



## Peace Boat passengers lend support to dioxin victims

(19-06-2007)

DA NANG — Passengers on the Peace Boat that visited Da Nang on Saturday voiced their support for the lawsuit filed by Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange against 37 US companies that manufactured the toxic defoliant sprayed by US army during the war in Viet Nam.

A delegation from the Peace Boat led by captain Yoshioka Tatsuyta joined a conference on legacies of war – Agent Orange and its aftermath, which was jointly organised by the Da Nang Association of Agent Orange Victims, the Peace Boat, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) last week.

The conference, which is part of the GPPAC Asia Pacific Inter-regional Forum Activities in Viet Nam, was held to show support for the lawsuit.

Some 20 GPPAC members from around the world attended the forum, where they watched documentaries on veterans and their descendants who had been affected by the war.

Pham Lenh, 62, a former soldier of Battalion No 2 of the Sai Gon Regime's Paratrooper Division, said his three children who are AO victims have received Government help and support.

Marte Hellema, a GPPAC member from the Netherlands, said it was the first time she saw the suffering of Agent Orange victims in Viet Nam.

She said US veterans exposed to Agent Orange were compensated US\$180 million while Vietnamese dioxin victims received nothing. "It's unjust!" she said.

"We stand side by side with you because the fight for justice is still ahead," said Yoshioka.

The chairwoman of Da Nang Association of Agent Orange Victims, Nguyen Thi Van Lan, said millions of Vietnamese people had been affected by dioxin.

"Our main concern is that the cause for congenital malformation is the effect of dioxin."

A survey among 174,198 AO victims reveals that there are 169,193 children (the first generation) and 5,005 grandchildren (the second generation) affected.

Lan said the Vietnamese Government had implemented social policies to support those who joined in the war and their affected children.

The conference wrapped up after delegates signed their names on a document calling for support for Vietnamese AO victims.

### Showing loyalty

An online chorus programme to support Agent Orange/dioxin (AO) victims was performed on Sunday, one day before the Vietnamese AO/dioxin lawsuit before the US Court of Appeals in New York.

The special show, organised by the Viet Nam Association of Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) and website [www.nhacso.net](http://www.nhacso.net), was launched with the song "Why did you die?" written by the late Thanh Truc in 1985 and performed by My Le with translations in English, Chinese, French, Japanese and Russian.

As many as 157,682 people took part in the one-hour show and append online signatures to a petition at [www.dongcavicongly.com](http://www.dongcavicongly.com) in support of the victims, said Nguyen Ngoc Long, the website's editor, including many from the US, UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Two chorus shows will also be held at Hoa Binh village and Youth Cultural Palace in HCM City and a fund-raising CD will also be released. — VNS



Delegates from the Peace Boat attend the conference on legacies of war – Agent Orange and its aftermath in Da Nang. — VNS Photo Ngoc Tuan

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