



KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. DASHO DAW PENJO,
FOREIGN SECRETARY,
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN,

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
NEW YORK,

29TH SEPTEMBER 2010

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the Presidency of the 65th Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that with your vast academic and political experience, you will provide the General Assembly with the necessary leadership in the year ahead. Allow me to also commend your predecessor, H.E. Dr. Ali Treki, for his many initiatives and guidance in steering the 64th Session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. President,

2. My delegation welcomes your proposal on “Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance” as the theme for the General Debate of this Session. This theme is most appropriate as it comes at a time when the world looks to the United Nations for its stewardship to address the multiple global crises, the devastating effects of climate change and the maintenance of global peace and security. The United Nations has long been recognized as an indispensable global organization due to its mandate; and must continuously adapt itself to deal with the challenges confronting the world so that its pivotal role in global governance is maintained. No other multilateral organisation, or intergovernmental grouping without the legitimacy of universal membership, can hope to replace the centrality of the United Nations in global affairs.
3. The vast majority of members of the UN are small States. The principal of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter establishes that all states, regardless of size, wealth, relative power, population, level of development, are accorded equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the work of the UN, its principal organs, and its high level posts. This in fact, is the bedrock upon which this august house was founded 64 years ago. It is a principal that must remain in the forefront, and help chart our course further as our dialogue on UN reform continues. How can we as members of the UN credibly espouse equity among nations and peoples if we fail to practice it among ourselves? After 39 years of membership, Bhutan continues to believe that the UN still has room and role for smaller states, as equal partners in global affairs, including the maintenance of international peace and security. For this reason, Bhutan is seeking membership for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC for the term 2013-14.
4. Last week at the High Level Plenary Meeting, our Heads of States and Governments acknowledged the plight of millions of people living in poverty, and agreed to recommit themselves to keeping their pledge on the MDGs. The successful achievement of the MDGs by all member states will serve as a measure of the UN’s effectiveness. The UN must, therefore, continue to provide the necessary leadership to foster renewed global partnership to enable the realization of all the MDGs by 2015.

5. On 20th September, Bhutan's Prime Minister had highlighted to this august gathering the need to move beyond conventional development practices. He, therefore, proposed the inclusion of Happiness as the Ninth Millennium Development Goal. My delegation is hopeful that this proposal of my Prime Minister will receive the broad support of the UN membership.
6. My delegation is pleased to note that the reform agenda initiated following the World Summit in 2005 is beginning to yield results. In this regard, we welcome the unanimous adoption of the resolution on System-wide Coherence by the General Assembly earlier in July, which among others has established UN Women. The creation of UN Women effectively consolidates all the existing mandates and functions relating to women and constitutes an important step in fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. We are confident that this agency will address the global issues of gender equality and women's empowerment with great vigor.
7. Bhutan has long been convinced that no society can be a happy one if it is not inclusive. Promoting the conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness by all our citizens, so that they, regardless of race, sex, language, religion, politics, or other status, may enjoy a good quality of life in a progressive and prosperous country is not only one of the objectives of government, it is our moral obligation. This spirit is further reaffirmed by our Constitution, which guarantees the fundamental rights of all Bhutanese, demonstrating that Bhutan is committed to building an inclusive society, one that enables all Bhutanese, including those with disabilities, to lead fulfilling lives, to contribute, and to participate as full members of society. My government was, therefore, particularly pleased to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 21st September 2010.
8. We are also pleased to note that with the resolution on System-wide Coherence, the operational activities of the UN will be enhanced making the funding system more systematic and harmonizing the overall governance structure. This would improve the capacity of the UN to more effectively deliver assistance to countries thus strengthening its development pillar.
9. My delegation recognizes the important role of the General Assembly in setting the global agenda and dealing with many of the important issues confronting the international community today. With each passing year, the responsibilities entrusted to the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative and policy-making body of the United Nations, continue to grow; and we believe that the authority of the General Assembly must be simultaneously enhanced to assume the increasing mandate entrusted to it. We, therefore, appreciate the progress made by the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, where a number of key issues have been highlighted, especially on the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We are confident that with the political determination of member states, these deliberations will result in a stronger United Nations.

Mr. President,

10. We are encouraged that in the past year, the five rounds of Intergovernmental Negotiations on UN Security Council reform, held under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan, is making good progress. My delegation supports the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council to reflect the contemporary realities and make it a more representative body. We believe that India, Japan, Germany, Brazil plus two from the African continent, which have the capacity and resources to shoulder the onerous responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security must be granted permanent membership.

Mr. President,

11. Given the renewed commitment of the international community to the MDGs to improve the lives of the people in the poorest countries, it is most timely that the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries should take place in Turkey in 2011. We thank the government of Turkey for their generous offer and assistance to host this important Conference. We also appreciate the efforts of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in coordinating preparations for the Conference.

12. As we undertake preparations for this event, we will look to you, Mr. President, for your support and direction so that the LDCs together with all our development partners can not only ensure a successful outcome, but also more importantly, give to its people a chance for a better life. We are confident that the Conference will build on the successes of the Brussels Programme of Action and adopt new measures and strategies for the development of the LDCs in the next decade.

Mr. President,

13. As most fittingly described, 'the other defining challenge of our time', Climate Change requires the collective and coordinated effort of all nations as its devastating effects know no bounds. My country has full faith in the leadership of the UN and believes in the centrality of the UNFCCC in addressing Climate Change. We are confident that the ongoing negotiations will lead to a concrete, comprehensive and equitable agreement at COP 16 in Cancun later this year, as envisaged under the Bali Plan of Action. Success would be essential in Cancun for small and vulnerable countries such as my own, which bears a heavier burden due to Climate Change. We must have the necessary resources for mitigation and adaptation measures.

14. With the severe threats and damaging effects caused by Climate Change in South Asia as recently occurred in Pakistan, it was no coincidence that the 16th SAARC Summit, which Bhutan was honored to host in April this year, aptly had Climate Change as its theme. In addition to adopting the 'Thimphu Silver Jubilee Declaration – Towards a Green and Happy South Asia', the Summit also adopted the 'Thimphu Statement on Climate Change'. The Statement outlines important initiatives to further

strengthen and intensify regional cooperation to address the adverse impacts of Climate Change in South Asia. One of the important outcomes of the Thimphu Summit is the formulation of a common SAARC Statement on Climate Change, which Bhutan as the current SAARC Chair will present at the forthcoming COP 16 in December in Cancun.

Mr. President,

15. We are pleased to report that as Bhutan progresses into its third year as a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy, the foundations for a sustainable and vibrant democracy are growing stronger. The institutional arrangements as required under our Constitution for the three branches of government are now complete and functioning with the establishment of the Supreme Court earlier this year. Likewise, all the constitutional bodies that have oversight functions have been firmly established and the media is performing its role as the fourth estate in an atmosphere of freedom.

Mr. President,

16. There is no doubt that for the present challenges confronting our increasingly interdependent world, the role of the United Nations is vital in addressing these issues. In order to do so, the United Nations requires the full support and commitment of the entire membership. Only then would it be able to truly reaffirm its central role in global governance. I, therefore, conclude by assuring you, Mr. President, of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you embark on a year long journey of further strengthening this organization.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!