

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. TSHERING TOBGAY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN
HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE: PROTECTING
OUR PLANET AND COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE,
27TH SEPTEMBER 2015, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Co Chairs, Excellencies,

I wish to begin by quoting His Majesty The King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who pointed out that “the image of a shared planet must always be present in our minds, and especially in the minds of those who are in positions of leadership.” It is this wisdom that has consistently guided my country’s approach to protecting our planet.

2. As small as we are, as modest as our means may be, and despite the fact that we have done little to contribute to the causes of climate change, Bhutan has always understood the solemn responsibility that we, as custodians of the earth and of nature’s bounty, bear to ourselves, to one another, and to future generations.

- In 2009, Bhutan pledged to remain carbon neutral. Not only have we kept this promise, we have exceeded it, as in reality, we are carbon negative. We are, perhaps, the only country to be a net carbon sink. We generate only 2.4 million tons of CO², but our forests sequester as much as 6.3 million tons of CO² each year.
- Driven by the conviction that GNH is more important than GNP, national policies have always been defined to pursue both self-reliance and inclusive green socio-economic development in equal measure.
- Exciting initiatives supporting carbon neutral cities have been introduced to address the challenges of increasing energy emissions from the transport sector.
- Bhutan is also examining ways and means through which it may contribute further, with additional national commitments to help ensure that global emissions pathways remain consistent with a 1.5 degree C world, critical for the survival of the most vulnerable states, including fragile mountain ecosystems like our's.

- At the same time, we are also proud to showcase collaboration with our neighbors that presently offset 5.6 million tons of CO² per year through the production and export of clean hydropower. By 2025, we would have developed sufficient hydropower capacity to offset 35 million tons of CO² per year in our region - no small feat considering Bhutan's emissions constitute under 7% of that figure.

Co Chairs, Excellencies,

3. Following our adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we must build on the momentum to ensure that we arrive at a successful outcome to the UNFCCC COP 21 this December, with a comprehensive and ambitious, legally binding instrument that will serve the interests of humanity and our shared planet.

Thank you