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**Statement by Mr. Pham Binh Anh
Representative of the Delegation of Viet Nam
At the 3rd Committee of the 66th Session of the General Assembly
On agenda item: "Advancement of Women"
New York, 12 October 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation wishes to thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important topic. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Special Rapporteur and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for their comprehensive reports.

My Delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the distinguished Representative of Argentina on behalf of G77 and China and the distinguished Representative of Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

Fifteen years have passed since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and important progress has been made in terms of ensuring women's rights. Thanks to our aggregate efforts, millions of women can now live in an environment free from war, armed conflict, discrimination and violence, and enjoy better access to education, employment and participation. Many have held decision-making positions in Governments. We rejoice at the establishment of the UN Women and appreciate its endeavors in working actively with Member States, UN partners and other stakeholders in advancing women empowerment and gender equality in many countries and regions around the world. We believe that with its expertise and energy, combined with its greater focus of resources on women and their equal development, new progress in promoting gender equality will only be an issue of time.

Mr. Chairman,

Achievements aside, we cannot ignore the fact that the above-mentioned progress has been uneven and fragile. Discrimination against women remains and even becomes alarming in instances. It's not uncommon to see their employment still limited to low paying jobs, with long working hours, and many of them continuing to fall victim to violence, no or under-education, and other serious injustices. In that context, due to the time constraint, my Delegation would like to underline just two points:

Firstly, women empowerment plays a crucial role in achieving a nation's development and gender equality. Women's key role in taking care of their children and households often motivates them to put any money they have back into their family's education, health, and welfare, therefore, helping to break the cycle of poverty. Subsequently, investing in women makes good economic pay-offs. Studies show that for every 1% increase in the proportion of women with secondary education, a country's annual per capita income growth rate will increase by about 0.3% points. Women's freedom and economic viability, thus, are pivotal to our collective global well-being. Equipped with the basic tools and skills for success, they can be empowered to better their lives and their children's, as well as to invest in their countries' future.

Secondly, as gender mainstreaming has been recognized by the international community as one of the most effective measures to attain gender equality, there's a huge imperative to mainstream gender in all strategies, policies and programs, particularly those related to development, as well as in the legal system, at all levels. This, if and once implemented, will help ensure that women's needs and priorities are better met, social benefits distributed fairly and equally, and women empowerment no longer a watchword.

Mr. Chairman,

As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination against Women, Viet Nam is committed to supporting the advancement of women and gender equality, considering this Convention an important instrument to achieve gender equality and sustainable development. This has found reflections in the country's Constitution, Criminal Code, Civil Code, Labor Code, Education Law, Land Law, and many other legal documents related to gender equality. Especially, Viet Nam has separate laws to implement the core principles of the Convention, namely the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence. We have also put in place a large number of State-level programs and projects on poverty alleviation, jobs generation, vocational training, and education with direct

positive impacts on women's life, such as the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, the National Strategy on Reproductive Healthcare, the Strategy for Educational Development, the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, to name a few. The Strategic Guidelines for Sustainable Development in Viet Nam also affirm that women represent one of the seven priority groups in the promotion of sustainable development in Viet Nam.

The concerted implementation of all the afore-mentioned laws, policies and strategies has resulted in significant progress in promoting gender equality and improving the status of women in Viet Nam. Favorable conditions and more opportunities for Vietnamese women to participate in and contribute to the economic, social and political affairs of the country have helped uplift their role and status in the society and in the family. They have also enjoyed better access to education and health care services. The gender gap in education has been significantly narrowed down at all levels. In the academic year 2010-2011, the rate of female students is estimated to reach 49.1% at the primary education level; 46.8% at the secondary education level; 52.6% at the high school level; and 48,5% at the higher education level. In the field of healthcare, women who are higher users of healthcare services due to their reproductive role have benefitted from Viet Nam's nationwide healthcare network with relatively good coverage. Overall, around 85% of women live in communities with a health care worker. Better healthcare has led to a dramatic fall in Viet Nam's infant and under-five mortality rates. The maternal mortality rate has also gone down considerably. Equality in employment and income has seen marked progress: among the number of workers employed annually, female workers make up about 49%. A growing number of women have actively engaged in managerial responsibilities and held leading positions in the Government, National Assembly, People's Councils, and political, social and professional organizations. The introduction and effective implementation of numerous positive measures has also led to the dwindling gender gap in many traditionally male-dominated areas, for instance, land and property entitlement. A certificate of land entitlement in today's Viet Nam is only lawful if bearing the names of both the husband and the wife. It is not without reason that Viet Nam is considered to be one of the countries with a high gender development index (GDI).

Mr. Chairman,

Against this encouraging panorama, we are fully aware of the challenges we are facing on the way to achieving full gender equality. There are still barriers to women's full participation. There is still a gap between policy and

law on the one hand and their implementation on the other. However, I can assure you that as Viet Nam is strongly committed to the cause of gender equality and the advancement of women, we are ready, as we have been, to do our utmost, together with all UN agencies and the international community at large, in order to bring about the best to women, the better half of all the humanity.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman./.