## President says ending poverty along north border akin to defending nation

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内容：CAO BAèNG - Ending poverty among households residing in seven northern Vie-t Nam China border provinces is tantamount to defending national territory, President Tr--ng Taán Sang said yesterday. Addressing at a meeting held in -a-m Thu-y Commune, Tru-ng Khaùnh District, Cao Baèng Province, yesterday, he said that the seven northern provinces hold a very important position in maintaining national defence and security as well as its socioeconomic development. With special care from the Party and State and ef forts of local ethnic minority communities themselves, local living conditions have improved considerably over the last several years, he noted. However, people living in border communes, particularly in new settlement areas, who have to discharge two duties at the same time -engage in production and defend the homeland - still face many difficulties that they need help surmounting, he added. Under a programme initiated by Sang, since 2014, households in the seven border provinces have been provided with 15,000 tonnes of cement to build houses and animal sheds as well as 24,000 cows for breeding. In addition, the border security forces have given VN-1 billion (US$48,000) to local residents as part of efforts to help them rise above poverty. President Sang also said at the meeting in -a-m Thu-y Commune that despite considerable progress, many difficulties and challenges lay ahead. The population of 700,000 living in the northwestern region-s 168 communes is not a big one, so with support from the central government, ministries and sectors nation wide, they can carry out effective measures to escape pov erty, he said. He also asked residents to turn the northwestern region into a border of peace, friendship, stable cooperation and development. President Sang was accompanied on this trip by Nguye-n Xuaan Phuùc, Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Steering Board for the NorthWestern Region, and senior officials from several central agencies. -