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Statement
by H.E. Ambassador Le Luong Minh,
Permanent Representative
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations
at the First Committee of the 60th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly
(New York, 04 October 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections and assuring you of the full support and cooperation of the Delegation of Viet Nam.

My Delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the distinguished Representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

In the over-all bleak disarmament picture of the past year that I will describe in more details, we do see some bright spots. We are pleased to note the adoption of some specific measures to promote implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, namely those aimed at developing national capacity to mitigate infectious and deliberate diseases and avoiding misuse. The outcome of the Second Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit
Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Aspects is also positive. More and more States are moving closer towards ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status was declared and commitments were made by the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Conference on Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones that took place in Mexico last May reaffirmed the conviction in nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important nuclear disarmament measure. These are positive developments that should be encouraged as we undertake a more thorough review of the disarmament situation of the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

Having mentioned the above positive developments, we cannot deny that the past year generally has not been a good year for disarmament. The arms race continues with estimated global military expenditures reaching a new high and new challenges and threats causing international concern. With limited progress we see in the reduction in the number of deployed nuclear weapons, the rest of the nuclear disarmament picture is not rosy. Thousands of nuclear weapons still exist, many on alert status. And, while the International Court of Justice has passed a verdict concerning the legality of the threats of use of nuclear weapons, we are alarmed by the emergence of new security doctrines giving even a broader role to nuclear weapons. In the face of this situation, deadlocks remain at the most important multilateral disarmament fora. The Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body is still unable to engage in any substantive negotiation. The Disarmament Commission has not been even able to agree on an agenda of work. The 7th Review Conference of the State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last May failed to reach agreement on any substantive issue. The omission of the section on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation resulting in the absence of any reflection in the Outcome Document of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session of the General Assembly on the concerns, interests and political will of the majority of Member States only adds to the disappointment of the international community. This over-all situation offers no healthy reason for celebration.

Mr. Chairman,

Where shall we go from here? Responsibility to ensure peace and security for our own peoples and for the very survival of mankind does not allow us to let the present situation prolong. We should have been better equipped with a more comprehensive Outcome Document. That not being the case does not mean we do
not have sound guidelines to follow. The UN Charter, the many multilateral disarmament treaties and the numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by review conferences and by the General Assembly constitute a solid basis for our actions. The question remains if we all want to move forward. In this connection, let me quote what the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization: “Multilateral instruments to prevent proliferation and to promote disarmament must be revitalized if they are to continue to contribute to international peace and security”. Over the past decades, the Non-Aligned Movement has always been in the forefront in the struggle for disarmament. The Vietnamese Delegation totally shares the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that stresses the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery in dealing with questions of disarmament and other related international security issues and underlines the need to strengthen them.

Mr. Chairman,

The Vietnamese Delegation joins the majority of Member States in reiterating our common position that nuclear weapons continue to pose the most serious threat to international peace and security and nuclear disarmament hence remains our highest priority. To achieve nuclear disarmament, while political will is necessary on the part of all States, it is particularly so on the part of the States that possess nuclear weapons with their obligation under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to engage in faithful negotiations with a view to putting an end to the nuclear arms race and totally eliminating nuclear weapons. The decision in 1995 to extend this Treaty indefinitely was based on the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfill their above-mentioned obligation and, in fact, at the 2000 Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States did give an unequivocal undertaking that they would do so. We call upon the nuclear-weapon-States to honour their commitments. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon-States should be pursued as a matter of priority. Towards these ends, The Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission must be allowed to carry out their mandates. The United Nations must continue to play the central role in this connection. We support the call for convening an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been a positive step towards accomplishing the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. While
welcoming the positive developments in this connection as mentioned above, we
join the call for continued efforts to implement the resolution adopted by the 1995
NPT Review Conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear
weapons.

It should be pointed out that one of the most important factors determining
the effectiveness of the treaties on nuclear-weapons-free-zones is the participation
by the nuclear weapons States in the relevant protocols of the treaties. We
welcome China’s readiness to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia
Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone and urge the other nuclear weapons States to do the
same.

Mr. Chairman,

With the increasing danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass
destruction falling into the hands of the terrorists, we see the necessity of and
support measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, including measures to
ensure compliance. However, these measures must be applied on an equal footing,
without discrimination and with respect for the sovereignty and territorial
integrity of States. Furthermore, a balance between compliance measures and those
to ensure respect for the right of developing countries to technical assistance and
access to the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes
must be maintained.

Mr. Chairman,

With complex developments and the serious lack of progress, the convening
of the Fourth United Nations Special Session Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD IV)
is imperative in order to review and assess the implementation of the First United
Nations Special Session Devoted to Disarmament and chart the way forward. We
join many other Delegations in calling upon the General Assembly to reconvene
the Working Group to find practical ways to hold the Special Session as soon as
possible and look forward to actively participating in its work.

In concluding, let me assure you, Mr. Chairman, of Viet Nam’s willingness
to work closely with all other Member States in advancing towards our lofty
ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

I thank you for your attention!