STATEMENT
By H.E. Ambassador Le Hoai Trung
Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
At the Third Committee of the 68th Session of the General Assembly
on Agenda item 27: Social Development
New York 8 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you and other members of the bureau on your elections and ensure you of my delegation’s full support of your work. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on this agenda item.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statement made by the Distinguished Representative of Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China, and by the Distinguished Representative of Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has made significant achievements through hard efforts and important initiatives including that of the MDGs, but there remain serious social challenges with enormous complexity and consequences. While we welcome the progress made in reducing inequality in education, health care and other dimensions of human development, significant disparities remain as many social groups continue to suffer disproportionately from income poverty and inadequate access to health care and education.

As the 2015 deadline for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals approaches and the international community is working to define the post-2015 development agenda, there is an urgent need for the international community to take prompt and effective actions to deal with unemployment, social inequality, ensure sustainable and social protection. In that context, my delegation welcomes the priority
theme of “promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration, full employment and decent work for all” as elaborated in the Secretary-General’s report. Development experience in every country shows that in designing the post-2015 development agenda, adequate attention must be paid to the issues related to growth and the establishment of a favorable international trade and financial environment. We also welcome the results of the High-level Meeting on Disabilities and Development and the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, concluded last week, which demonstrate the concerted efforts and determination of international community in striving for an inclusive development for all.

Mr. Chairman,

In June 2012, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainability, Member States confirmed their commitment to sustainable development in three interconnected dimensions, namely economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, among which, Viet Nam believes, economic development should be the core driving force and the primary factor and condition for solving social problems. In that process, the Vietnamese Government always puts the people at the center of all development strategies, considering the people the subject of development as well as its driving force. Empowerment of people is therefore central to our poverty eradication and social development efforts. One of the most important lessons learnt from the last thirteen years of MDG implementation in Viet Nam is the engagement and empowerment of the people themselves, by giving them the means and creating an enabling environment for them to generate wealth, escape poverty and access social services. Indeed, Viet Nam has adopted and implemented various measures to ensure that its people can optimize their capacities, resources and opportunities, lead healthy and productive lives, exercise their rights and responsibilities to be active in their communities and as partners in development. Social protection has at all times been a major priority of the Government, even amidst the recent economic crisis and in its aftermaths.

Supporting people with disabilities in all aspects has been high on the national agenda. The Government has carried out a range of activities at national and regional levels aimed at expanding people with disabilities’ involvement in all facets of society. In addition to the Law on People with Disabilities, the National Action Plan on Supporting People with Disabilities for the period 2012-2020, Viet Nam is one of the first countries in the Asia-Pacific region to develop and implement a long-term plan for persons with disabilities initiated by UNESCAP, and is currently
implementing the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Rights Real” for persons with disabilities, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2013–2022, and the ASEAN Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Disabled People in ASEAN community. I am also pleased to inform that Viet Nam is completing domestic procedures for the ratification the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities early next year.

Viet Nam has always been proud of its elders and considers the elders as an “invaluable” and important social force with tremendous potential and an important role in upholding the traditional values of society and family and in the national development and protection. Caring for the elders, therefore, has always been given great importance in all stages of national development and the Government has adopted many laws and programs in this regard. After two years of implementing its Law on the Elderly and one year of implementing the National Action Plan on the elders for the period 2012-2020, 3 million elders now have free health insurance; more than 1 million receive monthly social assistance. Viet Nam aims to provide monthly social assistance and/or nursing homes to 1.5 million elders by 2015.

Youth employment, especially in rural areas, is an issue of particular importance in Viet Nam’s socio-economic development strategy. A Youth Development Strategy for the period 2011-2020 was adopted with the aim of building a generation of youth that is educated and professional, creating a young, highly skilled and qualified workforce that meets the needs of industrialization, modernization and international integration. Moreover, in recent years, the Government has implemented many preferential policies, national programs, and other socio-economic development programs targeting youth. Each year, these programs create new jobs for 1.4 to 1.7 million young workers.

Mr. Chairman,

Social development is one of the three pillars of sustainable development, and shall be highlighted in the post-2015 development agenda. While reaffirming our commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action, and the initiatives adopted by the General Assembly at its 24th special session, Viet Nam is strongly committed to working with other member states and the United Nations for a comprehensive and implementable post-2015 development agenda with the aim to eradicate poverty, achieve inclusive economic growth, promote social development and preserve the environment for future generations.

I thank you./.