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Agrarian  
reform

2 November 1956

Mr. David C. D. Wurfel  
Southeast Asia Program  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York

Dear David:

Attached are copies of the notes that we made on the March 9th and 10th conference of tenant farmers. I hope that they will be of use to you.

It was good to meet and have an opportunity to talk with you during your stay in Saigon.

Sincerely,

Walter W. Mode  
Chief, Field Administration  
Division

Enclosures

Nationwide Conference of Tenant Farmers' Representatives, held on March 9 and 10, 1956.  
Reporter: Hoc

Secretary of Agrarian Reform's answers to tenant farmers' representatives' requests.

- I agree with you in prolonging the term of B and C category contracts. But I remaind you that, according to the present rules, farmers who work on B or C contract may sign a contract of category A after the first contract is terminated. However, we will study this over.

- The Department will organize an Agrarian Reform court to try all cases concerning A. R matters (disputes on lands).

- I agree with you that in case a tenant does not have enough money to buy the land he is working on, he will have right to continue until the contract is terminated. But we should think it over, because there are cases in which the buyer, he himself, has no other land to work on. As for the loans most of you have requested to be granted to needy tenants so that they can buy lands, I remind you that is what we are mainly interested in, because that is the Department's basic aim. Still, this is a problem that depends on many others, such as financial problems, foreign aid problems, etc. Therefore, we'll have to study it over.

- As for the rent rate problem, please discuss it before you express your desire about it. I would like to tell you that in other countries where there is an Agrarian Reform program, they apply only one rent.

- For the fixing of the A.R. Joint Committees' authority, in a coming modifying decree, the Joint Committees will have the right to make limited final decisions. As for the subsidy you ask, after the present rules are modified, we'll strive to satisfy you.

- We will strive to satisfy you about questions of loans for buffaloes, and of short and medium term loans. As for the questions of helping you to have buffaloes that can fit with the climate in Vietnam and to have loans of money on time, we'll have the technical services and the U.S.O.M. manage as how to bring back a satisfactory result.

- For the question of cooperatives, we are sending specialist teams to places to study local conditions, so, be assured that in the near future cooperatives will be established everywhere.

- For the question of salt marshes, we have just received the documents about them from the Department of Finance. We promise you that we will go right to the marshes to work out measures on the spot.

Here are the aspirations of farmers all over the country.

OoooooO

After the Congress at the Department of Land Registration and Agrarian Reform on March 9, 1956, every representative of the tenant farmers all over the country set up the following Motion to submit the farmers' common aspirations to the Government.

In view of maintaining this Motion, after the Congress at the Department of Land Registration, the representatives met at the headquarters of the League of Farmers to establish a Syndicate of Farmers in each province.

Motion of the farmers all over the country to be submitted after the Congress at the Department of Land Registration and Agrarian Reform on March 9, 1956

We, the Representatives of the tenant farmers in all the provinces of the Republic of Vietnam, in compliance with the appeal of the Secretary of State for Land Registration and Agrarian Reform, unanimously submit the following motion to the Government for approval:

1. We thoroughly support the Government of the Republic of Vietnam under the leadership of President Ngô đinh Diệm.
2. We are very glad that the Secretary of State for Land Registration and Agrarian Reform has kindly called us for meeting at the Department to contribute opinions and to examine and study faults committed on the occasion of applying and diffusing Agrarian Reform programs.

Decision:

We are asking all levels of Administration to execute impartially and rapidly the rules of Agrarian Reform promulgated by the Government.

Ordinance No 2

1. Contracts of category A

- a. After a delay of one month, beginning from April (solar calender) if a landowner does not agree on signing contracts with a tenant-farmer, the latter is allowed to sign them with the village council.

b. We are asking the Government to allow the landowner or the Village Council to raise the delays of the contracts of Category A if the tenant farmer does not violate any provision in these contracts.

c. Contracts must be based upon the average crops and not based upon kinds of land.

We must thoroughly apply the punishments of Article 28 Ordinance No. 2, to the intransigent landowners or tenant-farmers who do not execute contracts.

## 2. Right of keeping rice-land for cultivation.

a; We are asking the Government to order right of keeping rice-land for cultivation for tenant-farmers in compliance with the spirit of ordinance No 2.

b. We beg the Government to allow tenant-farmers to continue to cultivate land and pay rice, according to the communique of July 12, 1955 issued by the Delegation for the Government, when they enter an action.

c. The Government is obliged to order rights of keeping rice-land for cultivation back to the tenant farmers who lost rice-lands owing to the landowners' oppressions, in the last crop.

To use appropriate methods to defend the rights of keeping rice-lands for cultivation of tenant-farmers.

## 3. Buying priority right.

a. We are asking the Government to fix the status of the buying priority right.

b. If tenant-farmers can not buy rice-lands, landowners must respect their rights of keeping rice-lands for cultivation in accordance with Article 11, Ordinance No 2.

## 4. Rent

a. We decide to maintain the rent-rate of from 15 o/o to 25o/o

- Depending of average crops
- Applying rent-rates, high or low, according to the yields of each rice-land, many or few.

b. We are asking the Government to abolish the contracts which have delays of one or two years and require too high rents.

c. We are asking the Government to abolish any auction of the communal fields and private fields that have contracts of 3 years, to provide them regularly for poor families. Each family is not distributed more than 2 hectares and is allowed to pay low rents.

#### 5. Agrarian Reform Joint Committees.

a. When its function time ends, i-e, in 1956, Agrarian Reform Joint Committees at every levels must be re-elected in compliance with the spirit of Ordinance No 2.

b. Juridical Board designates spheres for Agrarian Reform Committees at every levels.

c. We are asking the Government to subsidize the cadres of Agrarian Reform Joint Committees at every levels.

d. To help to train them.

