

Save the Children's Statement at the 14th Round Table Meeting of Royal Government of Bhutan and Development Partners held in Thimphu: 13 – 14 March 2019

Hon'ble Foreign Secretary Dasho Sonam Tshong, Mr. Gerald Daly, Resident Coordinator of UN System in Bhutan, Hon'ble Ministers, 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 for the opportunity provided to Save the Children to be part of the Round Table Meeting, for the clarity of the presentations made by the Secretary of the GNHC on the challenges and aspirations of the 5 year plan, and the opportunity to make a statement.

Save the Children has been a friend and partner of Bhutan for almost 40 years, I would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan for the mutual trust, confidence and partnership that we have shared for the length of our common journey.

Today, I would like to assure the Royal Government of Bhutan that Save the Children is a fully committed partner and will continue to support the government and its child development programs.

Bhutan's commitment to children's wellbeing and protection is well known. It was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in May 1990. Bhutan ratified the two Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in October 2009 and on Children in Armed Conflict in December 2009. Bhutan also signed the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in September 2010.

In spite of the limited resources and many development challenges, Bhutan has always prioritized child protection and children's wellbeing.

Bhutan has consistently labored to make all its laws and services child friendly and child rights oriented. Most recently, The National Commission for Women and

Children (NCWC) was established to regulate, oversee and monitor women and children's issues; and The Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan are both testimony to Bhutan's serious commitment to child wellbeing and protection, among the many protections established for children.

The recent launch of the Tollfree Women and Child Helpline 1098 is the latest addition to the long list of achievements made by Bhutan on its road to making Bhutan a better place for women and children.

Save the Children is proud to have contributed and been a partner in these achievements of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Please receive my commitment, that we will continue to support those programs that target the hardest to reach and those programs that protect the most vulnerable. We see excellent alignment with the 12th Five Year Plan Objectives and National Key Result Areas.

Finally, 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, guidance, friendship and collaboration accorded to Save the Children in Bhutan.

Thank You and Tashi Delek!

Mr. Ned Olney, Country Director for Nepal and Bhutan Country Office, Save the Children