

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ambassador Kesang Wangdi, Leader of Delegation of Bhutan

Asia Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the MDGs to the UN Development Agenda Beyond
2015. 26-28 August 2013

The Bhutanese delegation would like to thank the Royal Government of Thailand and UNESCAP for hosting and organizing this important Meeting. As we are nearing what is known as the 'input stage' of the Post 2015 development agenda, we are pleased that the Asia Pacific region will have the opportunity to have its collective voice heard. The Royal Government of Bhutan therefore values this opportunity and attaches high importance to this Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue.

During the course of the deliberations so far at this meeting my delegation has offered our views on various aspects of the ongoing discussions and developments. At this stage and in the interest of time we would simply like to share our thoughts on the more procedural aspects of the direction that the discourse on the post 2015 agenda should take.

Bhutan believes that discussions on the Post 2015 Development Agenda should be a state driven intergovernmental process with the widest participation by all stakeholders. A process that will ultimately reflect the convergence of all processes and mechanisms which are currently underway into one universal development framework. While we recognize this harmonized and unified framework should have sustainable development and poverty eradication at its core it must remain sensitive to the specificities of the individual member states and its development needs.

The Post 2015 global development framework should reflect shared priorities. It is therefore important to ensure that mechanisms, as appropriate, are open, inclusive and transparent in order to enable interested states and other stakeholders to enrich the important discussions within the international mechanisms and procedures.

Bhutan would like to emphasize the need for a higher vision to steer the transformative SDG framework and Post 2015 Development Agenda that put people at the centre of all development initiatives in bringing about shared prosperity and happiness to all. The implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda should be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Needless to mention, mutual accountability must be incorporated as one of the key strategies in realizing the objectives of this new development agenda.

Bhutan maintains active participation in the work of the General Assembly's intergovernmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. It views its engagement on this front as an opportunity to build on the MDGs and redefine a new set of development priorities which is in consonance with Bhutan's development philosophy of Gross National Happiness.

I take this opportunity to also reaffirm the high importance attached by the Royal Government to the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Our participation in this conference and other multiple parallel mechanisms currently underway on forging a new development framework bears testimony to this.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to take this opportunity to mention here that Bhutan would be making a national contribution in the form of a report entitled, "Towards a New Development Paradigm", to the global community's ongoing effort to define a new global agenda when the MDGs expire in 2015. This report also marks a milestone in Bhutan's own involvement in this worldwide endeavour, starting with our sponsorship in July 2011 of the UN resolution 65/309 entitled "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development" that was adopted by consensus.

This was followed by our organizing and hosting a high-level meeting on wellbeing and happiness at United Nations Headquarters in New York in April, 2012. It was attended by more than 800 governmental, international, scholarly, business, religious, and civil society leaders. The meeting called upon Bhutan to convene an expert working group to frame a new development paradigm. In July 2012, with reference to Bhutan's own experience of pursuing a holistic, sustainable and inclusive development process aimed at promoting human happiness, His Majesty the King of Bhutan established the Steering Committee for the New Development Paradigm and an International Expert Working Group to undertake that task. Its report will be presented to the UN Secretary General during the 68th session of the UNGA.

Thank you.

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