#### **PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND ENSURING HUMAN RIGHTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

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#### **Abstract:**

#### **Purpose:** This paper aims to systematically analyze the relationship between promoting democracy and ensuring human rights in the context of contemporary development and international integration, with a particular focus on Vietnam. The objective is to clarify the role of democracy as both a method for establishing a humane society and a catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development.

#### **Method:** The study is conducted using a theoretical analysis–synthesis approach combined with empirical evaluation. The author employs theoretical frameworks on democracy and human rights while analyzing current legal documents, policies, and empirical data from Vietnam to elucidate the content and interrelationship between these two categories.

#### **Findings:** The research indicates that promoting democracy is closely linked to the protection of human rights. In the context of Vietnam, although significant achievements have been made, there remain institutional limitations, challenges in policy implementation, and issues related to social awareness.

#### **Result and Conclusion:**

#### The article proposes several key solution groups to enhance the effectiveness of democracy promotion and human rights protection, including: improving the legal and institutional framework, strengthening education on human rights, and promoting transparency and accountability in state governance. The conclusion emphasizes that effectively managing the relationship between democracy and human rights is a prerequisite for building a progressive and civilized society.

#### **Originality/Value:**

#### This article offers a systematic and context-specific approach within the Vietnamese setting, shedding light on the strategic role of democracy and human rights in the national development process. It serves as a valuable reference for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders concerned with institutional reform and sustainable development.

#### **Keywords:** Democracy; Human Rights; Rule of Law; Political Institutions; Equality and Freedom

**Introduction**

Promoting democracy and ensuring human rights are both universal and context-specific goals in the political and social development of every nation. These two objectives are dialectically interrelated, ultimately aiming at the realization of individual freedom. In the context of globalization and deep international integration, the fulfillment of human rights is closely tied to the construction and enhancement of substantive democracy that places human beings at its center. In Vietnam, the Communist Party and the State have affirmed that the development of socialist democracy is a driving force for sustainable development and social progress. However, in practice, significant challenges arise in simultaneously ensuring political stability and expanding democratic space so that human rights are genuinely respected and protected. This paper provides a systematic assessment of the current state of democracy promotion and human rights protection in Vietnam and proposes feasible solutions to improve the quality of democracy and the effectiveness of human rights implementation under the conditions of a socialist-oriented market economy.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in the theoretical foundation of democracy and human rights, emphasizing that democracy serves as a prerequisite for ensuring human rights, while the respect for and implementation of human rights is a reflection of substantive democracy.

Firstly, the research builds upon the ideas of Beetham (1999) and Diamond (2004) regarding *substantive democracy*, which highlight that democracy does not merely consist of regular elections, but also includes critical elements such as the rule of law, freedom of information, political participation, and the accountability of government to its citizens (Beetham, 1999; Diamond & Morlino, 2004). The concept of *accountable democracy* is also employed to analyze the role of citizen oversight in public governance (Fung & Wright, 2003).

Secondly, the study approaches human rights based on key international documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966). It also integrates the perspectives of Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s thought, the views of the Communist Party of Vietnam on democracy and human rights, the 2013 Constitution of Vietnam, relevant legislation, as well as reports by the National Assembly and the Government. Within this framework, human rights are understood to encompass both *liberty rights* and *welfare rights*, reflecting the multidimensional needs of human beings in contemporary society (Sen, 1999; Donnelly, 2013).

The theoretical framework adopts an interdisciplinary approach drawing on political science, philosophy, legal studies, and development studies to contextualize human rights within the broader context of socio-political transformation in Vietnam.

**Research Methodology**

This study employs a systematic review of secondary literature combined with qualitative content analysis to comprehensively examine the relationship between promoting democracy and ensuring human rights in the context of development and international integration in Vietnam. Secondary data collection includes national legal documents (such as the 2013 Constitution and relevant human rights legislation), international instruments (including the UDHR 1948, ICCPR 1966, and ICESCR 1966), United Nations UPR reports, peer-reviewed academic studies, as well as materials from human rights organizations (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) and development agencies (UNDP). This research methodology ensures both objectivity and comprehensiveness and is particularly suitable for identifying policy bottlenecks and proposing actionable solutions to advance democracy in conjunction with the realization of human rights, tailored to the specific socio-political conditions of Vietnam.

