

Fostering the seaport infrastructure development

DINH LA THANG
Party's central committee member,
Minister of Transport

The 21st century is expected to be century of ocean. With the geographical position advantage which is lying along the shoreline and on one of the busiest international maritime transport routes of the region and the world, there are many favorable conditions for Vietnam to develop sea economy, especially seaports, maritime transport services, as a driving force for sustainable social – economic development.

The 10th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam Session 4 passed a Resolution regarding the Vietnam sea strategy to 2020 with a goal of bringing Vietnam to be strong in maritime sector, enriching from sea, ensuring strong national sovereignty at sea and islands, which contributes an important force to the industrialization and modernization. The resolution clearly indicated that, maritime economy will be ranked No. 2 among sea economies (just behind oil exploitation and procession) to 2020 and No.1 after 2020. As so, to the Communist Party and Government, development of the maritime economy are seen a breakthrough in sea economy development in particular and social-economic development in general in the coming period. To be successful in implementing the resolution, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) has been instructing implementers to focus on developing and managing port infrastructure in line with the Planning and comprehensively; developing logistics, maritime infrastructure.

Implementation of the national seaport system planning has been gaining some certain achievements so far. However, there are also many things which really need to be modified and updated in order to suitable to new situation. The Prime Minister has approved the development plan of Vietnam's seaport system till 2020 and orientations to 2030. In particular, the national port system must be capable enough to handle forecasted cargo throughput of 500 to 600 million tons /year in 2015, of about one billion tons/year in 2020 and about 1.6 to 2.1 billion tons/year in 2030. The Ministry of Transport has also approved the detailed planning of six groups in Vietnam's seaport system which consist of 39 ports, inclusive of 1A graded three ports (Van Phong international transshipment port, Hai Phong two international port hubs and Cai Mep - Thi Vai port), and 1 graded 11 ports.

Being assessed the situation seriously and quantitatively, in recent years, even though the State budget focuses on developing common infrastructures (navigational channels, breakwaters) and some key port projects located at some focused economic zones, attractiveness degree for socialization is not high actually. Basically, investments made before 2010 met essential needs only, and they could not be successful to be a breakthrough force for turning our country to become one of the maritime centers in the region. In the coming time, the state budget run by the Ministry of Transport will focus on key projects and establishing deep-water seaports which are capable enough to handle long haul ocean voyage and to perform as international transshipment hub. To ensure feasibility, Van Phong international transshipment port which Vinalines is appointed as the project owner is calling for investment of foreign investors who have available resources and experience. Also, upgrading and rehabilitation of navigational channel and maritime infrastructure shall be continues to ensure the stable and efficient operation synchronous with the seaports at some areas.

For the effective development and exploitation of seaports with taking continuities, synchronization into account, the development of infrastructure connecting to seaports is one of the key factors. Apart from the establishment of modern and international standards seaports enabling handling large vessels as directed by the Prime Minister and Ministry of Transport, Vietnam Maritime Bureau is carrying out a study of seaport management model which should be synchronous and uniform and supported by advance software and technology system so that seaport system enables to be competitive against other transshipment centers in the region. To maximize effective role of a international transshipment port/ international gateway , besides huge cargo volume required and good connecting infrastructure, it is necessary to have measures and policies to attract container cargos called at ports and involvement of big shipping lines in making investment and operation of logistics services so that Vietnam transport services can join in the global transport service chains. Vietnam Despite of favorable advantages, we have also facing many challenges due to poor logistic infrastructure; inadequate and inappropriate policy framework, weak containers fleet.

With the goal of developing the maritime economy to become a leader among other fields of sea economy, the Ministry of Transport has determined that investment plan should focus on not only port infrastructure development but also Vietnam ships be modern and international, especially container ships. Moreover, appropriate strategy and policy framework which facilitate to develop logistic services drastically are also taken into account. The Vietnam's sea strategy to 2020 clearly

determined its mission to develop the sea economy in line with sky zone control and protection of sea, islands and to establish national defense associated with people's security.

During the past time, along with the port infrastructure, synchronous development of infrastructure services supporting operational activities of seaport and maritime transport to fully meet requirements on infrastructure facilities in accordance with international conventions on the sea and maritime in which Vietnam is a member has been deploying by authorities in transportation sector. Also, a coordination among ministries has also very been successfully in combating and negotiating with the COSPAS - SARSAT organization and neighboring countries about VNLUT/MCC of Vietnam. At the same time, cooperation relations with other maritime organizations and countries to receive technical assistance and funds to develop maritime infrastructure and human resources were promoted. The Ministry continues to perfect information technology system supporting sea economic activities in order to concretize and civilize the national sea areas, to participate effectively in operational activities of the International Maritime Organization and other relevant international organizations which Vietnam is a member, to plan and execute specific programs so that Vietnam could become a member of International Maritime Organization (group C). As so, it also shows great contribution to enhance Vietnam's position on the international rank in the field of maritime and to assert Vietnam' sovereignty at sea areas and islands.

With these objectives and infrastructure development orientation in seaport sector in particular and Vietnamese maritime industry in general, responsibilities as well as workload of the Ministry of Transport and authorities of maritime industry are huge. In addition to the efforts and commitments of the industry, it is really essential for obtaining attention and instruction of the Party and Government and close cooperation/coordination of concerned ministries and industries, aiming at to achieve sustainable development of maritime economy as per spirit of the Resolution.

(vinamarine.gov.vn)

(08 Dec 2011)

(Translated by Portcoast)