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MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by
Ms. Hoang Thi Thanh Nga
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At the 3rd Committee
On agenda item: “Advancement of Women”
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Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his reports and all speakers for their briefings. My Delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Yemen on behalf of G77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Celebrating the fifteen anniversary of the Forth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the tenth anniversary of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security provides Member States and the United Nations system with a chance to review and assess the implementation of agreed commitments to improving gender equality and women’s empowerment, protecting women’s rights and promoting their role in the peace process, as well as to discuss ways to overcome the current challenges. At the United Nations, the year 2010 is historic since it marks the establishment of a new U.N. Entity on Women, the merger of the four UN agencies and offices dedicated to women issues, in order to create a stronger and more united voice, and ensure more effective ways to further advance women at the global level. We are committed to working closely with this new body in achieving its noble goals.

We also appreciate efforts made by Member States since the Sixty-fourth Session of the General Assembly, as mentioned in the Secretary-General’s reports, particularly in improving the legal framework to better protect women from all forms of violence, discrimination, and adopting National Action Plans, strategies and policies to empower women and increase their participation in decision-making, as well as in reinforcing

more preventive actions and public awareness-raising activities, etc. While encouraged by progress gained during the reporting period, we believe that greater attention should be paid to the following areas:

First, it is important to ensure smooth transitional arrangements for the new UN Women in order to make it a truly stronger and more united entity which can effectively provide guidance to the UN system and Member States and supports national efforts on women's issues. It is equally critical to ensure the organic coordination between this new entity and other development agencies so that the gender perspective will be better integrated into these agencies' strategies, policies and programs. In situations of conflict and post-conflict, the coordination must be strengthened between the UN Women and all UN political, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions to ensure gender mainstreaming in all strategies, policies, and at all stages of the peace process.

Second, the United Nations and Member States should take more concrete measures to promote the empowerment of women, politically, institutionally, economically and financially alike. This can not be achieved without a legal and policy framework addressing all aspects of gender to actively engage women in economic activities and decision-making process. We believe that the enhancement of women empowerment is definitely feasible if women, particularly rural and poor women, are assured of tangible ensuing results, for instance improved income, family and social status, and better well-being of their children. To this end, the most effective way is to provide them with better access to education, training, re-training, hence new and better knowledge and life skills.

Third, while making efforts to better protect women from all forms of violence and discrimination, we should not merely consider women as victims, but rather, agents of change. From our own experience of a post-war country, we believe that women can play an active role in peace building and reconstruction once they are encouraged and supported by enabling policies, and their special needs, including health and education, are appropriately addressed. On its part, the United Nations can definitely play a pro-active role in enhancing women's participation in peace building and reconstruction process through the full implementation of SC Resolutions 1325 and 1889.

Mr. Chairman,

Improving women's participation has been always among top priority development policies of Viet Nam. Currently accounting for 25.76% of the National Assembly membership, women Parliamentarians have formed their own Caucus with an aim to better mainstream gender in the law-making and monitoring process. Being aware of the importance of education in women's empowerment, the Government has designed specific objectives and indicators in 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. As a result, the gender gap has been reduced at all levels of education with female students now accounting for 46.8% of enrollment. With its gender-related indexes improved, Viet Nam now ranks 52nd among 93 countries in Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), and 68th among 130 countries in Gender Gap Index (GGI).

Mr. Chairman,

Despite initial encouraging achievements, we believe that much more needs to be done to improve gender equality in rural areas, as well as at workplaces, including ensuring equal job opportunities, equal pay, and equal chance to leadership and managerial positions. We are ready to work closely with all partners, all stakeholders for this purpose, including particularly within the ASEAN framework, and with all related UN agencies. Exactly like in the past years, particularly since joining the pilot groups of "Delivery as One", we will continue cooperating effectively with UNIFEM and the new UN Women in the time to come for our common goal.

I thank you.