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Joint Press Release

Earmold Lab launched at JDWNRH

*“Together we must envision a Bhutan where no child shall endure hearing loss due to preventable causes”
Her Excellency Dasho Dechen Wangmo*

August 11, 2022: The World Health Organization estimates that hearing loss affects 32 million children worldwide and opportunely 60% of pediatric hearing loss can be prevented through early detection and the robust implementation of public health measures, along with the timely provision of diagnosis and treatment services. In Bhutan, it is estimated that 2.2% of the population has some form of hearing disorder. Hearing impairment in children is detrimental to the optimal growth and development of a healthy child.

In keeping with the Government’s commitment to “narrow the gap” in service provision for people living with disability, the Ministry of Health embarked on a journey to address the two most common disabilities in the country, visual and hearing impairment. Today, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with our partners (UN Technology Bank, Medtronic Labs; GNResound, MEDEL and Austrian Development Agency (ADA)) is delighted to launch the earmold lab at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH). An initiative to ensure universal ear care for every Bhutanese child through the ***“Hear, Listen and Speak program”***.

Through this program, earmold impression and hearing aids services for children will now be available at the JDWNRH in addition to enhancing the capacity of our health workers for the future expansion of our services. The program is expected to enhance the early detection of preventable hearing difficulties in children 0-14 years old, and subsequently strengthen support services. As a strong advocate for Persons with disabilities, Her Excellency, Dasho Dechen Wangmo is committed to mainstreaming disability initiatives in all programs to improve access to opportunities and services for people living with disabilities. The Ministry of Health strongly encourages all intersectoral partners to support this ear and hearing care initiative that will transform the lives of Bhutanese children with hearing loss.
