

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Excellencies, distinguished development partner representatives and friends,

The RTM has now come to a successful conclusion. Bhutan and our development partners were able to review together the performance of Bhutan's 10th plan for which the development partners had made generous technical and financial contributions. The implementation of the 10th plan has generally been successful and most of the milestones, including the MDG goals, have been achieved or are in the process of being achieved within the next two years.

While the overall performance is excellent I would like to remind the development partners that Bhutan is at a very critical juncture in its history-- the economy is being transformed from subsistence agriculture to commerce and industry in a globalized environment where competitiveness is the order of the day. We are treading a path that is new to us--a difficult and uncertain path.

The Government Budget is overburdened with maintenance of essential services that have been instituted with donor support. These services were indispensable for poverty reduction and equity. The young democracy remains very fragile with imminent dangers of collapse. The people in the new democracy have very high and often unreasonable expectations which if unfulfilled risks loss of faith in democracy.

The challenge before Bhutan is enormous as we have to tread a fine balance to nurture democracy and at the same time face serious resource constraints. While the future looks very good with the hydro power projects expected to bring in enormous revenue the need for donor support in the meantime is most critical.

We have taken note of the recommendation of the development partners on a number of important issues such as gender parity, cultural tourism, youth employment, private sector development, malnutrition of children, climate change and adaption to it as well as on matters concerning the rights of minorities and the need to continue the dialogue with Nepal to resolve the matter regarding the people in the camps.

The Royal Government appreciates the views of the development partners and will give due attention to all the issues raised. Infact most of the issues are under various stages of being addressed. Due to time constraints the sector agencies could not be given the opportunity to provide updates or to explain the reasons for some of the problems. The Royal Government understands the concerns of the development partners on the matter of the people in the camps. In fact this is a matter of grave concern to us as it threatens the very survival of our country. Bhutan is most keen to resolve this problem at the earliest. The

Prime Minister had taken up the issue with the Prime Minister of Nepal and other political leaders on the sidelines of the UNGA and SAARC Summit as well as during his visit to Kathmandu as the Chairman of SAARC. Unfortunately the political instability in Nepal had hindered the continuation of the process. Bhutan is ready to resume the process with the new Government in Nepal.

We had the good fortune to view the excellent documentary "Revealed: Meltdown in the Himalayas " which brought home the imminent dangers of climate change that could have devastating repercussion on Bhutan and the people in the Himalayas. Bhutan is most concerned and sparing no efforts to conserve our fragile mountain eco-system. We are also spearheading efforts to ensure regional co-operation to address Climate Change. Bhutan will be hosting a Climate Summit this November.

The most important common agenda of our development partners have always been democratization and we have successfully introduced democracy 3 years ago--it is very young and fragile---you must help us to strengthen it by enabling us to meet the aspirations of the people so that they do not lose confidence in the new democracy. Development partners must not appear to be abandoning the democratically elected government at this critical stage. The democratic govt must be able to serve the people, if not better, at least as well as in the past---for which we need your continued support. I would also like to caution the donor representatives about the type of media reports appearing in our news papers-this is indeed an indication of media freedom and democratic culture being developed. If the reports are correct we commend them, however if the reports are not correct, we simply tolerate it so that the growth of free press is not retarded.

Finally, on behalf of the Royal Government and the People of Bhutan,I have the pleasure to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our development partners who have come all the way to take part in this very important donor coordination meeting.

It is your support which has enabled Bhutan to very successfully reach this level of development and to pursue a GNH path of development towards greater happiness of the people.

I would like to express our gratitude to H.E. Mr Ajay Chibber, the Asst secretary General of UN and Asst Administrator of UNDP and Madame Claire Van Vaeren, the Resident coordinator of the UN here in Bhutan and her team for all the support rendered to make this RTM a success. We are also honored by the presence of HE Chieck Diarra the Under Secretary.

I would also like to commend the GNHC Secretary and his able team for the excellent preparation. The Foreign Ministry has been most effective in the arrangements of the logistics. I also commend the consultant who shows a good understanding of the subject matter.

We have been able to jointly review the performance of the 10th plan and to look ahead at the issues that need to be addressed in the 11th plan. This meeting will enable our development partners to better understand the needs of the 11th plan.

I am very happy that the development partners have all pledged to continue to support Bhutan in the next plan which is so crucial a period for the socio-economic and political transformation of Bhutan---as a truly GNH nation.

Tashi Delek and Thank You

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