**Results and Discussion**

**General Theoretical Framework on Democracy and the Protection of Human Rights**

*Perspectives on Democracy.* The concept of “democracy” emerged with the formation of the earliest states, particularly during the era of slave-owning societies. In specific socio-economic conditions, several ancient Western states established republican regimes, notably the aristocratic slave-owning republics (such as Sparta and Rome), and especially the democratic slave-owning republic of Athens (Greece). In Athens, with a developed economy based on industry and commerce, the class of industrial-commercial slave owners and common citizens gained political dominance, creating favorable conditions for democratic ideas to flourish. Athens is thus considered the cradle of democratic republicanism and the starting point for the spread of democratic ideals across Europe. In ancient Greece, the term *Demokratia* derives from two components: *demos* (the people) and *kratos* (power), meaning “power of the people.” From this origin, it can be affirmed that democracy is fundamentally a political concept, reflecting the requirement that political power and state power must belong to the people. In other words, democracy is a form of organizing state power based on the principle that the people are the highest and sole source of authority.

In class-based societies, democracy serves both as an instrument for the ruling class to legitimize and safeguard their dominance through the codification of civil and human rights and as a symbol of resistance for the oppressed classes striving to attain and protect their legitimate interests. As such, mass movements of the working class are inherently struggles for freedom, democracy, and human rights. Karl Marx affirmed: “...as long as democratic power has not been achieved, communists and democrats must continue to fight side by side, and the interests of the democrats are the interests of the communists” (Marx & Engels, 1995b, p.391). In this evolutionary process, socialist democracy is not a spontaneous phenomenon but the inevitable outcome of human historical development. Marx emphasized: “Any other form of democracy can exist only in the minds of learned theorists who are indifferent to real facts and who believe that it is not men and circumstances that develop principles, but that principles develop independently. Democracy has become the principle of the proletariat, the principle of the masses” (Marx & Engels, 1995a, p.93). The emergence of socialist democracy is a direct result of the development of productive forces and the process of socializing production, which creates an objective necessity for the socialization of the means of production.

Continuing the ideological legacy of Marx and Engels, Lenin in his *Ten Theses on the Soviet Power*, asserted that democracy is an embodiment of freedom, emphasizing: “Democracy is freedom, is equality, is majority rule; what could be higher than freedom, equality, and majority rule?” (Lenin, 2005a, p.414). According to Lenin, democracy is concretely expressed through: Equality before the law; Political freedom; Majority decision-making; and Open voting, the foundation of peaceful and pure democracy (Lenin, 2005b, p. 515–517).

This democratic ideology was inherited and further developed by Ho Chi Minh in a manner suited to the Vietnamese context. According to Ho Chi Minh, democracy is the most precious value of the people, formed and affirmed throughout the nation's long history of state-building and defense. Democracy, in his view, reflects the fundamental relationship between the state and the people within a given political system. He emphasized: “Our country is a democratic country. The highest position belongs to the people because the people are the masters” (Minh, 2011b, p.434); and “Our regime is a democratic regime, which means the people are the masters, and the government is the people's loyal servant” (Minh, 2011c, p.382). Ho Chi Minh’s perspective on democracy represents a progressive and humanistic system of thought, with high practical value, serving as a guiding framework for building a socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam. According to him, democracy is both a goal and a means for national development, ensuring human rights and citizens' rights, and moving toward a just, democratic, and civilized society.

Ho Chi Minh’s democratic thought has been creatively adopted and applied by the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially during the Renovation period. The 11th National Party Congress affirmed: “Socialist democracy is the essence of our regime; it is both the goal and the driving force of national development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p.84–85). Subsequently, the 12th Congress emphasized: “Continue to promote socialist democracy, ensuring that all state power belongs to the people. All Party guidelines, state policies, and laws must derive from the will, rights, and legitimate interests of the people, with their input and participation. Democracy must be fully and seriously exercised in all areas of social life. Ensure the people's participation in all stages of the decision-making process on matters related to their interests, from proposing initiatives, and engaging in discussions and debates, to supervising the implementation process. Focus on building legal documents directly related to the people's right to be masters” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p.169).

*Perspectives on Human Rights.* One of the universally recognized values affirmed by the international community is that every individual possesses human rights, which must be respected and upheld equally, regardless of gender, language, race, skin color, nationality, religion, residence, occupation, disability status, social position, or other characteristics. These rights are enshrined and protected through national laws, international treaties, and customary practices, forming a normative framework that obliges all social institutions to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights.

Although differing perspectives persist, the United Nations affirms that human rights are inviolable and that all states have the responsibility to safeguard these rights for their citizens. Documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) establish non-derogable standards to which all states are bound (United Nations, 1948; United Nations, 1966b).

