



KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

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STATEMENT BY

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AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE
SIXTY-NINTH SESSION
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I wish to begin by conveying the warm greetings of His Majesty the King of Bhutan to this august gathering.

It is an honor to be in this grand assembly of nations.

Great men and women of our time have graced this podium. Yet the magnitude of the challenges we are called upon to address today remains formidable and greater than any person or country we represent.

The United Nations was founded to unlock the potential of our collective endeavors for the peace, prosperity and progress of succeeding generations of humankind.

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the founding of our organization, the considerable gains we have made in the social, economic and political front give us many reasons to be hopeful.

However, we continue to be confronted by grave challenges, such as the festering wounds of age-old conflicts that threaten to spin out of control; new tensions and resurgence of violent extremism; the irrefutable evidence of the menace posed by climate change to life on our planet; and the unconscionable inequities and injustices that contribute to millions being deprived of the basic needs of food and shelter.

All of these are compelling issues that remind us that we have yet to heed the tragic lessons of the past and are far from realizing that world envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President

We commend you for your choice of the theme for this session: *"Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda"*.

This is an opportune moment to define a new era in international development and cooperation – one that can build on the successes and shortcomings of more than three decades of Internationally Agreed Development Goals and the MDGs in particular.

The process must activate real and meaningful change for all countries if it is indeed to be transformative. And for this to happen, the Agenda must be anchored on the need for breakthroughs to address the hard ground realities of different countries, especially with regard to capacity and financing for development.

As such, a collaborative approach based on an appreciation of the unique circumstances and experience of each country and driven by the desire for true working partnerships among and within countries will be vital.

Such an approach would require changes in our development paradigm, in our very beliefs on the sustainability of the current trajectory of our world and in our behavior as individuals, which consequently shape our character as a nation and our destiny as an international community of nations.

Mr. President

For a small, least developed and landlocked country like mine with many indicators below the ideal, we have to get our development priorities right.

Given our small size and unique circumstances, the lessons Bhutan has learned are not universal but certain principles may have relevance. And it is in a spirit of humility and modesty that we share our experience and aspirations.

First and foremost, we believe that development must be guided by a clear homegrown vision. Championed by successive Monarchs, ours puts people's welfare and happiness as its central objective.

Second, it takes good governance to unlock the full potential of a country and its people to pursue effective development and peace.

Third, within the broader development objective, eradication of poverty must remain an overarching pursuit. Eliminating the scourge of poverty must therefore, form the central objective of the post-2015 development agenda.

Fourth, strong partnerships would be key to delivering on the post-2015 development agenda. From our experience, nurturing and maintaining strong partnerships with our donors, based on trust and mutual respect, has been critical to our progress.

Last but not least, is the conservation of the environment, which touches on the issue of sustainability. A decent standard of living with adequate education, healthcare and employment is essential for people to live with self-respect, dignity and hope. But if the most basic necessities of life – air, water and food –

are polluted and contaminated, none of the above can be sustained. Wanton exploitation of natural resources without any care for the health of our planet is clearly unsustainable.

Mr. President

In a world riven by challenges of epic proportions, the centrality of the United Nations as the only truly global organization cannot be over-emphasized. Yet efforts to reform the apex organ, the Security Council, remain frozen in deadlock.

While a decision taken by consensus is the most desirable way forward in multilateralism, we cannot allow its absence to obstruct progress indefinitely, especially in the crucial area of peace and security.

Mr. President

We are heading into a momentous year, during which the international community will craft a new development agenda that will lay the framework for transformational change and shared prosperity.

In the final analysis, no matter what brilliant concepts we introduce and breakthroughs we achieve on paper, nothing of lasting value may be achieved without a transformation of mindsets and hearts. It is here, perhaps, in our hearts and minds that we really need a paradigm shift.

In the words of His Majesty the King of Bhutan:

"This is a world that is shared – not between governments and nations but among the peoples. No nation today can stand alone in achievement. There can be no lasting national progress if it does not fit into a future of global peace, harmony and prosperity. The world must progress together or fail together"

I thank you for your kind attention.

Tashi Delek!