

Salutations (*will depend on the specific session where our intervention is scheduled, since different sessions are being chaired by different persons*)

1. Let me begin by congratulating the Royal Government of Bhutan and the UNDP for the successful organisation of this 14th Round Table meeting, which brings together all of Bhutan's development partners for a dialogue with the highest levels of the Bhutanese leadership. The theme chosen for this edition of the Round Table Meeting, namely "Enhancing Happiness and Sustainable Development through Partnerships" captures well the existing and potential synergies between Bhutan's philosophy of Gross National Happiness, as distilled into the 17 National Key Result Areas, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals identified by the United Nations.
2. India has been associated with Bhutan's planned development efforts since the 1960s. From the beginning, the contours and pace of this collaboration have been determined by the development priorities of the Bhutan Government, and have benefited from the enlightened guidance of Their Majesties the Kings of Bhutan. We feel privileged that India has been able to partner successive Bhutanese Governments to advance development in critical areas while preserving the traditional ethos and philosophy of the Kingdom. In this context, I would like to put on record our special appreciation for the quality of governance, including the effective oversight provided by the Gross National Happiness Commission for the overall development enterprise in Bhutan. On the whole, it is our conviction that the evolution of the relationship between Bhutan and India over the past half-century, and the results it has achieved, stands out as a unique model of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, and mutual benefit between countries of markedly different size.
3. In this context, let me recall that last year, Bhutan and India celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. The visit

of His Excellency Lyonchhen Lotay Tshering to India in December 2018 was a fitting finale to this landmark year, and allowed both countries to review the achievements and modalities of our past cooperation. It also allowed India to express full support to the new Government of Bhutan, and to its laudable agenda of 'narrowing the gap' within different sections of Bhutanese society.

4. During Lyonchhen Lotay Tshering's visit, Government of India announced that it would support the implementation of Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan to the same extent as it had done for the 11th Five Year Plan. As in the past, we are confident that Indian support will help the Royal Government of Bhutan in implementing the different facets of the XII Five Year Plan, including infrastructure development, smaller community focused grassroots projects, as well as human and institutional capacity building in various sectors.
5. I would also like to mention the cooperation between Bhutan and India in the field of hydroelectricity, which has been a major component of our partnership portfolio and which offers a unique model of win-win collaboration between contiguous countries. The hydro-electricity projects developed in Bhutan with Indian support have contributed over the years to providing clean energy to India's vast population while simultaneously being the most important source of export revenue to Bhutan.
6. Like other development partners of Bhutan, we share a sense of pride and joy at the imminent graduation of Bhutan from the ranks of Least Developed Countries. This is a remarkable achievement, especially for a small landlocked nation with few natural resources, and owes itself entirely to the exemplary leadership that the Kingdom has been blessed with. While we congratulate Bhutan on this achievement, I would like to underline that India's development cooperation with Bhutan is not linked to any specific status, but is based, instead, on the historical, physical, cultural, commercial, and emotional contiguity between our countries, our people and our leaders.

Therefore, the future of the unique and special relationship that Bhutan and India share will continue to be determined by the expressed needs and priorities of Bhutan, and India's capacities to contribute towards them.

7. I will end by once again thanking the organisers of the Round Table Meeting for the excellent arrangements made and for the exemplary quality of the presentations and discussions during the Meeting. On behalf of the Government of India, I reiterate that India will continue to walk alongside Bhutan, as the Kingdom progresses into ever higher levels of development, prosperity, climate-resilience and national happiness.

Tashi Delek and Thank You to all of you!