STATEMENT

By H.E. Ambassador Le Hoai Trung
Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
At Agenda Item 28: Advancement of Women
14 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important topic. I thank the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur for their reports. I would also like to express our appreciation to the work of the UN Women and believe that under the new leadership of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the organization will continue to play a bigger role in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Distinguished Representative of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China and the Distinguished Representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the international community, important progress has been made in ensuring women’s rights. More countries are adopting new legislations on gender equality and mainstreaming gender equality into their development strategies. Millions of women are now better enjoying their rights. We are seeing a growing number of outstanding women in politics, economy and academia.

However, women all over the world are still challenged by a number of obstacles that restrict their ability to play significant roles in the communities and society. The multiple, interconnected and aggravating impacts of the current global economic and social crises, the continuing food insecurity, climate change and energy crisis have impeded the development of all, but more so women, and are threatening the achievements attained thus far.
In that context, Viet Nam welcomes the upcoming review and appraisal of the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the preparation of post-2015 development agenda as new opportunities to take stock of and further expand the scope of the work in the area of women’s rights, and would like to highlight the following points:

Firstly, strengthening women’s rights and addressing barriers to their political participation are critical to women empowerment, poverty reduction and achievement of development goals. Equal representation of women and men, each having varying perspectives and experiences, helps ensure that decision-making can better foster inclusive economic and social development and benefit all people.

Secondly, engagement of women as full stakeholders has proven to enhance sustainable livelihoods of local communities and national economies. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is, therefore, essential to build stronger economies, attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially the MDG on poverty reduction, and achieve development and sustainability.

Thirdly, ending discrimination and violence against women requires a comprehensive and all-inclusive approach. It is not the responsibility of one person, actor or group. It is a collective response in which everyone has a role to play. Actions therefore need to involve all stakeholders, men and women, developing and developed countries, representatives from government, parliaments, the judiciary, law enforcement agents, the private sector and international organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

Viet Nam is strongly committed to the advancement of women and gender equality as important instruments to achieve equitable and sustainable development. Since the enactment of the Gender Equality Law in 2006, the Government has adopted and implemented various policies to promote the rights of women. For instance, the Law against Domestic Violence was adopted in 2007. A National Strategy and National Program on Gender Equality for the year 2011-2015 with the total budget of an equivalent of USD 47 million are under implementation. A Gender Statistical Indicator System is collecting data that can better inform policy making and programming. Gender is mainstreamed in all new laws. A recent example is the Tobacco Law in 2012 which specifically obligates smokers to avoid smoking near pregnant women and children.

Many innovative programs and projects are being implemented to improve women economic situation. With the support from World Bank and UN Women in Viet Nam, this year’s Viet Nam Women’s Innovation Day was launched with the theme “Economic empowerment and capacity building for Vietnamese Women” to support initiatives of economic empowerment for women that “think outside the box and act beyond existing
predefined parameters and traditional interventions”. Since 2003, this biennial program has provided some USD 2.4 million in funding for 231 women innovative projects.

Women in Viet Nam have always been active in the political life of the country. In recognition of the importance of investing in gender sensitive leadership, the Center for Women in Politics and Public Administration was launched last June to help political leaders and civil servants develop their appreciation for the importance of gender equality in inclusive socio-economic development and learn ways to promote gender equality through their work. The establishment of the Centre is a strong indication of the Vietnamese Government’s commitment to the advancement of women and their leadership role in public administration and politics.

Mr. Chairman,

The above efforts by the Government, supported by many partner countries and organizations, have produced very tangible results. 78% of Vietnamese women are now employed, accounting for 48% of the labor force, and the numbers are increasing. The literacy rate for women and girls is 92%. Female students account for more than 50% of total enrolment in tertiary education. In 2012, Viet Nam ranked 3rd in ASEAN and 48th in the world in terms of gender equality index; was among the 5 developing countries in Asia that have the highest percentage of women members of Parliament. In Viet Nam, a certificate of land entitlement must bear the names of both the husband and the wife to be lawful. And importantly, the issues of gender, gender equality and gender-based violence have been mainstreamed in all social discourses and policy making processes.

However, Viet Nam is still faced with challenges, including limited numbers of full time staff available to work on gender issues, especially at the provincial level, limited budget to implement national programs, low representation of women in the National Assembly and in highly influential political positions, male and female income disparity still remains, etc. These are the challenges that Viet Nam will have to overcome in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to the supported extended to Viet Nam by UN agencies, especially UN Women, and many other partners. Viet Nam places much importance on the role of UN agencies in coordinating the efforts of international community in promoting and protecting the rights of women and women advancement. Once again, Viet Nam reaffirms its commitment to work with the international community to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on Women and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for a better life of all women around the world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.