The viewpoint of the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam on human rights is grounded in Marxist–Leninist thought, Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, national cultural traditions, and a selective incorporation of widely recognized international norms. In a socialist society, human rights are comprehensively guaranteed, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights; they reflect a unity between individual and collective rights, between freedom, justice, and equality, and between human rights and citizens’ rights. As expressed in V.I. Lenin’s “Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People,” these are foundational values of the new regime.

Marxism–Leninism acknowledges the historical role of bourgeois revolutions in establishing human rights but also highlights the formalism and class-based limitations of these values, which primarily served the interests of the bourgeoisie. Karl Marx emphasized that humans are products of both society and nature and thus, human rights must be examined within specific historical contexts: “Rights can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure.” Friedrich Engels argued that human rights are not innate but are the result of historical development. Genuine equality, therefore, requires not only the elimination of class privileges but the abolition of class divisions themselves.

Ho Chi Minh’s ideology skillfully integrated Marxism–Leninism with Vietnamese patriotism. His view on human rights represented a synthesis of socialist humanism, patriotic tradition, compassion, and the practical experience of Vietnam’s revolutionary struggle. He asserted that national independence and sovereignty are the essential preconditions for realizing human rights and for liberating the individual. After independence is achieved, socialism must be built to fully realize human rights, since socialism is “a regime that enables working people to live in warmth, happiness, and fairness,” in which people are “liberated in economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions.” He wrote: “If we achieve freedom and independence but the people still die of hunger and cold, then freedom and independence are meaningless. The people only appreciate their value when they are well-fed and clothed” (Minh, 2011a, p.175), and “If the country is independent but the people do not enjoy happiness and freedom, then independence has no meaning” (Minh, 2011a, p.64).

Continuing Ho Chi Minh’s ideological legacy, the Communist Party of Vietnam has affirmed: “To implement human rights and the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens following the spirit of the 2013 Constitution; to link rights with responsibilities and duties, and to uphold social ethics. To further promote grassroots democracy, to improve the legal system, and to respect, guarantee, and protect human rights and citizens’ rights and obligations” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p.169). At the 13th National Congress, the Party emphasized the need to build and perfect institutions, policies, and laws to ensure and promote the people’s right to mastery, stating: “Human rights and the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens have been more comprehensively defined in the 2013 Constitution and in newly promulgated and amended legal documents” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.166).

*The Relationship Between Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights*

Promoting democracy and ensuring human rights represent a dialectical process in political philosophy, in which democracy is not only a prerequisite for the realization of human rights but also a criterion for measuring the extent to which these rights are actualized. Only when democracy is fully promoted can human rights be comprehensively guaranteed in social life. Conversely, only when human rights are equitably and effectively realized does democracy have a solid foundation for development, becoming the basis for a progressive, just, and humane society.

First, democracy is the condition and foundation for protecting human rights. According to Marxism-Leninism and social democratic theories, democracy is an essential form of political organization to ensure and promote human rights. Democracy is not limited to the right to vote or freedom of speech; it is a system of institutions and political mechanisms that guarantee equal participation of citizens in the formulation and implementation of public policy, as well as fair access to resources and development opportunities. The views of Marx and Engels emphasized that democracy is linked to the process of human liberation from oppression and exploitation; it is a tool through which the working class affirms its political and economic power. True democracy must be built on a foundation of social justice, free from the dominance of ruling class interests. This perspective is reflected in the orientation of the Communist Party of Vietnam: “Strictly implement the principle of ‘the people are the root’; truly trust, respect, and promote the people’s right to mastery” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 96).

Second, human rights are the benchmark for evaluating a democratic system. Democracy only has practical significance when it is associated with respect for and protection of human rights in all aspects of social life. Human rights include not only individual freedoms but also the right to participate in state management, the right to fair treatment, and the right to live in a society free from oppression and discrimination. If democracy exists only formally, without the realization of human rights, it cannot be considered mature or genuine. Ho Chi Minh's thought also emphasizes that human rights are associated with national rights and the rights of the working class. According to him, national independence is a prerequisite for ensuring human rights, and human rights only truly have value when connected with the right to live in a just, democratic, and humane society. In the 1945 Declaration of Independence, Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “All men are created equal… they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Minh, 2011a, p. 64). To protect human rights and the people’s right to self-determination, the Party affirmed: “Practicing democracy within the Party must go hand in hand with strengthening the Party’s discipline and rules” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 181).

