

Save the Children's Statement at the 13th Round Table Meeting of Royal Government of Bhutan and Development Partners held in Thimphu: 15 – 16 march, 2017

Your Excellency, Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Royal Government of Bhutan, Your Excellency Mr. Haoliang Xu, UNDP Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific. Co-Chair for the RTM, Senior Government Officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan and esteemed Colleagues from development partner agencies.

I would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan and the UNDP for the opportunity provided to Save the Children to be part of the Round Table Meeting and make a statement at this August gathering even though Save the Children is not really a donor in the true sense of the word.

The socio economic progress made by Bhutan over the last couple of years and also the state of Gross National Happiness, as evident from the survey results, is commendable.

The presentations made by officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan has provided us with a clear picture of Bhutan's current situation, challenges and its aspirations for the next five years and beyond. It was also very gratifying to see the clear alignment of the objectives of the 12th Five Year Plan and its key result areas with the nine domains of Gross National Happiness and also with global and regional development goals such as the SDGs.

Save the Children has been in Bhutan since 1982 – a testimony to our long term commitment to the children of Bhutan, and at the same time a testimony to the mutual trust, confidence and good partnership between Save the Children and the Royal Government of Bhutan.

I would like to assure the Royal Government of Bhutan that Save the Children will continue to support child development programs in Bhutan for as long as the RGOB needs us.

Even though Save the Children is the largest International Non-Governmental Organization working for children, it has to compete for funding its country programs in a highly competitive development funding environment today. In spite of this challenging environment, we have been able to steadily increase funding support to the Bhutan Country Program. I am happy to inform that we intend to make sure to maintain or increase that level of support. Our key areas of support has been in the areas of Education – primarily focusing on Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD), Child Protection and child-focused Disaster Risk Reduction in partnership with the GNH Commission and the various RGOB ministries and CSO partners. We would like to continue to support programs under these themes during the next five years and we see good alignment with the 12th Five Year Plan Objectives and National Key Result Areas.

Finally, I, on behalf of Save the Children would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan for the hospitality and kindness shown to me for this RTM trip. I would also thank the Royal Government of Bhutan and in particular the Gross National Happiness Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for all the courtesies and privileges and guidance and collaboration accorded to the Save the Children program in Bhutan so far and I hope that this will continue during the coming years also.

Thank You and Tashi Delek!

Ms. Delailah M. Borjah, Country Director for Nepal and Bhutan, Save the Children