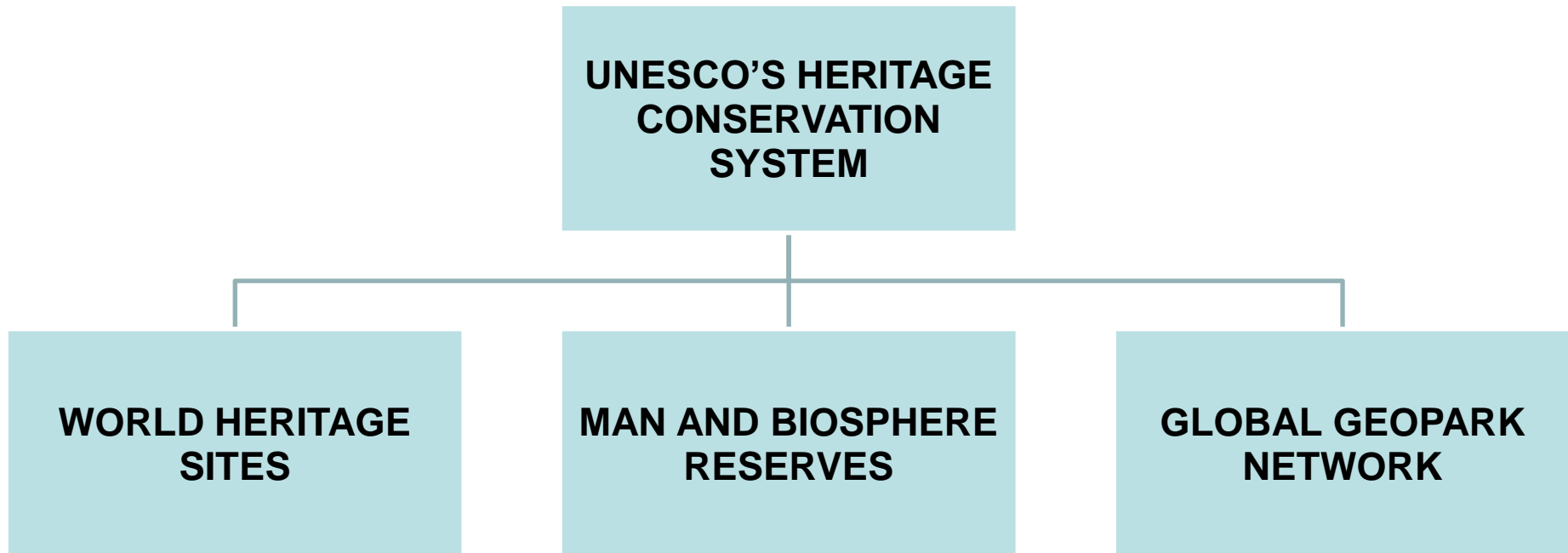


INTERNATIONAL UNESCO CONFERENCE ON GEOPARKS

Potential and Progress of Geopark Development in Vietnam



BRIEF INTRODUCTION ON GEOHERITAGE AND GEOPARK



1972;
1031; 802; 197; 32;
163 countries;
Vietnam: 5.

1977;
651;
120 countries;
Vietnam: 9.

2004 (2000);
120;
33 countries;
Vietnam: 1.

PROBLEMS IN VIETNAM

- ✓ Vietnam's legal framework recognizes the importance of Heritage, incl. Geoheritage, Conservation;
- ✓ Vietnam has good potential for Geopark and Geotourism development;
- ✓ Vietnamese geoscientists learned about concept early and started some activities in these directions;

Still, first Geopark in Vietnam was set up only in Sept., 2009 in Ha Giang province and recognized by GGN in 2010. A few more under preparation.

Why so slow? What are the problems?

