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General Debate

Statement by the Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Monday, 18 July 2016

Speaker: Ambassador Vu Quang Minh

*Not checked against delivery**

* This statement is made available in the language and form in which it was received. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

GENERAL REMARKS
BY ASSISTANT MINISTER VU QUANG MINH
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE, UNCTAD 14
(17h50 on 18 July 2016)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to attend our meeting today on behalf of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Since the 13rd Conference in Qatar in 2012, the world has gone through considerable changes, bringing both pains and gains to the development world. The profound impact of the global financial crisis in 2008-2009 has delayed the progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, while climate change, conflicts, cross-border epidemics, migration crises, and other new challenges put additional pressure on the limited resources for development, especially for developing countries. Albeit all such challenges, the succession of important international agreements such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the COP 21 Paris Agreement has given hope that the world would be able to unite, join hands and look ahead for the common good. Now it is indeed time for action and hence we welcome the theme of this year UNCTAD conference “*From Decisions to Action*”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After 30 years of Doi Moi reforms, Viet Nam has emerged as a dynamic economy and a responsible member of the world community. Since 2010, Viet Nam’s economy has grown at 6% per year with the growth rate in 2015 reaching 6.68%, generating more jobs, bringing more wealth to the people and turning Viet Nam into a lower middle-income country.

Placing human wellbeing at the center of economic development, Viet Nam has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals and is joining other countries in shifting our priorities towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such accomplishment in MDGs’ endeavour could not have been made

possible without the effective assistance from our development partners, whom I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to.

For our part, we have been also trying to help other developing countries under bilateral or multilateral frameworks. Viet Nam has shared its development experiences and best practices in areas such as agriculture, education and healthcare with members of Least Developed Countries (LDCs group), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs group) and other countries in Asia and Africa. In this regard, Viet Nam would like to call on developed partners and international organizations, including the UN and UNCTAD, to continue facilitating such frameworks for South – South cooperation.

Distinguished participants,

Realizing the importance of trade for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction, Viet Nam has been working with other countries to further reduce trade barriers through global, inter-regional, regional and bilateral trade regimes. We have so far joined FTAs with 55 major trade partners, including all G7 and 17 in 20 members of G20. We have been also participating actively in the WTO, APEC, and the ASEAN Community.

Acknowledging that economic integration alone cannot solve every economic and development problems, as a lower middle income country, Viet Nam has made serious endeavour in carrying out domestic reforms to improve national competitiveness and enhance governance and administrative capacities. On the other hand, we believe that the international community needs to make greater efforts against trade protectionism by further opening up goods and services markets for developing countries to create a truly fair, equitable and pro-development global trading system.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Viet Nam appreciates the vital role of UNCTAD as the focal point of the United Nations for integrated trade and development and inter-related issues. We hope that UNCTAD would enhance its work towards addressing the trade and development challenges of all developing countries, including LDCs, LLDCs, SIDs, lower middle-income and developing countries in transit with their special needs and challenges by contributing to translate into reality the commitments in Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Agenda 2030 and the COP 21 Paris Agreement.

For Viet Nam in particular, despite all the impressive achievements over the past three decades of reforms, challenges persist, particularly in maintaining growth, tackling climate change, protecting the environment and overcoming the middle-income trap, while policy space and international official development assistance start shrinking. The year of 2016 began with the most severe droughts and saline water intrusion in many regions of the Mekong Delta. As a result of the worst El Nino and lowest water level on the Mekong River, the dry spells in the once-fertile Mekong Delta are devastating food supplies in southern Viet Nam, jeopardizing the livelihood of millions of poor farmers and threatening to reduce global supply of rice, seafood and coffee.

Therefore, we call for developed countries and international partners to continue walking with us on the next development path and assist us to effectively deal with the challenges of the new phase of the country's development.

Let me conclude my remarks here. I would like to wish Mr. Chairman and all the delegates good health, happiness and every success.

Thank you. Asante !