

**Statement by H.E. Kutshab Lhatu Wangchuck, Permanent Representative of the
Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations, New York
at the
Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau
Havana Cuba, April 2009**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The NAM was established to pursue the dreams of the founding fathers to chart an independent destiny for their nations. 54 years later, while the world has been transformed in so many ways, that same yearning for freedom and self-respect sustains the relevance of the principles of our movement. I am deeply honoured to be in Havana, the capital city of one of the stalwarts in championing our movement's cause. As we prepare for the 15th Summit to be held in Egypt, my delegation is confident in your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and we assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would like also to express my gratitude to the Cuban people and government for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for our meeting.

I take this opportunity to express the hope that there will be a new dawn of reconciliation across the Straits of Florida.

Mr. Chairman,

While my delegation will fully support the collective views and positions to be reflected in the document for submission to our leaders, I would like to share a few general observations.

Events in recent months have again revealed the instability of the systems in which we operate. We have been reeling from one crisis to another. Corrective measures may provide but symptomatic relief and we may have to question some of the most basic assumptions sooner rather than later.

Mr. Chairman,

The financial meltdown will have a severe impact on the ability of developing countries to achieve Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. There is, therefore, an even greater urgency for us to strengthen our efforts to reform the international monetary and financial governance structures. We must step up our call for a world economic order that is fair and just: an order that will attend to the issues of globalization, the debt burden and unfair trade practices which have greatly handicapped the developing nations.

We must also convince the developed nations that far from using the crisis as what may seem to be a valid reason to do otherwise, they must increase the flow of ODA as an integral part and parcel of their own recovery packages.

Mr Chairman,

The United Nations was founded based on the principles of equality of all member states. In order to make progress toward this ideal, any reform on current UN structures and power dynamics must lead to the strengthening of the multilateral process. In this regard, we must continue to close ranks and further strengthen our position in the ongoing negotiations to make the United Nations and especially the Security Council, more transparent, representative and democratic.

We live in world of fast-paced changes and NAM too has to evolve with the demands of the times or lose its validity. We must do this without abandoning the fundamental principles of our movement and continue to spearhead the struggle of the south for an equitable and peaceful world. NAM must use the leverage of its large membership to best protect, preserve and promote our

collective interests within the essential framework of multilateralism. We must also develop a capability for the resolution of our conflicts, perhaps through regional or sub-regional mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been a year since Bhutan made its successful and peaceful transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy. Democracy came to Bhutan not through violent struggle or even by the popular will of the people. It was introduced in a carefully calibrated series of incremental steps over more than a century of enlightened leadership by our wise and visionary Monarchs. In doing so, our Kings always put the interest of the nation and the welfare of the people above their own. They realized early on that the governance system must be built in tune with the historical experience, cultural beliefs and traditional values of the people themselves.

All these factors contributed to the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as promulgated by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck almost thirty years ago. He abdicated his throne at the ripe age of 52 and we are happy to say that the reign of an equally dynamic and wise King in Khesar Wangchuck under a new dispensation is off to a promising start. The first popularly elected government is strongly committed to deepening the culture of an evolving democracy and in promoting the happiness of the people.

Mr. Chairman,

I mentioned earlier that the global recurrent crises may be symptomatic of a much more serious trouble facing humanity. We have been seeing clear signals that unless we make some revolutionary changes, we are travelling on a one-way ticket to the highway to hell. The main cause of all our troubles, including

the financial crisis, I believe, is unbridled greed and the mantra of profit at all costs. This has been the basic assumption which has been driving individuals as well as the Fortune 500 companies. But a simple King in a small, isolated country has been telling his people way before experiments in some of the world's most reputable institutes have proved – that happiness is not just about material consumption. My purpose in sharing the experience of my country was motivated by the humble hope that there may be some lessons for others.

My delegation also believes that the changes we seek at the international level must begin at home. Unless we effectively address the problems of inequities and perceived injustices at home, we will not be able to speak to others with conviction and credibility on critical issues.

In the same spirit, there can be no dispute that the purpose of the governments of all member states is to safeguard and promote the happiness of the people. Together, we represent more than half of the world's total population and an equally large portion of those living in unacceptable conditions of poverty and deprivation. In this regard, Bhutan reaffirms all of the positions of the Group of 77 and China concerning the economic and social development issues and other related issues as contained in the outcome documents of the 2nd South Summit held in Doha, Qatar from 12th to 16th June 2005, and the Annual Ministerial Meeting of G77 and China held in New York in September 2008.

Bhutan also reaffirms the major principles of the Declaration of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order based on the principles of equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

On the issue of climate change, to offset the continual threats and suffering from the effects of global environmental damage, we urge the international community to implement commitments in assisting developing countries to address the adverse impact of climate change through new and additional predictable financial resources, capacity building, and access to and transfer of technology on preferential terms.

Mr. Chairman,

We accept the universality of human rights and social justice, but resist cultural homogenization that seems to follow globalisation. We appeal for the protection of cultural traditions, the tolerance of the religious, socio-cultural, and historical particularities that define human rights in a specific region. We also strongly urge that the domestic political agenda of states and double standards should not be brought into the work of the newly established Human Rights Council.

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly and unequivocally reject terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We condemn all associations of terrorism as flagrant violations of basic human laws, including international humanitarian and human rights law. In this context, we affirm support for the provisions contained in the General Assembly resolution 46/51 of January 1992 and other relevant UN resolutions. Indeed, the UN with voluntary and full cooperation of all members of the international community is ideally suited to deal with the threat of terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Our quest for a more peaceful and equitable world validates the significance of the NAM to all the major issues confronting humankind and this quest must remain the defining characteristic of our movement. But to fully succeed in establishing a just and equitable world order defined by peace and security, all of us must seek closer cooperation with each other on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of all countries, equality among nations, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The NAM must strengthen our unity as a global organisation committed to peace and development; promoting the needs of member nations at the international level, and strengthening our political leverage when negotiating with developed nations. At the same time, we must continue to be an ardent supporter of the United Nations as the indispensable guarantor of the rights of all states and as the vehicle of multilateralism.

Clearly these challenges must be addressed in a way that would ensure the continued relevance and viability of NAM to its member states. Many goals have been achieved, but others have remained unfulfilled or not fully attained, and in this vastly changing geo-political environment, NAM must continue to be the beacon of hope that leads us member countries, whose peoples together make up a large proportion of the world's population.

THANK YOU.