1. Improper scientific understanding results in inadequate management

Although nature conservation has started in Vietnam long time ago, unfortunately, only some aspects such as biodiversity or special ecosystems are emphasized:

- ✓ As early as 1962, the first national park of Vietnam - the Cuc Phuong National Park - was established;

- ✓ Now, more than 130 conservation areas, incl. 28 National Parks, 62 Nature Reserves and 38 Landscape Protected Areas (> 2.5 million ha or app. 6% of on-land country territory);
- ✓ Marine conservation also started with first pilot project at Hon Mun (Khanh Hoa prov.) in 2001. MARD plans to set up 15 Marine Protected Areas (MPA) during 2006-2015;

1. Improper scientific understanding results in inadequate management

Some areas of international significance e.g.:

- ✓ 02 WHSites;
- ✓ 08 UNESCO MABs;
- ✓ 02 RAMSARs;
- ✓ 04 ASEAN Heritage Parks;

1. Improper scientific understanding results in inadequate management

Conservation of geoheritages remains very modest. Very few conservation area where geological values emphasized.

- ❖ However, both WHSites not by biodiversity but geological-geomorphological criteria;
- ❖ 3rd candidate also on geological-geomorphological criteria;

2. No consistent and unified State management for conservation areas

- ❖ Some NPs, NRs by the Government but others by provincial, even district authorities (mostly Forest Rangers) with insufficient staffing;
- ❖ As a result, most areas have no holistic, comprehensive conservation approach, emphasizing only some aspects (mostly biodiversity);

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 1996, after 30th Beijing IGC, Geological Museum of Vietnam started project “Study on geological conservation areas of Vietnam” (2001-2004);
- ✓ Institute of Oceanography and Vietnam’s Department of Geology and Minerals helped the UNESCO’s recognition of Ha Long Bay as WHS in 1994 (by landscape criterion) and in 2000 (by geological-geomorphological criterion);

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 2003 the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park got UNESCO WHS thanks to geoscientists from Hanoi National University in collaboration with UK Royal Geographical Society;

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ During 2003 and 2004, VIGMR conducted systematic surveys and studies on the geological-geomorphological values of the existing Pu Luong Nature Reserve (Thanh Hoa province) and the Ngoc Son-Ngo Luong area (Hoa Binh province), which helped the local authority to establish a new Nature Reserve;

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ Sept. 2004 organized Trans-Karst 2004, more than 100 international guests from 42 countries and 250 domestic participants.

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 2005-2006 VIGMR helped the Ba Be National Park in preparing the UNESCO nomination documents for the WHS title, where geological-geomorphological criteria play the decisive role.

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 2006 VIGMR set up a working group on Geopark and Geotourism;
- ✓ In 2007 started a Vietnamese-Belgian project on “Integrated capacity building through research-based geopark development in NE Vietnam”, key area in Dong Van Karst Plateau, Ha Giang province (2007-2012);

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 2008 started a State-funded research project “Assessment of geoheritage potential and recommendation of geoparks in North Vietnam”, (KC.08.20) (2008-2010), in 25 key areas;
- ✓ March 2009, UNESCO Vietnam established at VIGMR National Focal Point on Geopark Network Development in Vietnam

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ In 2006 attended Geopark Symposium in China;
- ✓ In 2007 attended Geopark Conference in Langkawi, first discussion on setting up APGGN;
- ✓ In 2008, attended Geopark Conference in Osnabruek, contributing to setting up APGGN; Visit China;
- ✓ Sept. 2009, Int. Workshop in DVKP, setting up the first geopark in Vietnam;

3. Some Geopark and Geotourism oriented activities in Vietnam and future plan

- ✓ Preparing dossier for UNESCO Global Geopark title for the DVKP Geopark;
- ✓ In 2010 prepare legal framework for setting up, appraisal, assessment, management etc. of geopark network in Vietnam;
- ✓ In 2010 prepare to expand survey and assessment of geoheritage and geopark potential in South Vietnam;
- ✓ In 2014 the Government approved a State-funded program on geopark development and management in the whole Vietnam;
- ✓ At present several aspiring geoparks are set up in North, Central Vietnam and Central Highland. So we are speeding up.

What is lacking?

In order to materialize this potential, so as to actually conserve geoheritages and to bring socio-economic and environmental benefits from them, Vietnam still has a lot more to do e.g.:

- ✓ A correct understanding about Geoheritage, Georeserve, or even about National Park or World Natural Heritage etc.;
- ✓ A proper understanding about geosciences and their role, both from the society and the geologists themselves;
- ✓ A strong juridical framework etc.