

**Statement by H.E Mr. Harri Kämäräinen, Ambassador of Republic of Finland to Bhutan**  
**during the 14<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting**

**Finland-Bhutan Cooperation**

Finland's focus changing towards multilateral cooperation

1. UN and its special agencies

Doing an immensely important work on the ground in Bhutan. One example can be eradication of measles in Bhutan as informed by the WHO. Other UN special agencies have similar success stories to share from various regions in Bhutan. Finland believes in rule-based international order and the strength of the UN. In today's world, we need more UN- not less.

2. Finland as an active EU member state is proud and happy to participate in EU program in Bhutan, among the other 27 EU member states. One example of such EU-funded projects is the cooperation between Finland's Aalto University and the Royal University of Bhutan. This project is funded by EU Erasmus+ and is about "Problem-Based Learning". One of its aims is to strengthen the capacity of higher educational institutions to contribute to socially responsible innovation ecosystem.

3. Finnish Government is also supporting Finnish NGOs and Civil Society organizations active in supporting Bhutan. For example, WWF Finland supports and cooperates with the WWF Bhutan in preserving the biodiversity and protecting the unique wildlife of Bhutan. FIDA International is working on "Future belongs to our Children" Project, which focuses on empowerment of women and vulnerable groups, including the disabled in the society and especially in the rural areas with the aim of creating work opportunities locally.

Through the Asian Development Banks's Future Carbon Fund, Finland is supporting a Hydro Power Plant Project in Bhutan.

Finland's State Auditing Authority has established good cooperation with Bhutan's Royal Audit Authority. FINCENT is training Bhutanese peacekeepers at its center in Finland.

#### 4. Business-to-Business Partnership

Finnpartnership, one of the Finland's funding agencies is granting funding for the Finnish private companies for doing business with Bhutan. So far, the interest from the Finnish companies has been rather limited but all those companies which have submitted their applications have received a grant.

#### 5. Possible future areas of cooperation between Finland and Bhutan

- i. Education, including vocational education
- ii. Forestry: Sustainable management of forest resources
- iii. Healthcare, especially digitalization of healthcare and health technology

6. On 1 July, 2019, Finland will resume the rotating EU-Presidency for the second-half of 2019. During her EU Presidency, Finland will focus very much on gender equality and combatting climate change.

7. Finland believes that even our small and modest support for Bhutan's development has had an impact, as Bhutan is taking the international cooperation with due seriousness. We congratulate Bhutan for her remarkable achievements during the past ten years of democracy.