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**Statement by Mr. Sonam Tobgay, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission
of the Kingdom of Bhutan, under Agenda Item 28: Advancement of Women,
Third Committee, 65th Session of the UNGA, 13th October 2010**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the Secretary-General for his insightful reports presented under this agenda item. These reports provide an excellent compilation of good practices prevalent in member states that merit consideration and are also worthy of replication.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of UN Women, which we are confident will address the global issues of gender equality and women's empowerment with greater vigor. We congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet upon her appointment as the head of this entity, and assure her of our full support in the discharge of her duties.

Mr. Chairman,

As a state party to CEDAW, Bhutan is fully committed to ensuring the equality of women and men in the enjoyment of the full spectrum of human rights. Our commitment is fully reflected in our national laws and policies most notably in our Constitution, which has two articles that specifically relate to women's rights. A number of legislation such as the Child Care and Protection Bill, the Adoption Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill are currently awaiting adoption by Parliament. These would reinforce existing legislation and empower the various institutions working to promote the rights of women and children.

Our commitment is also reflected in the identification, for the first time, of gender as a crosscutting development theme in the country's current Five Year Plan. An integral element of the plan and the policy formulation protocol of the government are gender mainstreaming and generating gender-disaggregated data. This is

mainly to ensure that sectors are sensitive to gender issues in the preparation of plans and programs. The newly developed National Plan of Action for Gender guides the mainstreaming of gender through seven priority areas, which include, education and training; health; good governance; economic development and employment; violence against women; prejudices and stereotypes; and ageing, mental health and disabilities. The central government agencies are supported in these efforts by a network of National Gender Focal Points in all sectors including the security agencies.

In addition, Bhutan takes great pride that traditional Bhutanese society provides a secure environment for women. Large parts of the country are matri-lineal, women inherit property, and as a result of which, women have significant decision-making power over property and family matters.

My delegation is also pleased to report that in 2009, we successfully presented our seventh periodic report on the situation of women and the implementation of CEDAW. The concluding comments of the CEDAW Committee were widely disseminated and all relevant stakeholders are in the process of implementing the recommendations of the Committee. Despite resource and institutional capacity constraints, Bhutan has taken consistent steps to progressively comply fully with the letter and spirit of the Convention, including strengthening the institutional capacity and augmenting the resources of the relevant legal and executive arms of government.

Mr. Chairman,

Bhutan has long been investing substantively in promoting and upholding the rights of women recognizing the importance of women's participation in every sphere of the development process. Today, we reap the dividends of some of our investments. In this regard, my delegation is particularly pleased to report that Bhutan has already achieved the MDG target of gender parity in school enrollment. This is indeed a matter of satisfaction for us as education is often seen as the ultimate leveler of all inequalities.

While a number of challenges remain, Bhutan will continue to work towards ensuring that any inequality, perceived or otherwise, between men and women are addressed and that women are empowered to the fullest extent possible.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.