

1. Thanks to the partners who have made this possible
  - Gross National Happiness Commission
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - UNDP
  - Ministry of Health
  - Thank you for the opportunity to be here for the discussion about the progress made against targets for 11<sup>th</sup> FYP and input into development of 12<sup>th</sup> FYP
  - It is an honor to be part of such a well-structured, analytical and thoughtful planning process and to better understand the outlook for development in Bhutan under the unifying agenda of Gross National Happiness for the Global Goals
  
2. Take the opportunity to thank the Queen Mother Ashi Sangay Chodem Wangchuk for all of the work that she is doing raising awareness about HIV in her visits throughout the country. We are fortunate to have such a prominent figure supporting the work of the National HIV Program and are grateful for her efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination and to promote prevention and testing.
  
3. Global Fund historical investment in Bhutan
  - \$14.58M historically, beginning in 2005 with TB and malaria grants
  - Currently in third round of grants which are worth \$6.0M across the three diseases
  - Amongst other things, the funding supports:
    - HIV treatment for 240 people currently living with HIV
    - TB diagnosis and treatment for over 4,600 people since 2005
    - Distribution of over 388,000 bed nets since 2005
  - Major accomplishments of the national disease control programs
    - Improved access to testing and treatment, including ensuring universal coverage of HIV testing in antenatal clinics and introduction of treatment for all people testing positive for HIV, a policy adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan this past December
    - Improvement in the diagnostic capacity of the district hospitals and the Royal Government Center for Disease Control for TB detection, leading to earlier diagnosis for TB and MDR-TB patients
    - Substantial (95%) reduction in the number of malaria cases since 2005. Just over 100 (104) malaria cases notified last year, most (64%) of which were imported. Huge success of the National Vector Disease Control Program in controlling malaria transmission and working towards elimination.
  - Bhutan has successfully achieved the MDG targets established for malaria and tuberculosis
  
4. Looking forward some challenges remain to continue to ensure the Royal Government of Bhutan is able to successfully control and work towards elimination of the three diseases
  - Cross-border and rural-urban migration brings the risk of increased disease transmission.
    - The National Vector Disease Control Program has done an excellent job of screening migrant workers for malaria upon entry to the country, which has helped identify disease early and prevent onward transmission.
    - Important to continue to invest in these programs and remain vigilant, as neighboring countries with higher rates of all three diseases pose a risk to the disease control efforts in Bhutan.
    - Important to continue to update disease control strategies to address an increasingly urban population.

- Need for earlier detection and improved treatment and care for people living with tuberculosis, especially those with MDR-TB
  - Improvements in diagnostic technology have led to an increasing number of people being identified with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, including one patient identified with pre-XDR-TB earlier this year.
  - Applaud efforts of TB Program to introduce new treatment regimens which shorten the length of treatment and have improved outcomes for MDR-TB patients and encourage acceleration of these efforts.
- 5. Allocation for Bhutan for 2018 – 2020 period will be USD \$3.58M covering the three disease programs<sup>1</sup>
  - Discussions have begun with the Ministry of Health and the country-level governing body which oversees the grant implementation to explore how those funds will be best invested to achieve impact in the three programs
  - Also looking to ensure that the funding be used to invest in systems and structures that will improve the health system overall and create a sustainable impact beyond the lifetime of the next set of grants
  - We look forward to supporting the efforts of the Ministry to both further decentralize disease control efforts, while at the same time strategically consolidating infrastructure and services, and will additionally look to leverage other partnerships in the country that will make our investment more impactful.

In conclusion, we are grateful to the Royal Government of Bhutan for the opportunity to be here for the 13<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting to explore how we can further strengthen our partnership with the Ministry of Health to support the objectives of the Gross National Happiness Commission and to ultimately create a sustainable impact in controlling and eliminating HIV, TB and malaria over the coming years.

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<sup>1</sup> HIV \$1.08M; TB \$1.07M; Malaria \$1.43M