Third, promoting democracy and ensuring human rights contributes to political stability. The relationship between democracy and human rights is not only theoretical but also demonstrated in the practice of national governance. Democracy is the condition for the realization of human rights, while human rights are the content and ultimate goal of democracy. Democracy can only be sustainable when human rights are guaranteed on both individual and collective levels across political, economic, cultural, and social domains. At the same time, human rights can only be effectively protected in a democratic environment where citizens are empowered to monitor power, participate in policymaking, and engage in social critique. The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed this perspective: “The people are the center and the subject of the renewal process… All guidelines and policies must genuinely originate from the people’s lives, aspirations, legitimate rights, and interests, with the people’s happiness and well-being as the goal of all efforts” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 28).

In conclusion, promoting democracy and ensuring human rights are interrelated and inseparable processes. A strong democracy provides the foundation for the protection of human rights, while the full realization of human rights serves as a criterion for assessing and advancing substantive democracy.

**Achievements in Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam**

Over the past 40 years of renovation and international integration, Vietnam has achieved significant progress in promoting democracy and ensuring human rights. These accomplishments play a vital role in the process of building socialism and safeguarding the nation.

*First, in the political domain.*The promotion of socialist democracy in contemporary Vietnam is manifested in various aspects, reflecting the expansion of the people's right to mastery and the concretization of human rights in political and social life. A prominent example is the right to participate in state and social governance, a fundamental political right that has been more clearly defined in the Constitution and legal system. Specifically, Article 28 of the 2013 Constitution states: "1. Citizens have the right to participate in the management of the State and society, to engage in discussions and make recommendations to state agencies on matters concerning local and national affairs. 2. The State shall create conditions for citizens to participate in the management of the State and society and shall ensure transparency in receiving and responding to citizens' opinions and recommendations" (National Assembly, 2013, Article 28).

On this constitutional basis, various forms of direct and representative democracy have been implemented and increasingly expanded. Simultaneously, civil and political rights are proactively safeguarded through the promulgation and enforcement of appropriate legal policies. For instance, Vietnamese law strictly prohibits violations of the right to life, including bans on torture and corporal punishment, and imposes the death penalty only for particularly serious crimes. The 2015 Penal Code abolished the death penalty for eight criminal offenses and stipulates that the sentence shall not be applied to individuals under 18 years of age, pregnant women, mothers of children under 36 months, or individuals aged 75 and above at the time of the crime (Kien, 2022).

*Second, in the economic domain.*Socialist democracy in the economic sphere is demonstrated through the State's recognition, respect, and facilitation of citizens’ exercise of fundamental economic rights, including the right to free labor, lawful ownership, enjoyment of the fruits of one’s labor, and access to development resources. These rights are institutionalized in the 2013 Constitution and further elaborated in various sectoral legal documents, thereby establishing a robust legal foundation for protecting and promoting human rights within the context of a socialist-oriented market economy.

The rights to work, to choose occupations, and to conduct business activities following the law have been increasingly ensured. The State has introduced numerous policies to foster entrepreneurship, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and protect workers’ rights, especially amid deepening international economic integration. Citizens have access to land through mechanisms such as land allocation, leasing, and legal recognition of land-use rights. Property rights are protected by law, and access to information and public services has been progressively expanded, thereby enhancing the economic capacity and living conditions of the population.

Evidence of the effectiveness of these policies includes Vietnam’s impressive economic growth rates. At certain periods, the country has maintained an average annual growth rate in double digits. Currently, Vietnam ranks as the fifth-largest economy in ASEAN, among the top 40 largest economies globally, and is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It ranks 48th out of 132 countries in the Global Innovation Index and has made significant improvements in global indicators such as the Global Competitiveness Index (World Bank, 2022).

Moreover, the right to life is guaranteed in both economic and social dimensions. The State has prioritized the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, improved access to maternal and child healthcare services, and launched emergency relief programs in regions severely affected by natural disasters and epidemics. The multidimensional poverty rate has significantly declined over the years, thanks to microfinance development policies, support for household economies, and the promotion of social enterprises as key instruments in securing livelihoods and sustainable development for the population.

*Third, in the socio-cultural domain.*Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are legally protected in Vietnam and have been progressively expanded within the existing legal framework. Policies aimed at universalizing education, promoting gender equality, and protecting vulnerable groups have been widely implemented, affirming the central role of human beings in the development process. The rights to access information and to enjoy creative freedom in the fields of culture and the arts have been broadened, enabling citizens to express their views and participate actively in socio-cultural life. Mechanisms of direct democracy, such as people's conferences and community consultations on socio-economic development projects, have been effectively implemented, contributing to the strengthening of social consensus and enhancing the accountability of public authorities at all levels.

