STATEMENT
by Mr. Do Hung Viet, Counsellor, Permanent Mission
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Agenda Item: Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child
18 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important topic. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, his Special Representatives, the Special Rapporteur and the Committee on the Rights of the Child for their detailed reports and for their tireless efforts for the well-being of children. My Delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

Viet Nam views children as the future of our national development. We believe effective protection and promotion of the rights of the child will help build a better future for the country.

Viet Nam has enacted legislations, created mechanisms and taken creative measures to ensure that all children are treated equally and their rights protected. Viet Nam strive to create a safe and healthy environment for the overall physical and intellectual development of our children.

Viet Nam was one of the first countries in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has since incorporated the provisions of the Convention into its national legislation, including the Law on the Protection, Care and Education of Children, the Education Law, the Labor Law, the Penal Code and the Civil Code. This forms a solid legal framework for the creation of equal opportunities for all children, protection of their rights and enabling their full participation in the society.
Children are among the most vulnerable groups who may be exposed to discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. In face of this, Viet Nam has designed policies to provide special support to poor and disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, ethnic minority children and children living in remote areas. This year’s Action Month for Children has a special focus on “creating equal development opportunities for poor and ethnic minority children”. A major community-based project is being implemented to support orphans, homeless children, children living with HIV/AIDS, children with severe disabilities, including victims of Agent Orange, and children affected by disasters. The project aims to ensure that by 2020, 95% of disadvantaged children receive appropriate assistance and social services and improve the quality of care and assistance at social service agencies and community housing.

The participation of children themselves is critical. Participation empowers children, helps them gain confidence, and promotes peer education. Children’s inputs help develop child-sensitive legislations and strategies. With that in mind, the Government organizes a Children Forum every two years to seek their opinions on matters of their interests. Their discussions and recommendations are then compiled and sent to relevant government agencies for consideration and incorporation into laws and policies. Indeed, this has led to an increase in funding for child-related activities in various sectors, including health, education, culture and sport.

These efforts, as part of our overall socio-economic development, have yielded positive results. Children in Viet Nam are now better enjoying their rights, from passive rights of being cared for and protected, to more active rights such as the right to express their view, the right to participate in social activities and the right to be consulted in decision-making process. Most child-related MDG targets on education, child mortality rate and gender equality have been achieved, with others set to be completed by 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has made solemn pledges and established comprehensive legal standards and frameworks to safeguard the best interests of children. Yet, those commitments and actions have not been realized in full. Children around the world continue to face major threats to their survival and lack opportunities for quality education, proper health and social care. They are often the easy victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and various forms of violence. Girls are often forced into early marriages and subjected to harmful traditional practices.

Different forms of violence continue to affect the lives of children of all ages in every region of the world. Violence against children is often invisible and socially condoned, perceived as a social taboo or a needed form of discipline, and therefore, seldom reported. Breaking that silence is an important step towards preventing violence
and protecting victims. Therefore, stopping violence against children requires not only sanctioning perpetrators, but also transformation of the mindset of societies and the underlying economic and social conditions that allow violence against children to thrive.

In many countries and cultures, girls are still treated as second class citizen. They are discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood and into adulthood in the areas of nutrition, health care, education, family care and protection, especially the girl child from poor and rural households. Awareness of girls’ needs and potential should be improved in society and among the girls themselves so they may participate fully in social, economic and political life. In that connection, my Delegation would like to reiterate the importance of education, particularly for girls. Education helps build a sense of self-worth in young girls, helps them claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social areas. Education also helps change the mindset of societies.

My delegation also welcomes the reports of the Secretary General and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and support the recommendation contain therein. We believe that these recommendations provide a good starting point for us to move forward a more collaborative approach in ensuring the rights and best interests of children.

Mr. Chairman,

The world has made strong commitments to the rights of children through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals. To help give children and youth safe and secure futures, Viet Nam is ready to work with member states, UN agencies and partners to protect children and youth, especially girls, from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse and ensure that they will have more opportunities to participate in and contribute to their communities. And let me conclude by expressing our appreciation to UN agencies, especially UNICEF, and many other partners, for the support extended to Viet Nam in these endeavours over the years.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.