

ĐẠI HỌC QUỐC GIA TP.HCM

6.2.1996



ON THE RECENT WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE HCMC NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

To rearrange the universities and scientific research institutes in HCMC, the Prime Minister promulgated Decree No 16/CP on the establishment of the HCMC National University on Jan 27, 1995.

In order to implement Decree No 16/CP, the Minister of Education and Training issued decision No 826/GD-BT on March 16, 1995 on the forming of the Preparatory Committee of the HCMC National University including 9 rectors of 9 university members and Deputy Chief of the Southern Office of the Ministry of Education and Training and appointed the rector of the HCMC Polytechnic University as Head of the Committee.

I. The major work having been done by the Preparatory Committee since March 16, 1995:

by Prof. Dr. TRƯƠNG MINH VỆ

1. To recognize the situation and forecast the techno-scientific and socio-economic development of the South, the country, the region and the world, from that look at the situation of 9 university members, set the target, plan, step and strategic motto for the HCMC National University by the year 2020.

The Preparatory Committee has discussed to predict the megatrends of the world, the region and Vietnam by the year 2020 as follows:

- The most important points of the new techno-scientific revolution are information, biology, automation, new materials, new energy, and the environment.

- Vietnam has integrated into Asean in the trend of economic globalization and from political hostility to development competition.

- Human being is the key source for the development in the transitional step from the industrial civilization to the information one, the product of training work in the multi-sector market mechanism.

- The targets by the year 2020 comprise industrialization and modernization, rich people, strong country, equal and civilized society, per capita GDP: over US\$2,000.

- Hồ Chí Minh City, where the HCMC National University is located and which it serves mainly is the most vital city of industry, service, and trade with its industrial output and payment to the Treasury which represents one third of the whole country's revenue. Its geographical location makes it become the communication center of the whole country and the Southeast Asia with busy airport and seaport. The South - the oil area, rice granary, and first industrial area, the last exploited land of the country - gather people from various areas with diversified culture who have large heart, definite will, open mind and energetic view, sensitivity to techno-scientific revolution. The HCMC currently has 100,000 graduates from universities and colleges, of which 800 have master degrees granted by 60 countries.

- 9 university members of the HCMC National University have 78 faculties, 46 centers, 76 departments with over 80 disciplines training 70,000 students of various kinds, and systems, 2,527 teachers of which professors represent 8.9%, doctors 12.3% and masters 7.7% and an area of 428,000 sq. meter and buildings covering 197,544 sq. meter.

Some opinions about 9 university members of the HCMC National University are as follows:

a. Advantages and opportunities:

- Most teachers love their career, have stability of ideology and politics, sensibility to renewal and vitality, give their whole mind to the development of education and training and the country.

- The staff graduating from many countries have wide relations with production establishments and international institutions.

- The Party has appropriate and timely policies on politics, economy, society and diplomacy and the society understands more and more clearly the dynamic of the education and training sector and makes more and more reasonable policies for the education and training development.

- The HCMC National University is located in the region and the city which have the best conditions for training, scientific research and

development.

b. Shortcomings, difficulties and challenges:

- Most of staff still have low levels which are not updated in comparison with the requirement of training and techno-scientific research.

- The target, content, curriculum, disciplinary structure, subject, teaching method, evaluation method are far behind the requirement of industrialization, modernization, the information society, as well as universities of the region and the world.

- The material base of universities are still poor and obsolescent:

- The contents of curriculum with inappropriate structure are not updated yet.

- The experimental equipment are scatteredly equipped for some subjects, the remainder have obsolescent equipment or not. Especially equipment for postgraduate studies is not available.

- The teaching and class facilities are insufficient and not modern.

- Some universities are well equipped with computers but they are not linked with internal and international networks yet and their efficiency of computer usage is low.

- The competition in education and training, science and technology in the country, the region and the world is very fierce whereas the budget granted to the training sector is small, the society is polarized into the rich and the poor, the staff's living still faces with difficulties. All of this is opposite to the requirement to rapidly improve their staff's skill. The rearrangement creates diverse strength of universities but it cannot avoid the contradiction between departments and individuals.

- The level and tool of management are low, the organizations are too dispersed.

c. The real objective requirements and significance of the HCMC National University:

- In the past the planned economy was underlined, the training was subsidized and graduates were assigned by the Government, the limited skill was accepted due to demand of the society at that time. As a result, the scattered and small model of training was costly and of low quality but suitable for many people's management level as well as their mind.

