



The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam: A Political Milestone Shaping the Development Vision and Commitment to International Integration

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ABSTRACT: The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam constitutes a political event of strategic significance, defining the national development vision for 2030 and 2045 within a volatile international landscape. Grounded in nearly 40 years of Doi Moi (Renewal), the Congress reaffirms the Party's central role in formulating long-term development strategies, prioritizing rapid and sustainable growth, strategic autonomy, and the reinforcement of national internal strength. Significantly, foreign affairs and international integration are designated as "crucial and regular" tasks, equivalent in stature to national defense and security. Vietnam steadfastly maintains a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, multilateralization, and diversification, asserting its role as a reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community.

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Published Online:

February 23, 2026

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KEYWORDS:

14th National Congress; Communist Party of Vietnam; Doi Moi; 2045 vision; sustainable development; strategic autonomy; foreign affairs; international integration; Vietnam's position.

Cite the Article: Cong, T.A. (2026) *The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam: A Political Milestone Shaping the Development Vision and Commitment to International Integration*. *International Journal of Human Research and Social Science Studies*, 3(2), 131-137. <https://doi.org/10.55677/ijhrsss/03-2026-Vol03I02>

1. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM

In the Vietnamese political system, the National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) plays a pivotal role, exercising a decisive function regarding the nation's development orientation in each historical period. The Party Congress serves not merely as a periodic political event but as a forum for comprehensively reviewing the Party's leadership guidelines and policies over a term, whilst simultaneously formulating national development strategies and directions for the subsequent term and long-term phases. Through the election of the Central Committee - the highest leading body of the Party between two Congresses - the Congress ensures continuity, stability, and unity in leadership and direction across the entire political system and social life.

Given that Vietnam is a nation led by the CPV, the Party Congress holds decisive significance in ensuring political stability, unifying leadership thinking, and defining the long-term development orientation of the State and society. The policies adopted at the Congress not only govern the Party's activities but also constitute the foundation for formulating and implementing major State policies across economic, political, cultural, social, defense, security, and foreign affairs domains. Consequently, the Party Congress is regarded as the "central axis" of the political system, the crystallization of the collective intellect of the entire Party, people, and army in selecting a development path suitable for the country's specific historical conditions and the international context.

A retrospective analysis of the Congresses from the 6th National Congress (1986) to the 13th National Congress (2021) clearly demonstrates the continuous evolution and renewal in Vietnam's leadership thinking and development model.

The 6th National Congress is considered a crucial historical milestone, officially initiating the Doi Moi (Renewal) process, transitioning the economy from a centrally planned model to a socialist-oriented market economy. This breakthrough decision

created the premise for profound transformations in socio-economic life, enabling Vietnam to gradually emerge from crisis, stabilize the macro-economy, and improve the people's living standards.

Building upon the foundation of the 6th Congress, subsequent Congresses have continuously supplemented, perfected, and developed the *Doi Moi* line to meet the requirements of each period. The 7th, 8th, and 9th Congresses focused on refining the socialist-oriented market economy institutions, expanding economic sectors, encouraging private sector development, and gradually opening up for regional and global integration¹. The process of international integration was accelerated through Vietnam's accession to ASEAN, the signing of numerous bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, and accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), thereby elevating Vietnam's position and prestige in the international arena.

The 10th, 11th, and 12th Congresses continued to affirm the requirement for rapid growth accompanied by sustainability, placing greater emphasis on growth quality, resource efficiency, and addressing social issues arising during development. During this phase, leadership guidelines witnessed a distinct shift from prioritizing quantitative growth to emphasizing quality, linking economic growth with social progress and equity, environmental protection, and the assurance of national defense and security. Concurrently, the roles of science and technology, education and training, and high-quality human resources were increasingly highlighted as key drivers for long-term development².

The 13th National Congress marked a new stride in the Party's leadership guidelines by more clearly defining a development model based on growth quality, innovation, and sustainable development through “promoting national digital transformation; developing a digital economy based on science and technology and innovation; harmoniously and effectively connecting domestic and international markets”; “promoting research, transfer, and strong application of the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in all areas of social life”³; and “building a green economy and circular economy that is environmentally friendly”.⁴ In the context of a rapidly changing world, increasing strategic competition among major powers, and increasingly complex global challenges, the 13th Congress demonstrated the Party's efforts to adjust leadership thinking, enhance national governance capacity, and proactively integrate internationally.

