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| **Vietnam’s external relations in 2020: *mettle and new posture***  HANOI – Vietnam’s diplomatic sector overcame numerous challenges throughout 2020 to create, **grasp** and optimise new cooperation opportunities, contributing to the country’s progress towards development, Minh said.  In his article entitled “Vietnam external relations in 2020: mettle and new posture” released on to mark the New Year 2021, Minh noted that last year witnessed great and unprecedented changes that have left widespread and long-term impacts on the world.  The COVID-19 pandemic hit all countries, pushing the global economy into recession, while the East Sea issues saw new, complicated developments, and other non-traditional challenges emerged, including those related to water security, natural disasters and flooding, greatly affecting the Southeast Asia region, including Vietnam.  However, the Deputy PM underscored that peace, cooperation and development were still the major trends and aspirations of people around the world. The Asia-Pacific has still been a dynamic economic region, while ASEAN has reinforced solidarity and adapted to the impacts of the world situation to secure its central role in the region.  The complicated and multi-dimensional **fluctuations** of the world and regional situation in 2020 deeply affected the domestic environment of Vietnam with the mixture of challenges and opportunities, stated the top diplomat, who highlighted that the Party, the State and the whole political system showed excellent performance in implementing the twin targets of preventing the pandemic and recovering a boosting the socio-economic growth on the foundation of a peaceful and stable environment.  Throughout the year, external relations activities were conducted in an active, proactive, flexible and creative manner, contributing to maintaining the momentum and promote the partnership of Vietnam with partners, enhancing the position of Vietnam in the new stuation, and making important contributions to the successfully implementation of the foreign policy **sketched** out at the 12th National Party Congress, and consolidating a peaceful, stable and favourable environment for national construction and defence, he clarified.  Firstly, Vietnam relations with countries, especially neighbouring and important partners, have been promoted with regular online meeting at all levels. Vietnamese leaders conducted 34 bilateral phone talks and online meetings with leaders of various countries, while safely implementing important delegation exchanges.  Vietnam provided assistance in masks, medical equipment and finance to 51 countries and international organizations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while actively supporting countries and partners facing difficulties. Meanwhile, the country has also received help from many countries and international organizations in the fight. Vietnam’s pandemic response model has been hailed by the internaional community, according to the Deputy PM.  Secondly, 2020 left a special imprint in the promotion and enhancement of Vietnam’s multilateral diplomacy as the country actively contributed to the building and shaping of many multilateral mechanisms, while successfully performing the roles of ASEAN 2020 chair, 41st AIPA President, and non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2020-2021 tenure.  Vietnam successfully escorted ASEAN through many challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, while organising the 36th and 37th ASEAN Summits and many other meetings in the online format. As many as 80 documents, the record number, were approved, with a focus on building the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025, reviewing the ASEAN Charter, and building an ASEAN Community Post-2025 Vision.  In the first year in the role of non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Vietnam showed the image of a responsible country upholding international law and working hard to seek **consensus** and solution to conflicts, while giving many initiatives, he stated.  Thirdly, Vietnam saw breakthrough progress in international economic integration with the effective implementation of the CPTPP and promotion of the signing and **ratification** of the EVFTA, which took effect from August 2020.  In the first 11 months of 2020, Vietnam enjoyed 5.3 percent growth in export revenue, he noted.  Fourthly, Vietnam also recored positive results in the border and territory-related work. Vietnam and Cambodia exchanged the two legal documents recognising the results of their land border demarcation and marker planting reaching about 84 percent of the total workload, making the documents officially effective from December 22, 2020.  Additionally, Vietnam also worked actively and closely with other ASEAN member countries and related partners to promote peace, cooperation, the rule of law, and peaceful settlement of disputes at sea.  Fifthly, the work for **overseas Vietnamese** and the protection of Vietnamese citizens abroad was promptly deployed, contributing to supporting Ovs in overcoming difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 280 flights were organised to safely bring home nearly 80,000 Vietnamese citizens from more than 59 countries and territories worldwide.  Sixthly, the cultural diplomacy and foreign information work was actively deployed, especially effectively using digital technology to promote Vietnam’s image to the world through innovative products and ways. International friends increasingly know that Vietnam is not only a peaceful, stable and safe country with great potential for economic cooperation, but also resilent, adaptive and able to effectively handle challenges, demonstrated in its success in keeping the COVID-19 pandemic under control and maintaining economic growth.  The important results in the past year were attributed to the close direction and direct participation of Party and State leaders, the persistence in the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, multiateralism and diversification, putting interests of the nation first.  Vietnam will continue to promote international **integration**, deepen relations with other countries, firmly protect its sovereignty and terrirtorial integrity, contribute to strengthening a peaceful environment, and mobilise external resources for further national development.  With the sound foreign policy of the Party and State and the determination of the entire political system, the close and smooth coordination between the Party and State diplomacy and the people-to-people diplomacy, as well as diplomatic efforts from ministries, sectors and localities, and the response of people and businesses, Vietnam is believed to successfully implement the external relations tasks in 2021, demonstrating the country’s real power and aspiration to become more and more prosperous. | ***mettle and new posture:*** *khí phách và thế mới.*  **grasp:** to seize, hold firmly.  **Fluctuations:** biến động.  **Sketched:** phác họa, phác thảo.  **Consensus:** đồng lòng, đồng tâm, nhất trí.  **Ratification:** confirmation.  **overseas Vietnamese:** người Việt ở nước ngoài.  **Integration:** hội nhập. |