- The period of industrialization, modernization with an information society integrating into the regional and the world economies and the fierce competition in science and technology do not allow small universities' existence. The best quality of

an university depends on its postgraduate training; this will be obtained when the National University is formed by the merging of 9 universities.

In addition to the merging to develop and attain the world standard, the Government's investment and policies will be concentrated and unified so as to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and scale of training, especially in a poor country like Vietnam. At the same time, Thủ Đức District, HCMC, will be an intellectual park where learning activities, scientific researches and talents training are brought about.

- Based on the above scientific analysis the Preparatory Committee has built the target, plan, step and strategic solutions to setting up the HCMC National University by the year 2020 with tasks and functions stipulated in the Decree 16/CP by the Prime Minister as a center of multidisciplinary training and scientific research of the whole country, helping other universities with training and scientific research.

2. Later on, the Preparatory Committee set up the training model and scientific research with the following main points:

- To apply study system by credits to the whole HCMC National University and the master studies include some 80 credits, bachelor 160 credits.

- There are three degrees of training: Bachelor, Master and Doctor and the postgraduate training will be pushed up. It is estimated that the University's students may reach 150,000 and attendants for MA degree may account for 15% of graduates.

- As for BA training, the two stages are considered: generalization and specialization, and the former will apply 7 programs on the trial basis.

- The postgraduate training will be paid full attention; the training departments will be attached to the scientific research institutes.

3. On the basis of the training model, the Preparatory Committee has concentrated great efforts and much time on discussing the organizational regulations and operations of the HCMC National University with the main points as follows:

- On training and scientific research: training and issuing BA, MA and PhD as first, second and highest university degrees.

- On organization: there are three levels with four-year term:

- + Level of the National University

- + Level of the university, research institute, center affiliated with the National University.

- + Level of faculty

The degree of concentration and management devolution will change in accordance with level progress, management tool and the process of concentration to the new site with the spirit of complete management devolution with a view to improving the responsibility and the creativeness of every unit, under the unification of regulations, policies, leadership in an administrative body as the National University.

- The Science Council of the HCMC National University is a consulting body for the Director on the training and scientific research; and meanwhile some legislative aspects with the aim to raise the National University's self-governing.

- As for finance, the University is an accounting unit at level 1, having a stamp bearing the national emblem and a private account. The budget allocated by the State is managed by the National University, the self-provided funds will be concentrated step by step, at first they are completely devolved to the generating stage.

- Regarding relation, the University is under the Ministry of Education and Training and permitted to make direct relations with other State agencies.

4. The Preparatory Committee initially planned the new establishment in Thủ Đức District with main work as follows:

- To repair offices, classes and dormitory so that the General University began new schoolyear in September 1995.

- To cooperate to make computing data of typographical map of the National University for the planning and land map with scale of 1/2000.

- To coordinate with the HCMC Planning Institute to make plan and feasibility study for building new premises of the National University in Thủ Đức District capitalized at VNĐ7,000 billion and safeguard this planned site.

5. To formulate a project of getting loans the World Bank for the National University's development with three contents:

- To plan borrowing US\$3 million for the training of staff and the installment of modern management facilities of the National University.

- To plan borrowing US\$40 million for the equipping of 52 modern laboratories and teaching instruments of university members and the Institute in the National University.

- To plan borrowing US\$3 million for equipment commonly used in the National University.

Initially the World Bank's experts highly appreciated our preparation and will try to cooperate with us to make installation at the end of 1996.

To expand the operational functions and get more assistance from other sectors in building the HCMC National University, on July 20, 1995 the Minister of Education and Training decided to strengthen the Preparatory Committee of the HCMC National University with additional members as follows:

- Prof. Nguyễn Văn Hiệu, Chairman of the Science Council of the National Natural Science and Technology Center.

- Prof. Chu Phạm Ngọc Sơn, Director of the HCMC Chemical and Physical Analysis Center, Chairman of the HCMC Union of Science and Technique Associations.

- Prof. Nguyễn Ngọc Trân, Chairman of the Committee for Overseas Vietnamese.

- Prof. Dr. Trần Chí Đáo, Vice Minister of Education and Training was appointed as Chief of the Preparatory Committee.