At present, the living standards of the majority of the Vietnamese population have improved significantly and continuously. For socially vulnerable groups, the Party and State have prioritized the allocation of national resources to protect and promote the rights of children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and people living in remote, isolated, and especially disadvantaged areas. The multidimensional poverty rate dropped markedly, from 58% in 1993 to just 1.93% in 2024, positioning Vietnam as one of the leading models for poverty reduction among developing countries.

According to the UNDP Human Development Report, Vietnam’s Human Development Index in 2024 rose by eight ranks, from 115th to 107th out of 193 countries. Life expectancy increased from 65.5 years in 1993 to 74.5 years in 2023, higher than the global average of 73 years. In 2024, Vietnam’s Global Happiness Index rose by 11 places, ranking 54th out of 143 countries, and its Sustainable Development Goals Index improved by one place from 2023, ranking 54th out of 166 countries (Van, 2024).

**Limitations and Challenges in Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam**

Despite significant achievements in promoting socialist democracy and protecting human rights across political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions, Vietnam still faces notable limitations and challenges that need to be addressed to advance toward more sustainable and inclusive development.

*First, in the political domain.* A key limitation lies in the insufficient depth and effectiveness of democratic practice in political life. Although the 2013 Constitution explicitly affirms citizens’ right to participate in state and social management (Article 28), in practice, genuine public participation in policy-making and law-making processes remains limited. Community consultation mechanisms are often formalistic in many localities, which hinders the effective incorporation of citizens’ voices. The implementation of grassroots democracy regulations in some areas remains superficial and lacks coordination and monitoring. Furthermore, the awareness of local authorities about the role of people as sovereign agents in this process has not been adequately strengthened (Son & Hanh, 2025).

*Second, inequality in access to economic rights***.** While the socialist-oriented market economy has created new opportunities, disparities in income and access to development resources such as land, credit, and technology persist. According to the 2023 Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey conducted by the General Statistics Office, there remains a significant income gap between urban and rural areas. People living in remote and isolated regions face major challenges in accessing market information and production support services. Notably, workers in the informal sector, accounting for approximately 56% of the national labor force, are still inadequately protected in terms of rights, working conditions, and social security (ILO, 2022). This highlights the urgent need to strengthen mechanisms that safeguard the economic and labor rights of this group.

*Third, disparities in development across regions and vulnerable groups.* Despite sharp reductions in poverty rates, persistent inequalities remain between regions and demographic groups. Ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and women in remote areas continue to face difficulties in accessing education, healthcare, and employment services (UNDP, 2023). Implementation of support policies in these areas is sometimes fragmented, lacking sustainability, and effective monitoring.

In addition, international integration and the rapid development of digital technologies present new challenges in ensuring human rights, especially the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy protection. The proliferation of misinformation and harmful content on digital platforms negatively impacts public awareness and poses serious challenges to state governance. Legal regulations on cyberspace management must strike a delicate balance between ensuring information security and protecting citizens’ legitimate rights to free expression. At the same time, enhancing digital access and literacy, particularly among vulnerable populations, is essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital transformation process.

**Solutions for Promoting Democracy and Ensuring Human Rights in Contemporary Vietnam**

To substantively realize the relationship between democracy and human rights in line with the goal that “every citizen enjoys a prosperous, happy life, with opportunities for development and wealth creation; contributes increasingly to peace, stability, and development in the region and the world, for the happiness of humankind and global civilization,” Vietnam must implement the following groups of solutions in a comprehensive and synchronized manner:

*Raising public awareness of democracy and human rights.* Human rights education must be considered a foundational element in fostering a democratic civic consciousness across society. Human rights and citizenship education should be integrated into school curricula at all levels and extended to capacity-building programs for public officials and civil servants. This approach not only cultivates generations of citizens with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities but also helps develop an administrative apparatus capable of effectively implementing human rights standards. In parallel, communication and legal dissemination efforts on human rights should be intensified, especially targeting vulnerable groups such as women, the poor, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities. Through legal counseling, access-to-information support, and life skills training, these groups can participate more actively and equally in social life, thereby deepening the dialectical relationship between democracy and human rights.

*Promoting sustainable socio-economic development in conjunction with equity and social progress.* Sustainable development serves as a vital material foundation for realizing economic, social, and cultural rights. Vietnam should continue to build a comprehensive social security policy system that guarantees every citizen's right to education, healthcare, employment, and a minimum standard of living, particularly for vulnerable populations. This embodies the convergence of development goals and the principles of human rights protection.

