

## **UPR of BHUTAN – INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE**

**(4 December 2009; 1430-1730 hrs)**

### **INTERVENTION BY INDIA**

Mr. President,

India warmly welcomes the delegation of Bhutan led by H.E. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, former Prime Minister and the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, and thanks the delegation for its presentation. We would like to express our appreciation for the comprehensive National Report that provides a candid appraisal of the country's transition to democratic constitutional monarchy, and the Government's efforts to strengthen the normative human rights framework in Bhutan, its achievements and the remaining challenges that the Government plans to tackle.

Mr. President,

As the newest democracy in the world, Bhutan has effected, in a short span of time, a remarkable array of measures encompassing the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, that collectively reflect its deep and abiding commitment to human rights. Indeed, it is a tribute to the people of Bhutan, and to the enlightened leadership and the statesmanship provided by the Fourth King, that Bhutan has succeeded in reaching the milestone of being a democratic constitutional monarchy in an atmosphere of utmost peace and stability, while steadily improving the welfare of her people.

In a commendable exercise in inclusive, democratic participation by its people, Bhutan adopted its Constitution last year after extensive and open public consultations. The Constitution guarantees and protects human rights of all its citizens and provides for effective remedies against infringement of these rights. It also provides for a multi-party political system and an independent judiciary. The country

held highly successful general elections last year and is currently in the process of establishing a Supreme Court. Bhutan's new Parliament has already set up a Committee on Human Rights and its Upper House, in view of the modest size of the opposition benches in the current Parliament, is playing an active role as a safeguard mechanism. The country is on track to achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals. Further, as has been acknowledged by CEDAW and CRC, Bhutan is paying particular attention to the welfare of women and children, and its achievements in education, healthcare and environment sustainability are noteworthy. Also, the country has become an Observer to the ILO this year.

Mr President,

As we undertake the review exercise for Bhutan, we must remain mindful that the country's principal priority is to enhance its institutional capacities and consolidate its democracy against the challenges of poverty, unemployment, illegal immigration and terrorism. As a close friend and neighbour, India remains steadfast in its commitment to stand by Bhutan as a factor of stability and support in Bhutan's quest for greater prosperity and happiness. We applaud the vision for Bhutan that has been laid down by His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk. Indeed, we have much to learn from Bhutan on how to pursue economic development that is neither at the expense of a fragile eco-system nor a country's social and cultural traditions. We believe that Bhutan's concept of Gross National Happiness has a particular resonance in today's world that is increasingly marked by consumptive excesses. Bhutan stands on the threshold of change and we assure Bhutan of our continuing support and cooperation, and also convey our best wishes for success in its endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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