II. The Preparatory Committee has implemented the following work since July 10, 1995:

1. To accept, review and keep on perfecting the necessary documents concerning the construction of the HCMC National University.

2. To organize the apparatus of the General University with the Management Committee including 6 members and 154 cadres (mainly coming from the three fundamental science faculties of three technique universities and some cadres of Universities of Economics, University of Finance and HCMC University). The General University's Party organization was formed with 47 members and Communist Youth Union, Trade Union and Student Association were also brought into operation. The General University takes charge of general training in the first stage (3 semesters) with 20 subjects (6 applied for every student, 12 for technique block, 9 for natural sciences and pedagogy block, 14 for economics and law block). The General University has accepted and trained 6,129 students in the two sites (the main one is in Thủ Đức District and another on the campus of the HCMC Polytechnic). It is estimated the General University can accept 20,000 students by September 1996 and its permanent staff may reach 500. The General University is making the best use of its

advantages with skilled teachers and well-equipped facilities but at present it also has to overcome many difficulties in organization, spirit, and deficiency.

3. To plan the entrance examination for the schoolyear 1996-1997 with the following main points:

- The HCMC National University trains students according to credit study system including only two stages from 1995 term. In the first stage, students attend 7 courses in line with 7 disciplines which they chose and passed the entrance examination. The students have to sit for an exam to enter the second stage or not in order to study disciplines chosen in the first stage in the specialized universities.

- The HCMC National University will accept without examination those who gained a good score of 34 points up in the high school graduation test, the other applicants can sit for three exams according to 7 disciplines of the first stage and the standard points will be fixed for each discipline.

- The applicants for in-service and junior college systems may sit for the same exam as the full-time system or the separate exam held at the specialized universities after the exam of the full-time system.

- The HCMC National University has the Recruitment Commission which uniformly direct and manage 9 Examination Organization Boards in 9 university members. To help the Recruitment Commission there are boards for making tests and examining, guarding, inspecting and secretarial duties.

4. The Preparatory Committee kept on directing the planning of the HCMC National University at the new campus; building the organization and machine of the university members in the orientation of modernity, multi-disciplines, interdependence, not coinciding, streamlining the capabilities of teachers and facilities for the training and scientific research, especially considering the scientific features and reasonability in the structure of the four Universities of Generalization, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences and Pedagogy.

5. The Preparatory Committee promoted the initial cooperation with the two American university communities, CECID (including 29 universities) and MUSIA (including 12 universities) in the range of exchanging cadres, students, experience from organization, management, training and scientific research.

It is a full year since the Prime

Minister signed Decree 16/CP dated Jan 27, 1995 on the establishment of the HCMC National University. The Preparatory Committee has attained good achievements in fulfilling these above-mentioned tasks thanks to:

- The common efforts of the Committee's members, the unification of viewpoints, the democracy in working, the same will and aspiration that the HCMC National University will be a dynamic for the country's socio-economic development.

- The precious assistance in knowledge and finance of various superior levels and teachers and staff of university members and other relevant bodies.

- The instruction and help of the leadership of HCMC, Sông Bé Province, ministries and the Government.

- On behalf of the Preparatory Committee of the HCMC National University, I would like to extend my gratitude to teachers and cadres of the HCMC National University, superior levels, and other relevant bodies, all of you have helped us to fulfill our tasks. In addition to our finished work, we can't avoid mistakes and there are many remaining issues in comparison with the requirement. It's the first step that counts, moreover there are a few universities in the country and the world as well which have large size and disciplines as the HCMC National University, meanwhile the Preparatory Committee's conditions of working were very difficult: no assistant machinery, no legal status, no budget...and our members' efforts are limited whereas we have to undertake principal work in our universities, the work for the Preparatory Committee is only our additional one.

On December 18, 1995 the Prime Minister decided to appoint Prof. Dr. Trần Chí Đáo, Vice-minister of Education and Training as Director of the HCMC National University and on Jan 22, 1996 the Minister of Education and Training decided to assign 5 Vice-directors and 4 managers of the HCMC National University's departments.

So far the work and tasks of the Preparatory Committee are considered to come to an end. Speaking for the Committee's members, 70,000 students and 4,000 staff of the HCMC National University, I wish the University's first director, Vice-Minister Trần Chí Đáo good health to make rapid progress for the HCMC National University.

I also wish all of you good health and success.