In addition, focused investment is needed in remote, isolated, and ethnic minority areas to reduce regional disparities, one of the key barriers to equitable access to basic rights. Improving the Human Development Index should be treated as a guiding indicator in the formulation of national programs and policies. In this process, administrative reform and digital transformation should be vigorously implemented to enhance public service delivery and increase citizen satisfaction with governmental institutions.

*Improving the socialist democratic system and building a rule-of-law state for the people.* The promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights must be grounded in a socialist democratic institutional framework that places people at its center. Vietnam should continue to refine its legal system on human rights by fully embodying the spirit of the 2013 Constitution and incorporating international human rights treaties to which the country is a party. Laws must ensure consistency, feasibility, and transparency, thereby enabling citizens to fully exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations.

Simultaneously, building and operating an effective socialist rule-of-law state is essential. This involves establishing a rationally organized state power structure with mechanisms for the delegation, coordination, and oversight of authority. Such a system not only enhances public accountability but also lays a solid foundation for protecting citizens' legitimate rights and interests in a fair, transparent, and effective manner.

*Promoting grassroots democracy – a foundation for ensuring human rights at the root.* Grassroots democracy is where democratic values are most tangibly realized and directly linked to the practical rights and interests of the people. Effective implementation of the principle “people know, people discuss, people act, people monitor, people supervise, and people benefit” should be pursued through forms of direct democracy such as community meetings, regular government-citizen dialogues, and public consultations. These are essential conditions for genuine citizen participation in decision-making and for strengthening social consensus and governance effectiveness.

Particular attention must be paid to enhancing the transparency and accountability of local authorities, especially in sensitive areas such as land management, budgeting, and policy support. Such information should be publicly accessible, verifiable, and easy to obtain. In tandem, it is crucial to improve the competence and integrity of grassroots officials and civil servants, ensuring they become effective intermediaries between the State and the people, thus contributing to the realization of democratic governance and the protection of human rights from the lowest administrative level.

*Enhancing international cooperation to promote human rights in the context of globalization.* In the context of deep international integration, Vietnam should continue to honor its international commitments to human rights and proactively engage in shaping and improving global human rights institutions. This demonstrates Vietnam’s global responsibility while also creating opportunities to improve its domestic legal and institutional frameworks.
International experience should be adapted with respect for national sovereignty and in alignment with Vietnam’s unique historical, cultural, and political contexts. Furthermore, human rights diplomacy should be strengthened to refute distorted narratives about the human rights situation in Vietnam and to affirm the country’s genuine efforts and progress in harmonizing the promotion of democracy with the protection of human rights.

*Harnessing science and technology in state governance to support human rights.* The digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution offer significant opportunities for improving the protection of human rights. The development of digital government and e-governance not only enhances the quality of public services but also helps realize key rights such as access to information, the right to be served, and the right to provide feedback and oversight.
The use of technology in managing, receiving, and responding to citizen feedback increases public sector transparency and accountability. Moreover, digital data and intelligent analytics empower the state to formulate evidence-based policies that better serve the people. This contributes to reinforcing social trust and promoting equitable and inclusive development.

**Conclusions**

The relationship between promoting democracy and ensuring human rights is not a dualistic or separate undertaking, but rather an interdependent and mutually reinforcing process that serves as a fundamental driver of sustainable development in every nation, especially in the context of globalization and international integration today. For Vietnam, this relationship holds particular significance as it is intrinsically linked to the goal of building a socialist rule-of-law state, one that places human beings at the center and operates on the principle of serving the people. By inheriting the universal values of humanity while drawing on national traditions and its specific development orientation, Vietnam has made significant progress in institutionalizing, concretizing, and realizing human rights through continuous democratic expansion.

However, to ensure that the relationship between democracy and human rights functions effectively, cohesively, and substantively, it is essential to further improve institutional frameworks, strengthen law enforcement capacity, foster grassroots democracy, enhance public awareness of human rights, promote sustainable socio-economic development, and actively engage in international integration. In this process, reforming national governance thinking, modernizing public administration, and developing mechanisms for social oversight form the institutional foundation for guaranteeing that human rights are respected, protected, and promoted in all areas of life. The nexus between democracy and human rights is not only a measure of national progress but also a critical factor in consolidating social trust, safeguarding national solidarity, and elevating Vietnam’s position in the international arena. This is the path that Vietnam has consistently chosen in its endeavor to build a just, democratic, civilized, and sustainably developed society.

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