.

Mr. President,

We appeal to the government of Viet Nam to review the way it treats its religious minorities. This requires a paradigm shift whereby people of faith are not seen as a threat to national unity that needs to be contained, but are welcomed into a pluralistic society where they can contribute in goodwill to the development and flourishing of the nation.

Thank you Mr. President.