

Forum III: 60 years of damage from Agent Orange and solidarity with the AO victims

SITUATION OF VICTIMS

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Good Afternoon everyone,

Regarding the victims of Agent Orange, it is often said that they are "the most miserable of the miserable, the poorest of the poor". Why is that? I would like to make a few remarks:

1. First on the disease:

- People who are directly infected with Agent Orange - We call them first generation - most have serious illnesses. The Vietnamese Ministry of Health has recognized that Agent Orange can cause 17 types of diseases, but there can be many other diseases and of these 17 diseases identified, there are up to 8 types of cancer.

- For victims of the 2nd and 3rd generation, that is to say those who have inherited from their father or grandfather, most of them present deformities, in particular intellectual disabilities. There are congenital cases; But in many cases, they start to get sick as they get older (7-12 years old).

These people are also called "persons with disabilities", but in comparison with other persons with disabilities, the status of disabilities of persons who are disabled by Agent Orange people is often more severe, most of them cannot help themselves on their own daily needs, and for different reasons, especially health reason, most of them do not have the capacity to go to school, to access rehabilitation centers like other persons with disabilities...

2. Regarding socio-economic conditions:

Since the end of the war in 1975, the Vietnamese government has endeavored to provide various forms of support to victims of Agent Orange, encouraging them to overcome difficulties, helping them to have a stable life and integrate into the community. The living conditions of the victims and their families have been improved significantly. However, in general, Agent Orange victims still face many difficulties:

- Regarding living conditions:

+ For those who directly participated in the fighting on the battlefield and were infected with Agent Orange (approximately 350,000 people): The state has preferential policies, including a monthly allowance to ensure a normal life for

these people and their children infected with Agent Orange. However, many families in this category still have difficulties, especially families with several children, grandchildren infected with Agent Orange, families who lack labor ...

+ For the civil population living in areas sprayed with Agent Orange and contaminated by Agent Orange, the State also has a form of social protection including: monthly social allowance, free medical insurance. In addition, these people are also given priority to benefit from other socio-economic programs such as poverty alleviation programs, programs supporting people with disabilities ...

However, so far, the number of people receiving monthly state social allowances is not large, the amount of the subsidy is still modest. Consequently, these families still have a lot of difficulties: housing, facilities to support people with disabilities, expenses for medical care ...

- Concerning the conditions of medical care and rehabilitation:

As mentioned above, the victims of Agent Orange of the first generation are elderly people (65 years or older) and suffer from serious illnesses, so it is difficult to treat their illnesses.

Second generation (35-45 years) and third generation victims of Agent Orange are often deformed or severely disabled, so it is also difficult for the treatment and rehabilitation.

The difficulty of going to rehabilitation facilities for people who live in remote countryside or people who cannot go to these facilities without support from their loved ones also reduces the possibility of organizing rehabilitation for disabled victims of Agent Orange. That is why we are considering developing a form of rehabilitation at home.

- About the future of Agent Orange victims: Currently, most Agent Orange victims of second and third generation are directly cared for by their parents at home. A huge question was raised: When these caregivers are gone away, what will happen to their children and grandchildren?

We have thought of building a system of care centers for our Association which, together with the system of the State's care centers, will collect, feed and treat these victims of Agent Orange. Currently, our Association has 26 centers in the provinces. We would like friends around the world to help us develop this model.

Thank you!