



KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

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Statement
by
H.E. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk,
Prime Minister
and
Leader of the Bhutanese delegation
at
General Debate of the 61st session of the General Assembly,
United Nations, New York
22 September 2006

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United
Nations,
New York

Madam President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I have the honour to convey to the august gathering the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan for the success of the sixty-first session of the General assembly.

2. I also offer my felicitations to you, Madam President, on your unanimous election as the President of the Assembly. Your election is a reflection of the General Assembly's confidence in your personal abilities and the high esteem the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoys. My country has fond memories of the 21st day of September 1971 when our two kingdoms became proud members of the United Nations.

3. My delegation wishes to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson for the exemplary manner in which he directed the work of the 60th session. Under his stewardship, a number of important decisions of the 2005 World Summit have been implemented.

Madam President,

4. We are confident that the 61st session, under your dynamic leadership will be able to successfully complete all its tasks. Bhutan is honoured to serve as one of the Vice-Presidents and we assure you of our full cooperation and support.

5. We fully support the theme "Implementing a global partnership for development" for the general debate. In this era of globalization and technological advances which has brought unprecedented prosperity to a minority, the international community must unite forces to lift the vast majority of the world's population from the vicious circle of poverty and destitution. The global partnership must engender greater political will to address the problems of trade, market access, technology transfer, and a host of others that impede growth and development in developing countries. It is also imperative that the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits, especially those relating to development are fully implemented by all.

Madam President,

6. The mid-term comprehensive review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 that was undertaken earlier this week, has shown much less progress than desired. It is my delegation's hope that, as provided in the declaration that was adopted by the Review meeting, all stakeholders will genuinely commit themselves to the special needs of the least developed countries and work towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action, which constitutes a fundamental framework for strong global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication in the LDCs.

7. Due to the limited scope of raising domestic resources, attracting foreign investments and raising funds on commercial terms, official development assistance is a critical resource for LDCs in achieving the goals and target of the BPoA. In fact, for many LDCs,

like mine, ODA constitutes the primary resource for development. My delegation, therefore, appeals to all developed countries to abide by their aid commitment of 0.7% of gross national product and allocate 0.15% to 0.20% to Least Developed Countries.

8. A summit meeting of the landlocked developing countries was held on 14 September in Havana, Cuba. This was the first ever summit meeting of the landlocked developing countries that highlighted the serious constraints faced by landlocked developing countries. It is our hope that the international community will provide due consideration to the problems of landlocked developing countries and support the roadmap for global partnership set out by the Almaty Programme of Action.

Madam President,

9. The task of reforming the United Nations remains incomplete in view of the slow progress in areas such as the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the reform of the Security Council. It is not enough to say that reform of these bodies is required while allowing ourselves to be constrained by other considerations. We need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council to enable it to deal effectively with social, economic and development issues that are of primary concern for the vast majority of the member states.

10. The Security Council needs to be reformed to reflect present day realities and challenges. My delegation strongly believes that the status quo is no longer an option. The Security Council has to be urgently reformed in all its aspects including composition and working methods. It is regrettable that the proposal submitted by the G4 at the 60th session was not acted upon. It is my delegation's hope that the 61st session will be able to bring about real reform of the Security Council.

11. We welcome the adoption by the 60th session the resolution on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. We must continue with our efforts to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of this body which is the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations.

Madam President,

12. Terrorism continues to threaten peace, security and development in many parts of the world. The recent train bombings in Mumbai and the plot to blow up transatlantic aircrafts uncovered in London last August, remind us of the need to take strong measures against international terrorism. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the 60th session of General Assembly the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The next important steps are to implement the strategy and renew efforts to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Madam President,

13. Recent developments in the Middle East once again highlight the urgency of finding a solution to the problem. My delegation calls upon all concerned parties and others in a position to help, to strive for a just and comprehensive resolution.

Madam President,

14. I avail of this opportunity to express my country's deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Anan for the dedicated service he has rendered to the organization as its Secretary-General. We are confident that the next Secretary General, who should be from Asia, will lead the United Nations to greater heights in the service of humanity.

Madam President,

15. Allow me a few moments to apprise the international community of the progress that Bhutan is making. As a small, least developed and landlocked country with a population of just over 550,000 people, the hurdles we face are enormous. Yet, under the farsighted leadership of His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the country has been making significant progress in all fields.

17. On the political front, the most notable is the culmination of the reforms which will usher in parliamentary democracy in 2008. These changes are taking place in an environment of peace, progress and stability and we are hopeful that the transition and the final outcome will be smooth and enduring.

18. Bhutan's development is guided by the conviction that human wellbeing and contentment must be promoted through pursuit of material progress on the one hand and fulfillment of spiritual and emotional needs on the other. This development philosophy, as I have submitted before in this Assembly, is defined as pursuit of Gross National Happiness rather than just Gross National Product. We will be happy to share our experience on this development philosophy as we did at the international conference on "Rethinking Development – Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing" that was held in Nova Scotia, Canada in June 2005. We believe that "The Happy Planet Index" that was recently published in the United Kingdom by the "New Economic Foundation" bears close relation to the development paradigm pursued by Bhutan.

I thank you, Madam President, and wish the General Assembly session success.