#### 6. Questions of Loans:

Money, buffaloes, cows, fertilizers.

We are asking the Government:

a. To raise loans in money on farmers' cultivation time (at the beginning of April, Solar Calender)

b. To lend money to farmers so that they can buy buffaloes, cows, themselves.

c. We propose that the Government pay special attention to tenant-farmers of category A and help them satisfactorily because they are very poor.

#### 7. Agrarian Reform Tribunal.

We beg the Government:

a. Order an Agrarian Reform Tribunal establish to judge questions concerning farmers and to judge conflicts between tenant farmers and land-owners urgently within ten days.

## b. Abolish justice expenses for farmers

8. Order to abolish foreign residents' possessions of rice-lands.
9. Requisition ownerless concessions to distribute to farmers.
10. Take back the rice-lands that foreign residents and feudal natives had illegally sold to farmers with the condition that the latters must pay rice without delay.
11. Set up the policy of dividing communal fields, communal lands . . . for farmers.
12. Order to execute the freedom of Syndicate of Farmers.
13. Break up abandoned fields by giving money to build dams, dikes, drains; by giving farm implements, ploughs, water pumps, tractors, insecticide-pumps.
14. Fix retention-rates (ceiling of holding) according to each region so that farmers have rice-lands to cultivate.
15. Set up regulations for salt marshes.

We, all the representatives of tenant-farmers, attending the Congress of Farmers all over the country, have confidence in the sagacious leadership of President Ngô dinh Diệm.

This Motion shall be approved and executed thoroughly and urgently in order to defend tenant-farmers' interests.

(SAIGON MỚI, March 12, 13, 1956)

Additional notes on the nationwide conference of tenant farmers' representatives, held on March 9 and 10 1956. - Hoc.

1. Contracts

1/5 of the representatives ask to raise the delays of the contracts of category B and C. (5 out of 20 representatives).

Almost 1/2 (9 out of 20 representatives who talked) agree with the present rules and request that the gov't will see to it that the rules must be strictly applied.

2. Right of keeping rice-land for cultivation

Nothing else

3. Buying priority right

2/3 of the representatives (6 out of 9 representatives who talked) request the gov't for help in loans so that they can buy the land which landowners want to sell. 1/3 ask for the right of keeping the land for cultivation until the contract is terminated, in case they don't have enough money to buy the land.

4. Rent rate

3 out 16 representatives who talked, asked to have maximum rate amount to 300/o

5. Agrarian Reform Joint Committees

1/2 of the representatives who talked (7 out of 14) asked that A.R. joint committees, especially those of the villages, should have a fixed authority and a certain subsidy so that they can be more effective and help the farmers. 4 out of 14 representatives who talked, asked for a certain subsidy for the joint Committees.

2 out of 14 request that the gov't should fix the authority to the joint committees so that they can carry out the work effectively.

2 out of 14 suggest that the Gov't should see to it that the joint Committees' members must be well trained.

6. Questions of loans: money, buffaloes, cows, fertilizers.

11 out of 23 representatives request that gov't lend them money so that they can buy local buffaloes or cows, instead of granting them buffaloes from Thailand because they found that the buffaloes brought by the Gov't from Thailand are not accustomed with the conditions in Vietnam.

3 representatives from the provinces of Binh Thuan, Thua Thien and Tra Vinh complain that they have submitted their petition for buffaloes and loans, long ago, but until now they haven't receive any buffaloes and loans yet.

4 representatives of tenants from the provinces of Sadec, Mytho, Chau Doc and Go Cong request the gov't to send buffaloes and loans on time so that they can do their crops.

The tenants' representatives in Tan An and Chaudoc complain that buffaloes and loans are granted unjustly. In Tanan province, only those who are rich and of influence can have buffaloes, and sometimes they found that even those who don't do the farming can have loans.

#### 7. Miscellany

Following are miscellaneous requests from:

- Cameu: build a dike against sea-water
- Baria: Agricultural cooperatives should be organized by Civic Action agents. Dig a drainage canal.
- Bentre: 70o/o crop lands are overcome by sea-water; thus we need money to build a drainage system.
- Bien hoa: Give a pumping machine to each district in the province.
- I.L.D.L.C. (workers' gen'l confederation): Call an inter-departmental committee which will be headed by the Dep't of Agrarian Reform to solve problems caused by disputes on lands. Because, many times the disputes take the form of a political denunciation, and in those cases, the Dep't of A.R., by itself, becomes really helpless.
- Gocong: Distribute public lands to tenant farmers only.
- Rachgia: Help organize agricultural cooperatives and provide us with plowing machines and devices for building dams.
- Soctrang: Distribute public lands to farmers.
- Vinh Long: Give money to build dams. Send more A.R. agents to the province: at least we must have one agent for each canton.
- Thua Thien: Stop the sea-water from Thuan An bay. Send to each province 6 more A.R. agents.
- Quang Ngai: Provide us with pumping machines to avoid dryness. Convene a third meeting between landowner and tenant representatives so as to draw out a combined result.
- Quangtri: Provide us with pumping machines to avoid dryness for the coming crop. And also effective insecticide.
- QuangNam: See to it that manufactures (silk) are set up to escape unemployment. Train more agents and give us some to carry out the program (it really has no achievement).
- Phanrang: We need pumping machines to fight against drought.

- Phuyen: Sell rice need to farmers and re-establish former agricultural cooperatives.
- Khanhhoa: Provide us with (phosphate de zinc) to fight against rat plague. Establish more agricultural cooperatives.
- Binh thuan: 14,375 ha of lands are uncultivated for lack of dams and canals for irrigations, gov't should help us to build dams and dig canals.
- Binh Dinh: General help because the province has already been exhausted.