



**STATEMENT**  
**OF VNGO-EVFTA AND VNGO-FLEGT NETWORKS ABOUT**  
**VPA/FLEGT IN VIETNAM**

*Members of VNGO-FLEGT, VNGO-EVFTA network noticed that:*

1/ The Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in Forest Products (VPA/FLEGT) has created a framework of commitment to the EU's contribution to tackling illegal logging in Vietnam.;

2/ Through the VPA/FLEGT Agreement, the Vietnamese Government has established an institutional framework for legal timber production. This has supported Vietnam in thoroughly solving several forest governance issues with the participation of many stakeholders. This is an integral part of how VPA is implemented.;

3/ VPA/FLEGT has played an important role in clarifying and revising the nation's legal timber definitions so that they are more in line with the principles of good, ecologically sustainable forest governance, ensuring the rights and livelihoods of local communities through the adjustment of Vietnamese legal documents such as forestry law, decrees, and circulars related to forestry;

4/ Regulations are needed to control the introduction of illegal wood products into the EU market. The FLEGT Action Plan should be supplemented with content related to public procurement, private sector initiatives, finance and investment, and promoting global trade in legal timber;

5/ The FLEGT Action Plan has contributed to reducing illegal logging and timber trade. The Plan is particularly relevant to forest governance reform and capacity building, thanks to actions aimed at developing multilateral cooperation and additional measures from the EU such as not consuming illegal timber.;

6/ Improving the forest and forest land use rights, sustainable forest management in VPA participating countries in general and Vietnam, in particular, is considered the most important success indicator outside of trade indicators.;

7/ The use of trade-related metrics to measure the success of FLEGT is clear when strengthening oversight of the implementation of the EU Regulation on Trade (EUTR). These measures have the advantage of being specific and easy. However, it is not enough for the basic conditions that allow illegal logging, or to recognize the impact of VPA processes on timber flows that do not reach the EU.;

8/ Vietnam and the United States have announced a joint agreement on illegal logging and timber trade (the agreement also requires Vietnam to report on the progress of FLEGT licenses and any changes to the system to ensure the legality of the joint "Timber Working Group" between the United States and Vietnam). Thus, the Agreement mentions a number of principles under the framework in the Vietnam - EU FLEGT VPA. This also demonstrates the advantages of the FLEGT legal framework.;

9/ Illegal logging is no longer the main cause of forest loss in Vietnam. The greater risk of forest loss in Vietnam is the conversion of forest use purposes (forest loss due to hydropower construction; construction of industrial parks; development of transport, information, and energy infrastructure networks; conversion to forest land for industrial crops);

10/ The EU wood market remains a driving force for Vietnam to implement VPA/FLEGT, Businesses also hope to successfully implement the VPA. However, the slow implementation process will cause difficulties for enterprises, especially after Decree 102/2020/ND-CP takes effect but it cannot license FLEGT due to the lack of an enterprise classification database.;

11/ Implementing the VPA has proven that it takes time and challenge to be granted a FLEGT license. Although the EU had anticipated this, interest on the EU side declined, as evidenced by a reduction in funding for VPA/FLEGT implementation support.;

12/ The EU is not the only timber consumer (Vietnam has signed with the US, based on the contents of the VPA/FLEGT), as agreements with South Korea and Australia are expected in the future. Therefore, it is advisable to encourage and require the participation of major timber consuming countries in the FLEGT program, at least with the restriction of illegal timber, thereby avoiding leaks and strengthening the incentive of producing countries to reduce illegal logging and to recognize FLEGT licenses more widely to establish a framework for the new VPA.

13/ Signing the VPA/FLEGT Agreement for Vietnamese exporters to develop timber trade and access to the EU market (as well as easier access to the US and other developed countries) is a real driver of private sector participation.

14/ Well-protected and well-developed forests are important factors in solving climate change issues, so policies need to focus on limiting the causes of forest loss. VPA/FLEGT needs to take more measures and policies as well as stronger support for communities living next to forests, protecting and regularly depending on forests;

15/ Illegal and unsustainable logging remains a major cause of forest degradation.

16/ Whether the VPA/FLEGT succeeds or not depends on the allocation of land, and the allocation of forests to the management community. Therefore, this needs to be further promoted so that the ethnic community can participate in the legal timber supply chain in the future.

17/For ethnic communities to participate in the implementation of VPA/FLEGT, it is necessary to strengthen propaganda and capacity building.

18/ Vietnam has always and will continue to pursue the development and protection of forests through strengthening management, preventing deforestation, converting forest area to other objectives, especially the conversion of natural forests beyond forestry purposes; ensuring the stability of forest area with 42% coverage nationwide, and will ensure the successful implementation of VPA/FLEGT and the Government of Vietnam has committed in COP26 as a country "No forest loss" by 2030.