It can be affirmed that the progression of Party Congresses from the 6th to the 13th clearly reflects the flexible evolution, creativity, and adaptability of the CPV in the face of domestic and international changes. The Party Congress is not only a venue for summarizing practice and strategic planning but also a space that demonstrates the political resolve, long-term vision, and self-renewal capacity of the Party in its role of leading the country. This serves as the critical foundation for Vietnam to enter new development stages with increasingly higher goals regarding growth quality, international standing, and people's livelihoods.

2. THE 14TH NATIONAL CONGRESS – THE POLITICAL FOUNDATION FOR VIETNAM’S STABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

After nearly 40 years of implementing the *Doi Moi* (Renewal) process, Vietnam has established a significant foundation of internal socio-economic strength, thereby forming a solid political-economic basis for the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam to set forth stable and sustainable development orientations for the new period. From an underdeveloped economy suffering from the severe aftermath of war and a centralized management mechanism, Vietnam has undergone a robust transformation, emerging as a middle-income country and one of the most dynamic economies in the Asia-Pacific region. These achievements not only reflect the effectiveness of the *Doi Moi* guidelines but also affirm the soundness of the Party and State's thinking regarding leadership, governance, and development management.

By 2025, the scale of Vietnam's economy has surpassed the USD 500 billion threshold, placing Vietnam among the large-scale economies in the region. Trade turnover has exceeded USD 900 billion, demonstrating the deep, extensive, and effective integration of the Vietnamese economy into regional and global value chains⁵. Notably, amidst a global economic downturn, increasing instability, and geopolitical risks, Vietnam has maintained macroeconomic stability, controlled inflation, and sustained

¹ Ngo Tuan Nghia (2025). *The Communist Party of Viet Nam’s Perspectives on the Relationship between the State, the Market, and Society*. Communist Review. Available at: https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/media-story/-/asset_publisher/V8hhp4dK31Gf/content/quan-diem-cua-dang-ta-ve-moi-quan-he-giua-nha-nuoc-thi-truong-va-xa-hoi (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

² Nguyen Tan Vinh and Vo Huu Phuoc (2025). *Promoting the Renewal of Vietnam’s Economic Growth Model from the 12th National Congress to the Present*. Communist Review. Available at: https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/media-story/-/asset_publisher/V8hhp4dK31Gf/content/thuc-day-doi-moi-mo-hinh-tang-truong-kinh-te-o-viet-nam-tu-dai-hoi-xii-den-nay (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

³ Communist Party of Viet Nam (2021). *Documents of the 13th National Congress of Delegates*. Truth National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 115.

⁴ Communist Party of Viet Nam (2021). *Documents of the 13th National Congress of Delegates*. Truth National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 117.

⁵ General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2026). *Report on the Socio-Economic Situation in the Fourth Quarter and the Whole Year of 2025*. General Statistics Office of Viet Nam Portal. Available at: <https://www.nso.gov.vn/bai-top/2026/01/bao-cao-tinh-hinh-kinh-te-xa-hoi-quy-iv-va-nam-2025/> (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

positive growth momentum. These results have been positively evaluated by numerous international organizations and experts, who regard Vietnam as a bright spot in terms of adaptability and resilience against global shocks.

A crucial foundation constituting Vietnam's internal development strength is the gradual shift of the growth model towards enhanced quality, efficiency, and sustainability. The 14th Congress takes place in a context where science and technology, innovation, and digital transformation are clearly identified as the primary drivers of the economy. The promotion of national digital transformation, the development of a digital economy, digital society, and digital government are intrinsically linked with institutional reform, the improvement of the investment and business environment, and the enhancement of national competitiveness. This is viewed as a strategic adjustment aimed at enabling Vietnam to overcome the "middle-income trap" and participate more deeply in high-value-added segments of global production chains.

Parallel to the innovation of the growth model, in recent years, Vietnam has focused resources on the synchronous development of transport infrastructure, digital infrastructure, and energy infrastructure. The system of expressways, seaports, airports, and logistics has been gradually perfected; telecommunications and information technology infrastructure have developed rapidly, creating a foundation for broad-based digital transformation. Meanwhile, the energy development strategy, oriented towards diversifying supply sources and increasing the proportion of renewable energy, contributes to ensuring energy security and sustainable development.

Alongside economic achievements, social security and sustainable poverty reduction policies continue to be implemented effectively, clearly demonstrating the humanistic nature and social responsibility of the Vietnamese State. The multidimensional poverty rate has decreased sharply across periods⁶, while public access to education, healthcare, social insurance, and basic services has increasingly improved. The close linkage between economic growth and social progress and equity has contributed to consolidating socio-political stability, fostering consensus and public trust in the development guidelines of the Party and State.

