

Opening Remarks by Jean-Pascal Torréton

Representative of IRD in Việt Nam

*Dear Mr. Đỗ Hoài Nam, President of the
Administrative Board of the VASS Social
Sciences Training Institute,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues, organisers and participants,*

The IRD has been contributing to this summer school since its creation in 2007 and is happy to be actively participating with its partners in this 2014 edition. I shall here underline a few characteristics of this summer school, which correspond to the reasons for the support and involvement of the IRD. I have identified at least six:

- This partnership with the Việt Nam Academy of Social Sciences is maintained by the annually renewed willingness of its President. This co-construction converges with the wish of the IRD to define and achieve common targets with our partners from the South with an ethical approach to the partnership;
- This summer school has only been made possible thanks to a long-term partnership between the Social Sciences Academy, the AFD, the EFEO, the AUF, the IRD and the University of Nantes. Such a long-term inter-institutional partnership also corresponds to the type of action desired by our Institute for the benefit of our partners in the South;
- This summerschool offers a place of intensive training for scientific managers, university teachers and researchers whose analyses

will serve to define public policies that aim to meet the challenges of development. This transfer of scientific method and study methodologies corresponds precisely to one of the IRD's missions. The publication in three languages of the proceedings, which capitalise on these training efforts, also constitute a quality for which the organising team may take credit;

- The IRD is convinced of the interest in maintaining scientific networks of doctoral students, young researchers and university teachers. Indeed, besides their role of training and transfer, the JTD also fulfil an important function of creating a network of social scientists;
- The crosscutting and interdisciplinary approach, which provides the necessary conditions for rising to the challenge of development, is also in line with IRD methods. You will find an example again this year, with the participation of IRD economists and modellers in the summer school's thematic workshops;
- Finally, the opening of the JTD to neighbouring countries that has been operating since 2010, by favouring the development and management of regional dynamics of research, also corresponds here to the missions the IRD has set itself in order to favour as much as possible the regionalisation of its research, training, and transfer activities. The theme

chosen this year is “a methodological, crosscutting and operational approach to the subject of sustainable urban development”.

I am particularly ill-informed on this subject, and indeed count on learning more about the field of urban development during these JTD, but urban transition, which is happening very quickly in developing countries, evidently raises numerous challenges that decision-makers must face in order to deal with the sustainability of this urban development.

This urban development is particularly dynamic in Asia and the challenges are not only limited to the megapoles that generally first spring to mind. According to the United Nations, in 2025, cities of less than 500,000 inhabitants will constitute the most common type of agglomerations in the world and will be home to more than two billion people, that is to say 42% of the total number of city dwellers in the world.

The multiplicity and interdependence of these challenges, in terms of supplies and access to services, the environmental issues they raise, their public health aspect, and questions of security in the face of disasters, mean that research in this domain must more than ever be multidisciplinary in order to provide the answers, the tools, and methods that will be useful to communities.

The multiplicity and diversity of the players and the beneficiaries of this development means that this research must also be the subject of multi-institutional partnerships that associate as much as possible public authorities and decision-makers, citizens, private enterprises, development players, and university teachers and researchers.

This very broad area of research is included in the priority themes of the IRD's 2011-2015 contract of objectives among which it is possible to mention:

- Understanding the link between the emergence of urban needs and their developments, which are constrained by economic stakes and the commodification of international exchanges;
- Urban sanitation issues, wastewater treatment and use in Southern megapoles;
- The relationship between health and the environment that is still often underestimated in Southern countries. Beyond aspects directly linked to sanitation, infectious diseases or their vectors of infections do not emerge or spread in the same way in urban and rural areas, if only for reasons of connectivity, human concentration, or niches.

Indeed, two-thirds of the research units of the Social Science Department at the IRD are working to different degrees on the urban sector; these units include geographers, historians, urban planners, demographers, and economists.

In the region, the “Urban Territories” project (2013-2016) developed by the UMR PALOC concerns the analysis of institutional changes, methods of urban governance, and power relationships, notably through the conditions of international cooperation and their effects on decentralisation in Laos.

The INVERSES project “Informality, administration and the hidden side of urban spaces” carried out by the UMR URMIS and financed by the Paris Town Hall aims to study the forms of governance and urban control in Jakarta and Manila, from a theoretical standpoint

that is often neglected: nocturnal activities and occupation of space.

The UMR *Développement et Sociétés* is studying, for its part, the “river-dwelling populations” in Hồ Chí Minh City and Hà Nội, who slip under the radar of censuses and increase *de facto* the urban population that should be taken into account for urban planning.

The UMR CEPED is working more on the peri-urbanisation of Hà Nội and is particularly analysing the challenges generated by the implantation of industrial zones, which principally employ migrant workers, in the neighbourhood of clusters of craft villages.

The UMR DIAL that has been present in Việt Nam since 2005 has, as well as working on other programmes, carried out research into the labour market and particularly the informal sector that is a major component of the urban working population. In Hà Nội and Hồ Chí Minh City, specific surveys into this sector were carried out in 2007 and 2009 and resulted in published work. These surveys will resume in the near future and be extended to the whole of the country.

As well as these social sciences teams, other IRD teams specialising in health or in the environment and resources are working on related issues.

The UMR MIVEGEC is working in Việt Nam in the field of human epidemiology on the phylogeography of the dengue virus in the city of Hà Nội and the synchrony of dengue epidemics in different cities in Việt Nam. Asynchronous dynamics in different cities might indeed give a new boost to the epidemic from neighbouring populations where there is high prevalence after a local extinction of the virus.

Finally, the UMI UMMISCO, among its other projects, models and simulates urban growth dynamics in Cần Thơ and Phnom Penh and their impact on the increased exposure of populations to water-related risks and to the epidemiological risks of vector-borne disease closely linked to water, such as dengue.

This quick review of the qualities of this summer school and IRD activities linked to urban development demonstrates that the objectives, method and content of the JTD “A Glance at Sustainable Urban Development” is in close convergence with the missions of our Institute.

In conclusion, I hope you have rewarding workshops, lively debates, and rich exchanges for this 8th edition of the JTD and I thank you for your attention.



Conférences
& Séminaires

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July 2015

A Glance at Sustainable Urban Development

Methodological, Crosscutting and
Operational Approaches

Regional Social Sciences Summer University
“Tam Đảo Summer School Week” (Đà Lạt, Việt Nam)
July 2014

A Glance at Sustainable Urban Development

Methodological, Crosscutting and Operational Approaches

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