ASEM Youth meeting affirms youth role in sustainable development

The Asia - Europe Youth Forum opened in Hanoi on Tuesday under the theme sustainable development and strengthened co-operation between Asian and European youth. The forum is held in preparations for the 5th Asia- Europe summit (ASEM 5) scheduled for October in Hanoi.

Speaking at the forum, Chairman of the Vietnam Youth Federation, Hoang Binh Quan, said the forum is a chance for the youth of the two continents to identify opportunities and challenges, and further affirm the role of the youth in resolving urgent social and global issues, contributing to developing a peaceful and sustainable world.

According to Mr. Quan, the knowledge-based economy, sci-tech achievements, and cultural exchanges have brought favourable conditions for young people to share and improve their knowledge about other countries and nations in the world.

The Asian-European young generation, however, are facing with common challenges such as terrorism, conflicts, gap between the rich and the poor, environmental degration, unemployment, and social issues. These problems have menaced sustainable development of each country, of which young generation would suffer the most.

During the three-day meeting, 60 delegates from 26 ASEM member countries will discuss the role of the youth in social development, environment, economics, and institution making.

Zainal Arif Mantaha, Director of the People-to-People Exchange project in the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), affirmed that the forum would contribute to realising the vision initiated by ASEM founders to enhance human-involved factors in ASEM dialogue about common issues, which could effect the future of ASEM member countries. He added that the forum would be a chance for ASEM youth to meet, discuss, and devise measures to resolve such issues and submit their proposals to ASEM leaders.