

**ADDRESS BY H.E. DASHO TSHERING TOBGAY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN
UNGA.80
NEW YORK, 26 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Madam President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Kuzuzangpo!**

I bring the warm greetings of His Majesty King Jigme, and the prayers of the people of Bhutan — for peace, harmony, and progress in our world.

Excellencies,

Eighty years ago, from the devastation of the Second World War, the founders of the United Nations dared to imagine a world at peace.

They chose cooperation over conflict, dialogue over division, and hope over despair. They built an institution to protect humanity from its worst instincts and higher risks.

Today, our challenges are different, but no less urgent: a planet in a climate crisis, persistent poverty, and conflicts that shatter lives and erode trust among nations.

The Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative calls on us to respond with renewed purpose:

- to strengthen the UN's capacity to act decisively on peace, sustainable development and climate action;
- to restore its moral authority;
- and to make it fit for the purpose of our collective future.

Bhutan believes in a United Nations that is representative, responsive, and effective. We seek a multilateralism that delivers results, not just resolutions.

That is why Bhutan supports reform of the United Nations, including reform of the Security Council — expanding both permanent and non-permanent membership. A reformed Council must include deserving nations such as India and Japan — alongside other capable and leading countries to reflect today's complex realities.

As we look toward the UN at 100, let us commit to a world where peace is the norm, where climate is stable, and where every child — (no matter where they are born) - has the opportunity to grow as productive members of the global community.

Bhutan will be an active partner on this journey:

- speaking for the small and vulnerable,
- championing sustainability and climate action,
- and promoting Gross National Happiness as an alternate measure of success to the conventional Gross Domestic Product.

Excellencies,

Reform of the United Nations must serve a purpose beyond itself. It must equip the United Nations to confront the defining challenge of our time - the climate crisis.

In Bhutan, we have endeavored to protect our forests, keep our rivers pristine, and take pride in being carbon-negative. Each year, we sequester over five times the carbon we emit, a contribution far exceeding our size and resources.

Yet we are already confronting the harsh realities of climate change. Our mountains are warming at nearly twice the global average. Centuries-old glaciers are shrinking at alarming rates. Rivers that once flowed steadily, now swell unpredictably, into destructive floods during summer, and often dry in winter.

This is not a distant threat. It is here! It is now! And it demands urgent action! Every country must strive to reduce emissions and aim for carbon neutrality. We know this...yet global efforts remain far behind what the science demands.

As of today, only four countries (just 4 countries) - (Bhutan, Panama, Suriname, and Madagascar) are carbon-neutral. At COP29 in November 2024, our countries came together to launch the G-Zero Forum, a coalition of carbon-neutral nations committed to accelerating climate ambition.

Our message is clear: net-zero cannot be the finish line — it must be the starting point. Every nation must work urgently to slash emissions and achieve carbon neutrality.

On our part:

- We will share best practices — from forest conservation to sustainable agriculture;
- We will share technologies — from renewable energy systems to low-emission transport;
- We will champion nature-based solutions — because forests and wetlands are not just landscapes; they are like vital organs - the lungs and kidneys of our planet; and
- We will push ambition beyond pledges — we will demand measurable results.

We invite all countries and partners to join us in this effort. The science is unequivocal. The solutions exist. The only question is: do we have the will?

Excellencies,

While reform of the United Nations and urgent climate actions are essential, this alone will not be enough. We must now reimagine the future we want.

According to the United Nations, over half of humanity now lives in urban areas, and by 2050 nearly 70 percent - (close to seven billion people) - will call cities home.

Cities drive over 80 percent of global GDP, but they also account for more than 70 percent of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions. This makes cities both the engines of innovation, and the frontlines of our greatest challenges - challenges like unsustainable consumption, environmental degradation, and rising inequality.

We face a choice: we can keep building cities that consume more than they give, or we can reimagine and re-design cities that heal, sustain, and uplift.

Fifty years ago, Bhutan offered the world Gross National Happiness — an alternative approach to development. Today, under the visionary leadership of His Majesty, King Jigme, Bhutan offers the world an alternative approach to urban living: the Gelephu Mindfulness City - A city founded on the values of sustainability, harmony and the ideals of Gross National Happiness.

The Gelephu Mindfulness City is a Special Administrative Region that is already taking shape in Bhutan. With executive and legislative autonomy, as well as an independent judiciary now established, preparatory works are already underway and economic clusters are being advanced. The Gelephu Mindfulness City is not an idea on paper. It is a living project in action.

The Gelephu Mindfulness City will not be a city of glass towers and unchecked sprawl. Instead it will be a place where modernity and tradition meet — where nature is the foundation of urban living.

Powered by renewable energy, built with sustainable materials, and designed for low-carbon living, it will offer inclusive housing, green public spaces, and meaningful jobs.

For Bhutan, the Mindfulness City is a strategic step:

- A step towards taking Gross National Happiness to the next level,
- towards advancing economic prosperity,
- And towards fostering deeper global engagement - without losing our identity or our bond with nature.

But the Gelephu Mindfulness City is not just Bhutan's project. It could serve as a forerunner in rethinking urbanization - a model city built on the values of mindfulness, sustainability, and shared humanity.

I extend a warm invitation for all of you to join us on this exciting journey. A journey to bring a Royal Vision to life. A vision of how cities and urban living can heal, inspire, and sustain both humankind and nature.

Excellencies,

The founders of the United Nations gave us more than an institution. They gave us an inheritance of hope - (and) the solemn responsibility to carry it forward.

In this spirit, and mindful of the troubled times we live in, I have the pleasure of announcing that Bhutan will host the Global Peace Prayer Festival later this year.

From the 4th to the 17th of November 2025, the Global Peace Prayer Festival will unite spiritual masters, scholars, and practitioners from across the world (and across traditions) in a common aspiration for peace, healing, and harmony.

Through the recitation of Moenlam Chenmo or global peace prayers, the sacred Bazaguru mantra, the Kalachakra empowerment, and the powerful Jabshi Gyap ritual, Bhutan seeks to offer not only a spiritual event, but also a diplomatic and cultural contribution to world peace.

For Bhutan, it is both a privilege and a prayer - that in these turbulent times, the voice of a small Himalayan nation, may help nurture the great cause of peace for all humanity. We extend a warm welcome to all who wish to join the Global Peace Prayer Festival.

Excellencies,

This is our moment.

Let ours be the generation that reforms the United Nations to reflect today's realities. The generation that confronts the climate crisis with urgency and unity. The generation that makes peace not merely the absence of war, but the presence of justice, opportunity, and dignity for all.

And when the United Nations marks its 100th anniversary, we will proudly affirm that we honoured the vision of those who came before us, and inspired hope for those who will follow.

Thank you and Tashi Delek.
