



Press Release

Towards effective implementation of grassroots democracy for all

Hà Nội, 02/11/2022 – Research of selected good practices and models in grassroots democracy implementation by citizens in Quang Tri and Ha Noi shows that, villages and residential areas are the level at which citizens have participated and practiced their grassroots democracy rights to their best.

The finding was shared at the thematic discussion entitled “**Grassroots Democracy Implementation in Viet Nam: Good Practices and Policy Implications**” co-hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Viet Nam and the People’s Participation Working Group (PPWG) in Ha Noi today. The discussion aims to contribute to promoting grassroots democracy implementation through case studies of several good models as well as to providing lessons learnt and policy implications for the on-going discussion of the draft Law on Grassroots Democracy at the National Assembly.

The study also shows that, to participate actively and effectively, citizens’ rights to access to information in a transparent manner need to be ensured. This is of particular importance for diverse population groups such as ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. In addition, vertical accountability towards citizens by government agencies at all levels needs to be institutionalized, while the right to participate effectively and actively of social organizations and media agencies in supporting citizens to practice their grassroots democracy rights also needs to be protected.

Lessons learnt from the good practices imply important policy messages that help promote citizen participation and ensure human rights in grassroots democracy implementation. In addition, the research links the lessons with the draft Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation to understand legal conditions to ensure that citizen rights “to know, to discuss, to do, to verify, to supervise and to benefit”, as provided in the Ordinance No. 34/2007/PL-UBTVQH11 on grassroots democracy implementation in communes, wards and townlets, be fully reflected in the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation. The Law is expected to be an important legal framework, a foundation for citizens to exercise their rights to participate actively in local governance, to practice their citizen rights, and at the same time, to contribute to improving local governments’ performance.

Sharing the research team’s field observations, Mr. **Lê Quang Bình**, PPWG chairperson, noted: “*Citizens do care about what matters most to their life both in terms of benefits and civic space. In particular, they want to participate in implementing and supervising the development of basic infrastructure projects in their own villages or residential areas; supervising the implementation of social policies, especially those targeted to people living in difficult, remote, and ethnic minority areas.*”

Mr. Binh further shared that through the interviews, both local public officials and citizens revealed that despite good policies, implementers' lack of responsibility led to wastes and wrongdoings. They therefore asked for their rights to supervise, and even to 'say no' to the kinds of support that fail to meet their needs and expected quality. They also requested for the right to supervise how local public officials behave while providing public services for citizens and to review how commune budget is spent. They also recommended that the State provide clear-cut legal regulations to protect citizen rights to take an active role in public work supervision and to require local governments be accountable to citizens in the areas of citizen concern.

On the draft Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, Dr. **Lã Khánh Tùng**, a research team member, said: *"The current draft Law only provides regulations on the establishment of the People's Inspection Boards and Community Investment Supervision Boards in communes, wards and townlets. Since such boards are established at the will of the commune-level government, they remain distant from everyday citizen concerns, making them less participatory for a majority of citizens"*.

The research team suggested that the Law ensure the right to establish community-based supervision groups at the village level, which is the most grassroots level for citizens. The Law does not need to provide for mandatory village-level supervision groups but protects and ensures the right for citizens to set up the groups when and where deemed necessary. While protecting citizens' rights, the Law should provide for obligations of state personnel to comply with the law and sanctions against violation of or the lack of compliance with the Law.

Ms. **Diana Torres**, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative and Head of the Governance and Participation Team, said: *"We hope that the findings from this action-oriented research, especially with the highlighted good practices, will provide important evidence and implications for central and local authorities when the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation comes into effect after the National Assembly passes it during the on-going Fall session"*.

In parallel with their endeavors in socio-economic development, the State and the citizens of Viet Nam have been paying greater attention to citizens' grassroots democracy rights. Lessons learnt from the good practices in grassroots democracy implementation are important evidence to inform the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, an essential legal foundation to protect citizen rights as embedded in the grassroots democracy motto of *"people know, people discuss, people do, people verify, people supervise, and people benefit"*.

Media contact point:

Trần Thị Vân Anh, Communication Officer, UNDP Việt Nam

Email: papivietnam@undp.org, mobile: 0363585842

For more information, follow the URL: <https://bit.ly/3sywWTV>

Or scan the QR Code

