

The 14th Round Table Meeting
(12-14 March, 2019, Thimphu)
Statement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Mr. Chairman, H.E. Lyonpo Dr. Tandi Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Kingdom of Bhutan,

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to be given an opportunity to address the audience on behalf of the Government of Japan at this 14th Round Table Meeting. First of all, I would like to congratulate the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan on the successful accomplishment of their third general elections held last October, and welcome Bhutan's steady progress towards consolidation of democracy. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere respects to the Royal Government of Bhutan for its strong ownership endorsing the 12th Five Year Plan.

The Kingdom of Bhutan and Japan have enjoyed historically cordial and friendly relations with wide-ranging and multi-layered interactions. These include mutual visits between the Japanese Imperial Family and the Bhutanese Royal Family, as well as grass-roots exchanges in various fields. Japan began its cooperation for Bhutan's socio-economic development with the dispatch of an agricultural expert, late Mr. Keiji Nishioka, who was bestowed the Honorary title of "Dasho" by His Majesty the King of Bhutan for his life-long contribution to the development of agriculture in Bhutan. Since then, fruitful results of our cooperation have been witnessed, particularly in the agriculture and rural development sectors. Moreover, Japan, as one of the major donors, has supported self-reliance efforts of Bhutan for the progress and consolidation of democracy, elevation of living-standards, and

other socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairmen,

Japan has continuously supported Bhutan's development endeavors focusing on areas such as agriculture and rural development, and infrastructure development mainly by providing grants and technical cooperation more than 50 years. In the area of agriculture and rural development, Japan has supported Bhutan's modernization and improvement of productivity in the agricultural sector by grant aid such as provision of more than 3,000 power tillers, construction of agricultural roads and rehabilitation of irrigation system. In the area of economic infrastructure development, Japan has extended a grant aid for reconstruction of bridges on National Highways, aiming at stable transportation by improving capacity and safety of those bridges. In the area of countermeasures for environmental issues and climate change, Japan has extended cooperation such as a grant aid for construction of a backup system for Mobile Network and technical cooperation for fostering Bhutan's capacity of disaster prevention. Last but not the least, Japan has supported Bhutan's capacity building through a grant aid for providing Bhutanese young public officers with a scholarship for masters and doctors in Japan.

As Bhutan now prepares to graduate from the category of least developed countries, Japan will continue to support Bhutan's efforts according to the 12th Five Year Plan, and hopes that Bhutan will make the most of our cooperation under Bhutan's ownership, in order to enhance the living standard of the people of Bhutan and to promote Bhutan's self-reliant development.

Mr. Chairmen and distinguished colleagues,

Having high regard for Bhutan's national development plan based on the basic principles of Gross National Happiness, Japan will continue to support Bhutan in addressing its remaining development needs, and always be ready to provide its full support to Bhutan's

endeavors toward self-reliant development.

Japan hopes that Bhutan will steadily implement the 12th Five Year Plan in coordination with its development partners, based on the proactive discussions held during these three days.

Thank you for your attention.