



KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

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Statement
by
H.E. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and
Leader of the Bhutanese delegation
at
The High-level Plenary Meeting of the 60th session of the General
Assembly,
United Nations, New York
15 September 2005

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United
Nations,
New York

Honble Co-Presidents,
Your Majesties, Hon'ble Presidents, Hon'ble Prime Ministers,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen

1. It is an honour for me to represent the Kingdom of Bhutan at this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. I bring the greetings and good wishes of our King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck to the meeting and to the United Nations at its sixtieth anniversary year.

2. At the outset, I would like to convey Bhutan's sympathy and solidarity with the United States in its efforts to recover from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

3. My delegation is pleased that two visionary leaders are chairing this meeting of historic significance. We would like to thank all those who worked meticulously to prepare for the meeting. The people of the world have high expectations from this gathering. The outcome document that we will approve, while not meeting all expectations, do contain important agreements that have to be implemented. This is crucial if we are to deliver these promises to our people.

Honble Presidents,

4. In the words of the Secretary-General there cannot be development without security nor security without development. Neither development nor security can exist in the absence of respect for human rights. This is the reality of our present day world. Today, more than ever before, we live in an interconnected and interdependent world and face challenges and threats that no nation can tackle alone. Recent times have shown that events in one region can affect the entire globe. Therefore, global action to address the issues facing humanity is the need of our time. Collective action calls for an effective multilateral system with the United Nations at its core to maintain international peace and security and promote international cooperation. Towards this, we must reform and strengthen the organization and its institutions, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic & Social Council and the Secretariat. Reform should promote efficiency and legitimacy. It should make the United Nations and its institutions more democratic and representative so that they better reflect the diversity and realities of our present day world.

Honble Presidents,

5. Global action can sustain and become credible only if we seriously follow up on our commitments and implement the goals and objectives agreed upon at the Millennium Summit and other major UN conferences relating to development, peace, collective security, human rights and the rule of law. Our community of 191 member states is not a homogenous one and although the challenges are the same, perceptions vary and the nature & scale of challenges faced differ from country to country and region to region. It is, therefore, important to ensure that we approach all issues in a holistic and balanced manner and that the principles and purposes of the UN Charter are respected and upheld at all times. The principles of sovereign equality of all states, territorial integrity and political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and resolution of disputes by peaceful means, as enshrined in the Charter are sacrosanct.

Hon'ble Presidents,

6. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, the progress achieved by the LDCs is insufficient to achieve the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action and thus the Millennium Development Goals. The Report has identified country ownership, capacity and resources as the major obstacles. As the primary responsibility for development rests on individual countries, we ourselves must increase efforts to tackle problems that impede development. At the same time, our development partners must scale-up their development assistance, provide full debt relief, assist & enhance trade and facilitate technology transfer, among others. We urge the developed countries to fulfill their aid commitment of 0.7% of the GDP and allocate 0.2% of that to the LDCs. We commend those countries that have already reached or crossed the 0.7% target. Accelerated global partnership between the LDCs and the international community is urgent as the General Assembly prepares to undertake the mid-term review of the Brussels Programme of Action next year. My delegation would also like to emphasize the importance of implementing the programmes identified in the Almaty Programme of Action.

7. A recent UN report states that the relatively poor performance of the Asia-Pacific LDCs is overshadowed by the fast growth countries in the region. It also states that these states receive less than half the average per-capita aid given to LDCs in other regions. This is a matter of serious concern and we urge the international community to address this situation faced by the 14 LDCs of the Asia-Pacific where 260 million people live.

Honble Presidents,

8. The Royal Government of Bhutan is deeply committed to the Millennium Development Goals and has assumed national ownership in achieving them. We are hopeful that with the continued support of our development partners and the international community, we will be able to achieve most of them by 2015. We are on track towards achieving eradication of poverty, ensuring universal primary education, reducing child mortality, improving the supply of safe drinking water and sanitation. Achievement of the MDGs will go a long way towards realizing our national development goal of Gross National Happiness. Permit me to briefly touch upon this development paradigm.

9. For over two decades, Bhutan's development process has been guided by the concept of Gross National Happiness - a concept enunciated by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. It stems from the belief that the ultimate goal of every human being is happiness and its attainment should be the purpose of development. We believe that the State should pursue policies and strategies to address the holistic needs of the human individual - both physical and spiritual - and thus create the conditions for achieving happiness. Increasing Gross Domestic Product enhances physical comfort but on its own cannot promote overall wellbeing. There are other aspects and we have determined them to be conservation of the natural environment, preservation of culture and good governance. In our view, this is a more holistic and sustainable approach to development. It could perhaps provide some answers to the many ills that afflict our societies. I call upon the international community to reflect on this.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!