

Statement by
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Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Viet Nam

At the 3rd Committee
On agenda item: “Advancement of Women”

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my Delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item. I also thank all speakers for their briefings.

Mr. Chairman,

Enormous efforts have been made over the last years by Member States and the United Nations system to ensure gender equality and advancement of women. We are pleased that significant progress has been achieved, particularly in raising public awareness around the world about the importance of eliminating discrimination against women and promoting their role in political and economic decision-making. While commending encouraging progress gained during reporting period, we are aware that gaps and challenges remain. In order to overcome those difficulties, my Delegation would like to share the following points:

First, we believe that gender mainstreaming should be further promoted in all UN strategies and programs, particularly development programs. In addition to UN system’s efforts, the Members States must make further efforts to incorporate gender perspective in their legal system, development strategies and all kinds of socio-economic policies. From our own experience, we found that since the Law on Gender Equality and Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence came into effect in 2007 and 2008 respectively, public awareness about gender equality and the role of women in socio-economic life has been remarkably improved, particularly in rural areas where men and sons’ preferences remain a major part in social life.

Second, the UN system and Member States should take concrete measures to promote women’s participation in decision making. We have learnt that many countries have applied a quota for women’s representation in governance institutions, regularly updated and publicly announced women’s percentage in these institutions. Those are all good initiatives but probably not sufficient. We believe that women’s participation is

demonstrated not only by their representation but more importantly by their capacity to contribute to decision making processes. Focus should, therefore, be placed on enhancing education and training for women. Bearing that in mind, our Government has made a lot of efforts to ensure equal access to education for women and girls, as well as take measures to improve percentage of girls in primary and secondary schools and reduce the rate of girl-dropouts at higher levels. As a result, in school year 2007-2008, the percentage of girls reached almost similar to that of boys in primary and secondary schools.

Third, it is our belief that women's economic empowerment plays a critical role to achieve gender equality. In my country, over the last five years, income and employment opportunities for women have been significantly improved. Women account for 48% of jobs created annually. The unemployment rate among women at working age has been reduced to 5.29% in 2007. In addition, a number of policies have been put in place to improve women's access to credit sources. The Viet Nam Social Policy Bank reported that loans for women represent 40-45% of its total loans in recent years. Many microcredit programs with women as major beneficiaries have been implemented effectively in many provinces of Viet Nam, providing a good example of women's economic empowerment. We hope that our efforts as well as those of other Member States to promote women's economic empowerment will be further facilitated by the United Nations system, which has a lot of experience and expertise in this field. We commend the U.N. initiative to develop gender marker system pioneered by UNDP, which allow decision makers to track funds allocated to women focused projects. We look forward to seeing such system developed in Member States in the near future.

Last but not least, Mr. Chairman, let me confirm our Government's commitment to promoting the advancement of women. We will do our best to ensure that women's voice is better heard, their specific needs adequately responded, and their participation in all aspects of life promoted, not only through the increase of their representation in socio-economic life, but more importantly through their real contribution to the development of the country. We count on the continued cooperation of UN agencies and Member States in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.