



# KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

**STATEMENT BY**

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**ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN**

**ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)**

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Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. Allow me to convey the warm greetings from the Kingdom of Bhutan.
2. This year will be remembered throughout history as an extraordinary year. Life as we know has changed and the entire world had to readjust in order to accommodate the pandemic that still threatens millions around the world.
3. I would like to convey my deepest sympathies to all who have been impacted and pray that through our collective endeavor and fortune, we will be able to overcome this challenging period very soon.
4. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chair of the LDC Group - Republic of Malawi, for the leadership and excellent coordination in promoting the interest of the Group and our priorities at the UN.
5. I would also like to thank Her Excellency Ms. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and her dedicated team for their continued unwavering support for the interest of the group.
6. I also recognize the presence of our development partners whose continued support and cooperation has become even more important as we work towards recovering from the effects of the pandemic.
7. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly become much more than a public health crisis. As the pandemic continues its rampage throughout the world, the poorest and most vulnerable have been hit the hardest. For the LDCs, our hard-earned development gains are under threat of being pushed back further behind as the pandemic exposes and exacerbates our existing fragilities.
8. Bhutan has been fortunate to have a strong national leadership that has provided proactive response to the pandemic threat. However, our responses that are centered on surveillance, prevention and containment have posed significant strain on our already limited resources and capacity, including on our fragile health system.
9. We have had to mobilize all available human and material resources to these efforts. Our National Development Plan has been re-oriented to meet urgent and immediate needs. All sectors of the economy have been severely impacted. However, those that build productive capacity, generate employment, and strengthen economic resilience are amongst the hardest hit.
10. This is deeply concerning, especially in the context of Bhutan's graduation from the LDC. For while we have met the graduation criteria for Gross National Income and Human Asset Index, we have not been able to meet the Economic

Vulnerability Index criterion. We are concerned that the pandemic will further exacerbate this situation.

11. However, while challenges abound, we also recognize that present circumstances present opportunities to accelerate economic diversification and to address structural issues which holds us back such as investing in the rural economy and in technical and vocational education as a growing number of young people consider the prospects of shifting to agriculture and other vocational sectors.
12. Bhutan will be presenting its Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the HLPF in July 2021. We are hopeful that this exercise will be an opportunity for us to make concrete assessment of where we stand, given the disruptions caused by the pandemic on our efforts toward achieving the SDGs.
13. Bhutan is privileged to Chair the LDC group for climate negotiations at the UNFCCC. LDCs stand at the forefront of the climate crisis. While the 47 countries contribute the least, yet we suffer disproportionately from the impacts of Climate Change. Bhutan will continue to work closely with all member states to ensure that the LDC group continues to speak with one voice.
14. On our part, we are committed to remaining carbon neutral for all times to come and we look forward to submitting our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in line with the Paris Agreement.
15. As we embark on the preparations for LDC V, we must reflect on how we have fared across the 8 priority areas of the IPOA as a group and whether the pace and rate of achievement of our enhanced commitments has brought us any closer to the IPOA's overarching goals for the decade.
16. In this regard, we look forward to the preparatory meetings which could not take place due to the pandemic. We stand ready to work with other LDCs under your Chairmanship in working towards LDC V.

I thank you all and Tashi Delek!

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