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Joint Press Release regarding the 6th Meeting of the Vietnam – Holy See Joint Working Group

“To implement the agreement reached at the fifth Meeting of the Vietnam – Holy See Joint Working Group in Ha Noi (September 2014), the sixth Meeting of the Vietnam – Holy See Joint Working Group took place in Vatican City from 24 to 26 October 2016. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E Mr. Bui Thanh Son, Permanent Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of the Vietnamese delegation, and Msgr. Antoine Camilleri, under-secretary for Relations with States, Head of the Holy See Delegation.

The two Parties had a broad and deep exchange of views on Vietnam – Holy See relations, including issues related to the Catholic Church in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese side reiterated the consistent and practical improvement of the legal framework and policies on the promotion and protection of freedom of belief and religion; encouragement and continued facilitation of the active engagement of the Catholic Church in Vietnam in the national cause of socio-economic development.

The Holy See, while reaffirming the freedom of the Church to carry out its mission for the good of the whole of society, expressed appreciation to the Vietnamese government for the attention given to the needs of the Catholic Church, as recently witnessed through the establishment of the Catholic Institute of Vietnam, and for the assistance in the organisation of important ecclesial ceremonies and events.

The two sides agreed that the Catholic Church in Vietnam will continue to be inspired by the Magisterium of the Church regarding the practice of ‘living the Gospel in the nation’ and being, at the same time, good Catholics and good citizens. The Holy See reaffirms that Pope Francis has a keen interest in the development of Vietnam – Holy See relations and it looks forward to the continued and invaluable contribution offered by the Catholic community, in cooperation with other actors in Vietnamese society, and in accordance with the applicable laws, to national development and the promotion of the common good.

The two sides acknowledged the progress in Vietnam – Holy See relations, including regular contacts and consultations, the exchange of high level delegations and frequent pastoral visits to Vietnam by the papal representative and non-resident special envoy, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli.

The meeting took place in an atmosphere of cordiality, frankness and mutual respect.

The two Parties agreed to maintain constructive dialogue, in a spirit of good will with a view to increasing mutual understanding and further promoting relations between the two sides. They also agreed to convene the seventh meeting of the Vietnam – Holy See Joint Working group in Hanoi. The date of the meeting will be arranged through diplomatic channels.

Before departing from the Vatican, the Vietnamese delegation paid courtesy visits to Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, secretary for Relations with States. They also visited some religious institutions of the Holy See”.
