STATEMENT
by H.E. Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 13 October 2014

Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me, at the outset, to convey our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee this year. It is our strong belief that with your able leadership, this year’s session will arrive at a successful outcome.

It is my great honour today to represent Viet Nam at the United Nations for the first time. I sincerely look forward to working closely with friends and colleagues in discharging my responsibilities in the time to come.

2. Viet Nam associates itself with the statement by H.E. Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement by H.E. Ambassador Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

3. We begin the work of the First Committee this year against the backdrop of a number of novel challenges. From Africa to Asia and Europe, crises and simmering tensions have characterised international security over the last year, despite much effort to peacefully settle disputes. As the Secretary-General has put it, not only has it been a terrible year for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, but disarmament itself is also now viewed as a distant dream.

4. In the face of such daunting challenges, it is crucial that we need to redouble efforts to lay further foundation for an atmosphere of strategic trust conducive to better international security for each and every Member State. In our view, core elements of such approach include respect for fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, especially respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and efforts aimed at reducing the reliance on the resort to the use of force in international relations.
Mr. Chairman,

5. Towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, nuclear disarmament should remain the top priority. We are heartened by recent efforts toward this end, including the recent Informal Ministerial Meeting in commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and recent meetings on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons. We are of the view that all states need to accelerate efforts to address outstanding issues related to nuclear disarmament. These include consultations on a nuclear disarmament convention, negotiations of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, and the initiation of negotiation of a fissile material treaty. We call for more signatures and ratifications of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at the earliest possible opportunity, especially those by states who ratifications are necessary for the Treaty to enter into force.

6. In this connection, we reiterate the pivotal role of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in the global regime of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The 64-point Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT must be seriously and expeditiously carried out. As we are nearing the next Review Conference, it is significant to bear in mind that there are serious concerns that we are lagging behind in terms of both substantive and procedural preparations. The upshot and atmosphere at recent meetings within the NPT framework clearly show that more serious commitment and practical achievements are badly needed if we are to produce at successful Review Conference in less than seven months.

7. On a more positive side, we are encouraged by the efforts made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in ensuring nuclear security and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology. We commend the hard work by the Agency, through which more and more states, including developing countries, benefited from its technical assistance. Viet Nam always places a premium on nuclear safety and security. We made our utmost efforts to fulfil our responsibility as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the IAEA for the term 2013-2014 in a balanced and efficient manner. We are grateful for the kind cooperation and support from all Member States. Viet Nam is also cooperating closely with the IAEA and international partners in developing our nuclear energy infrastructure. We also actively participated in the recent Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands.

8. Another important element of the global regime for nuclear issues is nuclear weapons-free zone and Mongolia’s nuclear weapons-free status. Therefore ASEAN always attaches great importance to the Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and is working closely with the nuclear weapons states with a view to concluding negotiations on the signing by the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) of the Protocol to the Treaty without reservations. We
are pleased with the resumption of meeting between ASEAN states and the NWSs last Wednesday the 8th October on the margins of the First Committee and look forward to continued engagement with the NWS. It is also our hope that the conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction would soon be convened with substantive outcome before the next NPT Review Conference (RevCon). It is crystal clear that the outcome of the Review Conference would hinge, not in a small part, upon this conference.

Mr. Chairman,

9. We share the view that it is the sovereign rights of states to retain, import, and manufacture conventional weapons for legitimate self-defence. We support the continued implementation of the Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) to curb the illicit trade of SALW across borders. We would like to stress that the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, given its entry into force later this year, should be carried out in a balance and non-discriminatory manner.

10. We also support the humanitarian purposes of the conventions on cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines. At national level, Viet Nam is in fact implementing various elements of these conventions, including establishing national mechanism and action plan to address consequences of explosive remnants of war in Viet Nam. We are also working closely with international partners in this important area.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Progress in the field of disarmament depends largely on the international security environment. But it also devolves on the disarmament machinery, which is more and more widely seen as short of producing results. While upholding multilaterally agreed principles, we could explore ways to promote efficiency in the disarmament machinery, for instance probing synergy among emerging mechanisms like the resolution on Follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament and the initiative on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We are also open to more discussion on improving the work of the First Committee.

12. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate our willingness to work closely with you and other Member States to ensure a successful outcome of this year’s session, thus contributing to building up momentum for further successes next year when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.