Based on these achievements and foundations of internal strength, the 14th Congress possesses favorable political-economic conditions to continue affirming and shaping a stable and sustainable development path for Vietnam in the upcoming period. The results achieved after 40 years of *Doi Moi* serve not only as a practical premise but also as a strategic resource for Vietnam to confidently enter a new development phase with higher goals regarding growth quality, competitiveness, and national position in the international arena.

3. DEVELOPMENT VISION AND FOREIGN POLICY MESSAGE FROM THE 14TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

3.1. Context of the 14th National Congress

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam convenes within a distinctive historical context, as the country has undergone nearly four decades of implementing the *Doi Moi* (Renewal) process and attained significant achievements of strategic import across the economic, political, social, defense, security, and foreign affairs domains. After nearly 40 years of renewal, Vietnam has transformed from a centrally planned economy to a socialist-oriented market economy, maintaining a relatively high economic growth rate over a prolonged period, markedly improving the material and spiritual lives of the people, and elevating the country's international position and prestige. These achievements create a crucial foundation while simultaneously necessitating a practical summary, and the supplementation and development of theoretical frameworks to shape new development strategies for the subsequent period.

However, the 14th Congress occurs not only amidst favorable conditions but also confronts numerous new challenges stemming from rapid, complex, and unpredictable fluctuations in the global landscape. Strategic competition among major powers is becoming increasingly acute. Local conflicts, political instability, economic crises, climate change, epidemics, and non-traditional security threats continue to escalate, profoundly impacting the development environment and security of nations, including Vietnam. This context imposes an urgent requirement to enhance strategic adaptability, maintain independence and self-reliance, while proactively and actively engaging in deeper international integration.

The 14th Congress holds particular significance as it is organized during a period when Vietnam is looking towards two pivotal historical milestones: the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 2030 and the centenary of the founding of the country in 2045. These two milestones bear not only symbolic significance but also represent strategic development markers, intrinsically linked to the aspiration of building a powerful and prosperous Vietnam with an increasingly elevated position in the international arena. The clear definition of the long-term development vision to 2030 and 2045 necessitates that the 14th Congress promulgate comprehensive, long-term policy decisions, ensuring the continuity and evolution of the *Doi Moi* line.

It is precisely within this context that the 14th Congress is expected to engender strategic depth in political, economic, and foreign affairs decisions, aiming not only to resolve immediate issues but also to orient the sustainable development of the country for decades to come. The domestic and international context, characterized by an intertwining of opportunities and challenges, has

⁶ General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2023). *Achievements in Poverty Reduction and Policies Supporting the Poor in Viet Nam during the 2016–2022 Period*. General Statistics Office of Viet Nam Portal. Available at: <https://www.nso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2023/10/thanh-tuu-giam-ngheo-va-cac-chinh-sach-ho-tro-nguoi-ngheo-o-viet-nam-giai-doan-2016-2022/> (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

underscored the role of the 14th Congress as a critical milestone in the process of formulating Vietnam's national development strategy in the new era.

3.2. Themes, Tasks, and Objectives of the 14th National Congress

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly defines the vision for national development in the new period, grounded in core strategic values including strategic autonomy, the enhancement of national internal strength, and rapid and sustainable development, while intrinsically linking economic development with peace, stability, and the happiness of the People. Accordingly, the theme of the 14th Congress, comprising 64 words, is articulated as follows: “Under the glorious flag of the Party, uniting strength and will to successfully realize national development goals by 2030; self-reliant and confident in advancing rapidly into the era of national ascendance, for the sake of peace, independence, democracy, prosperity, strength, civilization, and happiness, steadily marching towards socialism”⁷. This represents the inheritance and creative development of themes from previous congresses, while simultaneously reflecting the urgent requirements of reality amidst increasing strategic competition and global volatility.

On this basis, the 14th Congress identifies central, cross-cutting tasks: to continue deepening the comprehensive *Doi Moi* process; to adjust the growth model towards enhanced quality, efficiency, and sustainability; and to link economic growth with social progress, equity, and environmental protection⁸. Furthermore, the Congress emphasizes the requirement to improve leadership capacity, national governance capacity, and the operational efficiency of the political system in the context of deep globalization and the robust unfolding of the scientific-technological revolution and digital transformation.

