



World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Statement for the 14th Round Table Meeting of the Royal Government of Bhutan

Honorable Prime Minister, Your Excellencies, distinguished Co - chairs, ladies and gentlemen,

This is a Joint Statement for WWF and Bhutan For Life Fund Secretariat.

Mr Dechen Dorji, Country Representative, WWF

At the outset, I would like to join the distinguished delegates of this august gathering to offer our sincere commendations to the Royal Government, in particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the GNH Commission for this important and proactive undertaking, to advance the partnership framework for the 12th Five-year Plan. Thank you for the invitation and inspiration.

We would also like to convey our heartfelt condolences and offer our prayers to all the families of the UN staff and other Humanitarian workers who lost their precious lives during the recent air crash. Their commitment and service for the Good of humanity and planet, will be forever cherished and celebrated in their honour.

On behalf of WWF Global network, I am humbled to convey the warmest greetings of our colleagues and over 5 million supporters and volunteers, who are committed to a lifelong passion of protecting this amazing and beautiful Planet of ours.

However, this planet that we call Home is at the brink of Catastrophic damage. This is not a doom and gloom story; It is the new Reality. The astonishing decline in wildlife populations shown by the “WWF’s latest Living Planet Report” – a 60% plummet in just over 40 years – is a grim reminder, and perhaps the ultimate indicator of the Pressure we exert on the planet. Plastic pollution has been detected in all major marine environments worldwide, from shorelines and surface waters, down to the Deepest parts of the ocean.

Human activities now rival the Great forces of nature in driving changes to the Earth’s Life Support system”. Recent studies have also declared that the rising temperatures in the Himalayas, will melt, at least one-third of the regions Glaciers by the end of the century - even if the world’s ambitious climate change targets are met.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, its time to wake up. The nature conservation agenda is not only about Securing the future of Tigers, whales, and all the amazing diversity of life we love and cherish on this Planet. It’s Much bigger than that.

Our day-to-day life, health and livelihoods, Depend on a ‘Healthy Environment and Healthy Planet. There cannot be a Healthy, Happy, and Prosperous future for people on a Planet, with a Destabilized climate, Absence of Pollinators, degraded land and empty forests, all stripped of Biodiversity. There is no denying in The Simple truth that the Environmental and human development agendas are rapidly converging. Unfortunately, “Common Sense is not Common any more”.

Between now and the end of 2020, There is a unique window of opportunity to shape a positive vision for nature and people. This is when the world will review its progress on Sustainable Development by means of the SDG the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity. This is the Super Policy Year when “Global leaders” will make key decisions on biodiversity, climate and sustainable development, and where WE have a unique opportunity to build momentum towards the most ambitious Deal yet – one that provides a Blueprint for biodiversity and for people to 2050, and beyond.

This “new global deal for nature and people” as we are calling it, would put the Environment at the Heart of our Economic, Political, Social and Financial systems.

The Kingdom of Bhutan in particular, despite its size and place in the International Arena, has been the global vanguard for inspiring BOLD and BIG conservation visions.

Two Years ago at the 13th RTM, I announced that we are working with the Royal Govt, GCF, UNDP, BTF and other Development Partners and Private Individuals on the ‘Project Finance for Permanence’ initiative called “Bhutan for Life, to raise a \$43 million Dollar Transition fund—the first of its kind for Protected Area Conservation in Asia—to sustainably finance Bhutan’s network of Protected Areas, which constitute more than half of the country’s area.

I am very happy to report Today at this esteemed gathering that “Bhutan for Life” has successfully Concluded with the establishment of an Independent Bhutan for Life Fund Secretariat, endowed with a Grant of 3 Billion Ngultrum, Disbursement for conservation activities will begin from this Month.

The Bhutan for Life initiative is the right Representation of what a ‘New global deal for nature and people’ should look like. It was an ambitious and innovative plan to leverage partnerships, escalate the political relevance of Nature, and galvanize a Cohesive movement across, State, and Non-state actors, to drive Transformational change and Secure a sustainable future, not just for Bhutan, but Beyond.

BFL also inspired the WWF network to institute Earth for Life, an umbrella initiative that will use BFL as the model, to bring similar initiatives in 10 more countries by 2028. I am happy to report that We are close to completing a similar initiative in Peru.

We are the first generation that has a clear picture of the value of nature and our impact on it. We may also be the last that can take Action to Reverse this trend.

From now until 2020 will be a decisive moment in history – we can be the founders of a global movement that changes our relationship with the planet and secure a future for all life on Earth, including our own. Or we can be the Generation that had its chance and Failed to act.

In closing, on behalf of the entire WWF Global network and BFL Secretariat, I would once again like to convey our Immense gratitude to all our partners in the government, for their inspiration and unwavering support and friendship, and at the same time, giving us the unique privilege to secure lasting conservation in one of the Extraordinary places on this planet, - the “Kingdom of Bhutan” blessed with amazing vision and leadership of Extraordinary Kings.

Thank You and Tashi Delek