STATEMENT
by H.E. Ambassador Nguyen Phuong Nga
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations
at the General Debate of the 69th General Assembly Session
on Agenda Item “Oceans and Law of the Sea” [74 (a) and (b)].
(9 December 2014)

Mr. President,

Two years ago we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Today, at this meeting, Viet Nam joins other delegations in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. This is truly significant not only for the States Parties but also for all other States which have not become parties to the Convention to witness how the Convention has provided for the regulation and management of all ocean-related issues over the last two decades.

I would like to thank the Secretary General for his Reports in Documents A/69/71 and A/69/71/Add.1 which contain important information and analyses regarding developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea. I would also like to highly value the efforts of the Working Groups in submitting reports and recommendations on various issues, namely the role of seafood in global food security (Document A/69/90), the state of the marine environment, including the socioeconomic aspects (Document A/69/77) and the conservation and sustainable uses of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (Document A/69/177). These documents have further confirmed the belief that economic development must go in tandem with environmental protection and conservation.

On this occasion, I would also like to express my Government’s gratitude to the states that have supported Viet Nam to become a Member of the International Hydrographic Organization.
Mr. President,

UNCLOS embodies the efforts of all nations to build a comprehensive legal order for the oceans and seas. For the past 20 years, UNCLOS has remained the most important legal document which governs all activities in the oceans and at seas with a view to promoting peaceful development of the oceans and to preserving the marine environment. In a similar vein, UNCLOS also provides for a comprehensive and effective dispute settlement system which offers States Parties important peaceful means for the settlement of their maritime disputes, thus protecting their legitimate interests as well as the interest of the international community. Furthermore, taking into account the fact that all ocean issues are closely related, UNCLOS also establishes an effective mechanism for international cooperation in different fields, from optimum exploitation of the living resources, preservation of the marine environment to the management of international seabed in the interests of mankind.

As a matter of general international law, every treaty must be performed in good faith. This is also clearly written down in the Convention. Viet Nam considers it imperative that all nations uphold the provisions of UNCLOS in good faith and in a responsible manner, which includes the respect for the legitimate rights and interests of the coastal states in their maritime zones established in accordance with the Convention.

Mr. President,

As a responsible Party to the Convention, Viet Nam is fully aware of the importance of maintaining peace, stability as well as of developing oceans sustainably. Therefore, Viet Nam supports the UN General Assembly in paying its due and timely attention to sustainable development, conservation of marine diversity and the effective utilization of oceans resources for the common development of humankind.

Viet Nam was among the first countries to sign the Convention at Montego Bay, Jamaica on 30 April 1982. After then, Viet Nam has always actively participated in all the activities within the framework of the Convention and made every effort to fully perform its obligations under the Convention. One of those many efforts was the adoption of Law of the Sea of Viet Nam in 2012. This important legislation transforms the provisions of UNCLOS into our national legal system and articulates the different maritime zones under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Viet Nam. We strongly believe that the adoption of the Law of the Sea of Viet Nam
is a vivid testimony to Viet Nam’s respect for and compliance with the international law of the sea as enshrined in UNCLOS.

Mr. President,

It is obvious that the oceans boast valuable resources for mankind which call for peaceful and sustainable utilization and international cooperation. But the oceans can also become theatre for competition and confrontation, thus threatening international peace and security, especially when countries are pursuing and advancing invalid claims to the detriment of the legitimate and rightful interests of other states.

Viet Nam is seriously concerned about the recent developments in the South China Sea. We urge all the countries in the region to refrain from the threat or use of force and from activities that may further complicate the situation. We request all Parties concerned to resolve their disputes in the South China Sea in a peaceful manner on the basis of good faith and in accordance with international law, especially UNCLOS. Viet Nam also calls on ASEAN member states and China to fully and effectively implement all the provisions of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and to work towards the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace, stability and security in the region.

I thank you for your kind attention./.