Regarding long-term development objectives, the 14th Congress sets a clear strategic orientation framework for the milestones of 2030 and 2045. Specifically, by 2030, Vietnam strives to become a developing country with modern industry and upper-middle income; by 2045, to realize the vision of becoming a developed, high-income country, for a Vietnam of peace, independence, democracy, prosperity, strength, civilization, and happiness. The overarching general objective is to maintain a peaceful and stable environment; firmly defend the Fatherland; continuously improve the material and spiritual lives of the People; and consolidate national autonomy, self-reliance, and stature in the new era of development⁹.

For the 2026–2030 period, the 14th Congress proposes several key quantitative development indicators, demonstrating strong and sustainable development aspirations, such as: an average GDP growth rate of 10% per annum or higher; GDP per capita reaching approximately USD 8,500 by 2030; the Human Development Index (HDI) reaching approximately 0.78; the multidimensional poverty rate continuing to decline stably; forest coverage maintained at 42%; and greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 8–9%¹⁰.

To realize the aforementioned objectives, the 14th Congress identifies six central tasks associated with three strategic breakthroughs, emphasizing: (1) institutional breakthroughs for development; (2) the development of high-quality human resources and the building of a cadre corps possessing sufficient quality, capacity, and prestige; and (3) the completion of a modern, synchronous socio-economic infrastructure system serving digital transformation, green transition, and sustainable development¹¹. With the motto “Solidarity – Democracy – Discipline – Breakthrough – Development”, the 14th Congress demonstrates high political resolve to usher the country into a new development phase, achieving breakthroughs and rising strongly in the 21st century.

3.3. The Documents of the 14th National Congress

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam considers and adopts a system of crucial documents, central to which is the Political Report—a document possessing strategic orientation significance for national development in the new period. The documents of the 14th Congress are constructed upon a profound practical review of nearly 40 years of *Doi Moi* (Renewal), while inheriting and developing the Party's theoretical thinking, reflecting the objective requirements of a domestic and international context that is rapidly fluctuating, complex, and unpredictable.

Regarding content and form, the documents are compiled to be concise and condensed yet possess a high level of generalization, integrating core strategic contents concerning socio-economic development, Party building, national defense and security, and foreign affairs. This approach clearly demonstrates the effort to innovate the Party's policy planning thinking, ensuring strict consistency between objectives, tasks, solutions, and implementation organization, thereby enhancing feasibility and

⁷ Nguyen Van Sau (2026). *The Theme of the 14th National Congress of the Party: The Crystallization of Wisdom, Resolve, and the Aspiration for Development*. Communist Party of Viet Nam Online Portal. Available at: <https://dangcongsan.org.vn/tin-tuc-hoat-dong/chu-de-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-lan-thu-xiv-cua-dang-su-ket-tinh-tri-tue-ban-linh-va-khat-vong-phat-trien-.html> (Accessed: 29 January 2026).

⁸ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp. 21–23.

⁹ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp. 20.

¹⁰ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp. 20, 21.

¹¹ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp. 48 - 50.

implementation effectiveness in reality. Major orientations are presented coherently and with focus, avoiding fragmentation, while creating flexible scope for policy management amidst a constantly evolving development environment.

It can be asserted that the documents of the 14th Congress serve as a foundational basis for formulating and adjusting strategies, master plans, socio-economic development plans, and Vietnam's foreign policy in the upcoming period. Through the clear establishment of strategic priorities and long-term objective frameworks, these documents contribute to enhancing the forecasting, coordination, and policy implementation capacity of the political system, enabling Vietnam to be more proactive in responding to global challenges while effectively leveraging development opportunities within the context of deep international integration.

3.4. Orientations of Vietnam's Foreign Policy from the 14th National Congress

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam marks a significant evolution in the country's foreign policy thought and practice, explicitly affirming foreign affairs and international integration as crucial and regular tasks within the national development strategy, equivalent in stature to national defense and security¹². This approach reflects a pivotal shift in the Party's strategic thinking regarding national defense and development amidst a world undergoing profound, epochal fluctuations. Foreign affairs are no longer viewed merely as a supportive tool but have become a pillar constituting comprehensive national power, contributing directly to maintaining a peaceful and stable environment and expanding development space for the country.

A consistent theme in the foreign policy orientation emphasized by the 14th Congress is foreign policy for peace, stability, and the defense of the Fatherland "early and from afar"¹³. In the context of increasingly acute strategic competition among major powers, local conflicts, and rising non-traditional security challenges, foreign affairs are identified as the "front line" in maintaining a peaceful environment, proactively protecting national and ethnic interests, and preventing Vietnam from being drawn into spirals of international confrontation and conflict. This orientation inherits and develops Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic thought, while simultaneously demonstrating Vietnam's proactive, flexible, and resilient thinking in handling relations with partners, particularly major powers, based on independence, self-reliance, and international law.

