



# SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

**Statement by Representative  
of the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam  
at the Fifty-third Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

*(4 March 2009, New York)*

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation associates itself with the statements made earlier by the distinguished representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the distinguished representative of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation welcomes this Session as an important opportunity for the international community to review efforts made and achievements recorded over the past years in promoting gender equality and women's advancement, and better design blueprints to cope with existing challenges so as to ensure women's rights, particularly in the context of the disastrous global economic and financial crisis, and the persistent violence and prejudice against women. Coming from a country where the rate of HIV/AIDS affected population has kept growing, we appreciate the selection of "*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*" as the priority theme and we thank all the discussants for the ideas they have shared during the past three days, considering them as meaningful inputs for our thoughts and actions after this Session.

Mr. Chairman,

Recognizing the pivotal role of legal and structural dimension in the overall institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, Viet Nam has focused on improving the gender-related legislation, mostly evidenced by the enactment of the Law on Gender Equality in 2006 and the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2007. Accordingly, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs has been assigned to assume the function of State governance over gender equality issues, while the National Committee for the Advancement of Women and the Women's Union have both seen their organizational and financial capacity further strengthened. All this in turn has produced tangible results.

Regarding women's participation, women currently account for 25.76% of the National Assembly membership, elevating Viet Nam to rank the 28<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of women ratio in Parliament. Moreover, last year, the

Vietnam Female Parliamentarians' Caucus was set up, marking another step forward on the path to better mainstreaming gender in law-making and monitoring process. In addition, the State of Viet Nam has for the last over 20 years always had a female Vice-President and many women ministers in its Cabinet.

In education, specific objectives and indicators have been established in both the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and the National Plan of Action on Education for All to ensure women's equal access to education, resulting in the significantly narrowed gender gap at all levels of education with female students now accounting for at least 46.8% of enrollement, the enhanced role of women in the employment market, and the increased female membership in all fields of operation. It is not coincidence that the World Bank has commended Viet Nam for its fastest speed of narrowing the gender gap for the last 20 years in South East Asia. With its gender-related indexes greatly improved, Viet Nam now ranks 52<sup>nd</sup> among 93 countries in Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), and 68<sup>th</sup> among 130 countries in Gender Gap Index (GGI).

Regarding regional and international cooperation as essential for women's advancement, Viet Nam has over the years actively participated in many international conferences, seminars and fora. Currently chairing the ASEAN Committee on Women, we have worked intensively to facilitate productive exchanges of views, best practices and experiences in relation to gender issues among ASEAN members. In this connection, as a pilot country of the "Delivering as One" reform, Viet Nam is thankful to UNIFEM for its strong support, dynamic partnership and proactive involvement in gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations' work in Viet Nam.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the heartening achievements so far, we believe there is no room for complacency. Apart from greater efforts to further improve gender equality in legislation and practice, including ensuring equal job opportunities for women, equal pay for female workers, and equal chance for women's access to leadership positions in both State and non-State sectors, we have to work even harder in the coming years to address the spread of HIV/AIDS. Given the increased number of HIV/AIDS carriers as mentioned earlier in our statement, particularly among women, and perceiving HIV/AIDS as a negative factor extremely destructive to the future generations of the nation, we are to dedicate more energy and resources to the fight against this epidemic. And in this fight as well as in the broader cause for the advancement of women and gender equality, we reconfirm our commitment to working closely with UN agencies, international organizations, other countries, and the NGO community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.