



KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by H.E. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bhutan
At the General Debate of the 59th session
Of the United Nations General Assembly,
28 September, 2004.**

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of Bhutan, allow me to congratulate you on your election to this important post. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation as you guide the work of this important body for the year. We are confident that with your vast experience and able leadership, our deliberations will be productive. May I commend His Excellency Mr. Julian R. Hunte, for his stewardship and contribution to the work of the 58th session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

The task before the 59th session of the General Assembly is daunting given the array of issues and challenges facing the international community. Among them, is the issue of reform of the United Nations. In this regard, the General Assembly's resolutions on the revitalization of its work and the reform initiatives in other organs and agencies are timely and welcome as they will serve to ensure the United Nations' continued relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly changing world. My delegation looks forward to the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change set up by the Secretary General to examine the current challenges to peace and security.

Mr. President,

Much of the ongoing debate on UN reforms has justifiably centered on the reform of the Security Council as the organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. In a world torn by old and new conflicts, the Security Council must evolve in order to remain effective and enjoy the confidence of all member states. Its composition must change to reflect the wider membership of the United Nations and the new geo-political and economic realities of the present day world. Bhutan supports the call for an expanded Security Council through increased membership of both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Among others, Bhutan strongly believes that India and Japan, in view of the important roles they play in international affairs, are preeminently qualified for permanent membership in an expanded Council.

Mr. President,

The toll of innocent human beings falling prey to terrorism continues to mount by the day. The gruesome acts of terrorism in different regions of the world, including the recent brutal killing of school children in Beslan, and the cold-blooded murder of Nepalese and other innocent people in Iraq and elsewhere, has raised the level of horror to new heights.. We strongly condemn these senseless killings. Even my country has not been spared from this scourge. Having exhausted all peaceful means to prevail upon the heavily armed foreign militant groups from the North East of India to leave our territory, the Royal Government was compelled to use force to remove them in mid-December 2003. Most recently two people were killed and 27 injured by a bomb blast in a market place in a border town in southern Bhutan.

Mr. President,

There is an urgent need to take concerted action to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Every nation gathered here, by having signed the Charter of the United Nations, ascribes to the universal code that the methods which terrorists employ to achieve their aims, especially the targeting and killing of innocent civilians cannot be justified.

Mr. President

Conflicts and crisis situations continue to disrupt the political stability, security, and socio-economic welfare of millions around the world. Many of these conflicts are fuelled by conditions of poverty and underdevelopment. Recognizing this interrelationship, the international community has taken numerous initiatives in recent years. Several major conferences have been convened, including the Millennium Summit, which provided a comprehensive set of time-bound targets to be achieved in order to secure a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. However, these targets remain distant for many and the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider among and within nations. The Global Monitoring Report 2004 of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund indicates that economic growth in many developing countries remains below the level considered necessary to reach the Millennium Development Goals. If the goals are to be achieved by the target date, the report states that all parties need to do much more urgently. The Monterrey Consensus reinforced the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and emphasized the roles of all parties involved in the process of financing for development. While developing countries have to accelerate reforms, developed countries must provide more aid, foreign direct investment, debt relief and more open access to their markets.

Mr. President,

It is against this background that my delegation welcomes the 2005 high-level plenary meeting to review the integrated follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits. My delegation hopes that the review will lead to further concrete actions by all stakeholders. Furthermore, as a landlocked, least developed country, my delegation hopes to see the issues and challenges identified in the Almaty Programme of Action and the Brussels Programme of Action receive the highest priority during the review.

Mr. President,

May I mention that the Royal Government of Bhutan under the leadership of His Majesty the King, and guided by the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, has been making concerted efforts to ensure all round development of the country and realize the agreed goals of the various international conferences, in particular the Millennium Summit. I am pleased to report that with the continued support of our development partners, Bhutan is hopeful of achieving the MDGs by 2015. In this regard, I take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of the Royal Government and people of Bhutan to the United Nations and other donors for their contributions to the development of our country.

Mr. President,

As I conclude my statement, I would like to pay tribute to our Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Anan for the strong leadership provided by him and his relentless efforts to advance the cause of peace, development and security. We will continue to benefit from his vision and leadership for the next two years. As he leaves his post at the end of 2006, our work to find a suitable replacement to lead the United Nations has to begin soon and in earnest. My delegation believes that in keeping with the principle of equitable geographical representation, and in consideration of being the most populous continent with the largest regional grouping of 55 members in the United Nations, a Secretary General from Asia would be both timely and appropriate.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!