Concomitantly, the 14th Congress continues to consistently affirm the policy of building Vietnam into a reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community¹⁴. Vietnam steadfastly supports multilateralism, upholds the role of international law and the United Nations Charter, and participates actively and responsibly in global and regional multilateral mechanisms. Practice in recent years indicates that Vietnam not only participates but also proactively contributes to building common norms and "rules of the game" in numerous new fields such as peacekeeping, climate change, food security, energy security, and green transition. This approach contributes to enhancing Vietnam's international prestige and position, while creating a favorable foundation for the country to harness external resources for sustainable development.

A critical highlight in the foreign policy orientation of the 14th Congress is the robust shift in international integration thinking: from "participation" to "contribution", and from "following" to "pioneering"¹⁵. Integration is no longer understood merely as joining existing mechanisms but as a proactive, comprehensive, and extensive process wherein Vietnam participates in shaping international rules, standards, and agendas, particularly in new global domains such as the digital economy, green transition, science and technology, and innovation. This paradigm shift reflects the maturity of Vietnamese diplomacy and demonstrates the country's strong aspiration to rise in the new era of development.

To realize these foreign policy objectives, the 14th Congress emphasizes the requirement to leverage comprehensive national power and soft power, through the synchronous deployment of three foreign affairs pillars: Party diplomacy, State diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy¹⁶. These pillars are closely linked with cultural diplomacy, external information service, and work regarding the overseas Vietnamese community, aiming to enhance soft power and project the image of a peaceful, humanistic, dynamic, and responsible Vietnam. Cultural diplomacy is identified not only as a tool for promoting the national image but also as a method for fostering empathy, trust, and a social foundation for long-term diplomatic relations.

The overarching message that the 14th Congress sends to the international community is the image of a stable, proactive, cooperative, and responsible Vietnam, utilizing diplomacy as a driving force to pave the way for development and the realization

¹² Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp.19.

¹³ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp.20.

¹⁴ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, pp.36.

¹⁵ Doan Ca (2026). *Viet Nam's Foreign Affairs: A Year of Dynamism and Success*. People's Army Newspaper. Available at: <https://www.qdnd.vn/chinh-tri/cac-van-de/doi-ngoai-viet-nam-trai-qua-mot-nam-soi-dong-va-thanh-cong-1023615> (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

¹⁶ Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (2025). *Draft Action Programme of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*, *Draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee to the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam*. Hanoi, p. 4.

of national goals by 2045. This message has received attention and positive evaluation from numerous international partners and organizations. The Singaporean Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. Rajpal Singh, expressed being impressed by the development vision to 2045 outlined by Vietnamese leadership at the Congress, suggesting this presents a significant opportunity for Singaporean enterprises to expand cooperation with Vietnam towards ambitious development goals. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Vietnam, Ms. Pauline Tamesis, affirmed that the UN stands ready to cooperate closely with Vietnam in responding to non-traditional security challenges, promoting innovation, digital transformation, green transition, and ensuring human rights. Numerous other ambassadors, such as representatives from Switzerland, Belarus, Bangladesh, and Timor-Leste, also highly appreciated Vietnam's increasingly positive role in the international community and expressed a desire to continue strengthening cooperation¹⁷.

It is evident that the international community increasingly expects Vietnam to be not only an attractive investment destination but also a partner in co-creating value, participating more deeply in global supply chains and the digital economy. The foreign policy orientation of the 14th Congress, characterized by proactiveness, resilience, and high responsibility, creates a solid foundation for Vietnam to meet these expectations.

CONCLUSION

The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirms its role as a strategic political milestone, defining the long-term development vision and international integration orientation of the country within a volatile global context. Grounded in nearly 40 years of Doi Moi, the Congress not only consolidates the political-economic foundation for sustainable development but also opens up new development space through a proactive, resilient, and responsible foreign policy. This establishes a firm basis for Vietnam to rise strongly, asserting its position and making positive contributions to peace, cooperation, and sustainable development in the region and the world.

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¹⁷ Nha Nam (2026). *Notification of the Outcomes of the 14th National Congress to Foreign Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations in Viet Nam*. Official Information Portal of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam. Available at: <https://daihoidangtoanquoc.vn/thong-bao-ket-qua-dai-hoi-xiv-toi-cac-co-quan-dai-dien-ngoai-giao-nuoc-ngoai-cac-to-chuc-quoc-te-tai-viet-nam-post2912.html> (Accessed: 2 February 2026).

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