STATEMENT
by H.E. AMBASSADOR BUI THE GIANG
Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations
at the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security
(New York, 22 September 2011)

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Delegation of Viet Nam, I would like to express my high appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his initiative to organize this High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security. I believe that our meeting will make significant contributions to strengthening the global nuclear safety regime and ensuring maximum nuclear safety standards. Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

As we may all agree, nuclear technology has been shaping this era of human history to an incredible extent. Peaceful applications of nuclear technology have been widely and positively used in many different areas, most notably generation of electricity and health care. Viet Nam believes that nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful use of nuclear technology, which is the legitimate right of all States, are mutually constitutive. This has been reflected in the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of all nuclear-related international legal instruments, NPT in particular. At the same time, we are deeply concerned that huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the imminent nuclear proliferation combined have posed the most serious threat to the existence of humankind. For a more secured world, we should make further efforts toward the general and complete disarmament, first of all, disarmament of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

For nuclear energy to be developed and used for peaceful purposes, Viet Nam attaches importance to nuclear safety and security. In this connection, we wish once again to extend our condolences and sympathy to
the Government and people of Japan over the tragic losses caused by the tsunami in March this year. It is our view that the accident at Fukushima Dai-Ichi Power Plant which resulted from the tsunami has necessitated the international community to step up the current process of reviewing and improving the management of peaceful use of nuclear energy with greater care for safety and security. In this regard, we acknowledge the emergence of a new dynamic to further develop what has been discussed and successfully achieved at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington D.C. last year as well as at the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in Vienna this year and in other frameworks. We, at the same time, hold that any review and improvement to be made should not be detached from its overall constitutive context encompassing core elements, namely disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive and constitutive approach toward nuclear safety and security appears even more relevant today given the rising tensions evolving around the nuclear capacity of some countries as well as the potential threat of nuclear terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Along this line, in order to help strengthen global nuclear safety, we would like to make the following proposals:

First, notwithstanding the principle that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and security lies with the State, emphasis should be made on the centrality of the UN and IAEA in coordinating efforts in the realm of nuclear safety and security. Any international framework or standard on nuclear safety and security should be concluded or revised through negotiations within these institutions, bearing in mind their unchallenged political, legal and material capacity to handle all constitutive aspects of nuclear technology and broad membership.

Second, international cooperation in this respect needs to be broadly consulted to secure consensus from stakeholders, taking into account the socio-economic conditions and level of nuclear energy application of individual countries. It is necessary to refrain from imposing undue restrictions or unfair measures, whether bilateral or multilateral, on transfer to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

Third, in the context of the ongoing nuclear safety assessment process which started in the Vienna Conference in June, the sharing of information and practical experiences in a continuous, timely and transparent manner as
well as in the implementation of international legal instruments on nuclear safety, particularly the Nuclear Safety Convention, should be guaranteed. To this end, the central role of IAEA should be enhanced with a view to promoting and coordinating different programs and joint activities among its Member States in relation to nuclear safety.

Mr. Chairman,

Viet Nam has always followed a comprehensive policy toward nuclear energy. While consistently supporting the general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction, Viet Nam places top priority on safety and security in its employment of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Evidently, Viet Nam has acceded to and fulfilled its obligation under all major international treaties and legal instruments on both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security, such as NPT, CTBT, UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We have also endorsed the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In working closely with IAEA and other partners, Viet Nam has been proactive in establishing a legal framework and regulatory bodies to control and ensure the safety and security of the use of nuclear material and radio-active substances. As it is adopting an increasingly robust peaceful application of nuclear energy, Viet Nam will continue to attach great importance to nuclear safety and security.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the view that each State is entitled to devise its own national energy policy and make its own decisions on the development and peaceful use of nuclear energy, in line with internationally agreed laws and regimes. We are also convinced about the need to deepen our common understanding of the entire range of issues pertaining to the development of nuclear energy and its safety. In this process, the United Nations, including its related organizations, IAEA included, have an important role to play to facilitate cooperation on nuclear safety and security. Viet Nam stands ready to contribute constructively to this process.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.