

# **EuroSEAS Panel Abstracts**

## **Convenor and Chair: François Fortier**

### **1. Session Title**

Intersecting Climate Change and Development in Viet Nam: Negotiable Curve or Collision Course?

### **2. Session Description**

This panel will examine the dynamics between climate change and the contemporary Vietnamese economic model of industrialisation and global integration. Papers should ask on the one hand how is climate change threatening or providing opportunities to that economic model and, on the other hand, whether the model mitigates or amplifies the impact of climate change – not in terms of green house gases contribution, but by affecting the resilience of the Vietnamese society to structural change.

To analyse that dynamic, papers in this panel will discuss the triangular relationship between climate change potential impacts, the strategic response to that potential, and the Vietnamese economic model. The panel will therefore discuss whether that current strategic response addresses potential impacts of climate change, or seeks instead to perpetuate an economic development model that itself worsens those eventual impacts.

### **3. Abstracts**

#### **3.1 Increases in Typhoon Intensity and the Development of Vietnamese Ports and Cities**

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It is currently believed that the increase in surface sea temperature that would occur due to increasing level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere could result in an increase in typhoon intensity in the future. Specifically this would bring a number of problems to developing countries such as Viet Nam, notably flooding in coastal zones, increased damage from high winds and productivity losses from longer downtime. The present paper attempts to indicate the likely economic effects of some of these impacts, by using a Monte Carlo Simulation that magnifies the intensity of historical tropical cyclones between the years 1978 and 2008. This tropical cyclone model is then coupled with a socio-economic model that offers a typical scenario of the likely development course of the Vietnamese economy and society. The analysis highlights the need for improved adaptation measures, and suggests some possible solutions.

#### **3.2 Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Policies in Viet Nam**

Dr. Nguyễn Mộng Cường: Research Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Hanoi. [cuongccsd@yahoo.com](mailto:cuongccsd@yahoo.com).

Viet Nam is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, and also very vulnerable to the impact of projected climate change. Increasingly erratic and variable rainfall, higher temperatures, more extreme weather events such as typhoons, and the rising sea level will all have significant impacts across sectors, regions and income groups. The strongest impact will be on the livelihood and security of the poorest rural people. This presentation will briefly discuss the expected impacts of and vulnerability to climate change in Viet Nam, and consider mitigation and adaptation options in various sectors. In particular, it will review process and strategy behind the government National Target Programme on Climate Change adopted in December 2008.

### **3.3 Viet Nam's Unravelling Food System: The Crisis before the Storm**

Dr. Trần Thị Thu Trang: Assistant Professor, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa, Desmarais Hall, 50 Laurier Ave. E., Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, [trang.tran@uottawa.ca](mailto:trang.tran@uottawa.ca)

Vietnam has experienced impressive economic growth since its transition from a planned to a market economy. The country moved from a net rice importer in the 1980s to the second world exporter, with an impressive reduction of food insecurity. Yet, the government has recently expressed great concern on its capacity to maintain food security, citing climate change as the main threat. This article argues that while climate change is indeed likely to significantly disrupt food production, the food system in Vietnam suffers from internal problems that limit the long-term sustainability of food production and security, making the country particularly vulnerable in the context of climate change.

### **3.4 Climate Change and the Limits of Viet Nam's Development Model**

Dr. François Fortier: Assistant Professor, School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 75 Laurier Ave. E., Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, [ffortier@uottawa.ca](mailto:ffortier@uottawa.ca)

What interests is the emerging Vietnamese climate change strategy promoting, and is it the best and only way to face the looming threat of climate uncertainty? While Viet Nam is already and will greatly suffer from environmental change for which it is largely not responsible, this presentation argues that the prevailing strategy reflects and reinforces existing power relations, at the expense of a sounder approach that could be based on an open agenda of environmental and developmental issues. On the one hand, the approach largely conceals the inherent limits of Viet Nam's unsustainable industrialisation model. On the other hand, the strategy also fails to account for concurrent and synergetic crises beyond that of climate change and which act as multiple stressors, namely the likely contraction of the global trade régime on which the Vietnamese economy has become highly dependent, and the end of cheap fossil fuels. The strategy therefore provides an illusion of intervention and security, but will be unable to mitigate the underlying causes of climate change, or to lay the ground for a robust mid- and long-term adaptation strategy that can face up to yet unknown levels of climatic and other structural changes.