

**Statement delivered by  
His Excellency Dr. Tandi Dorji, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of  
Bhutan during the High-Level Opening session of the  
79th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**15 May 2023**

**Theme:** *“Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”*

Her Excellency the UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive-Secretary of ESCAP  
Excellencies  
Ladies and gentlemen

1. Kuzuzangpo and warm greetings of His Majesty The King, Her Majesty the Queen and the people of Bhutan.
2. I am honoured to be participating in the 79th session of ESCAP.
3. This is an opportune moment for the region to reflect on the progress, share experiences and lessons and pave the way forward, especially as this year marks the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and seven years since the world came together to sign the Paris Agreement.
4. Bhutan, with its fragile mountainous ecosystems and reliance on climate dependent sectors such as hydropower and agriculture, is highly susceptible to the consequences of climate change. Despite our vulnerabilities, under the guidance of our visionary leaders, Bhutan has set a strong example in conservation and its low emission development policy for climate change and sustainable development goals.

Excellencies,

5. We note with concern, ESCAP’s report in November 2022, which underlined that the economic growth of Asia and Pacific region has been based on unsustainable models of development, leading to the region accounting for more than half of global greenhouse gas emissions.
6. In order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, it is imperative for all economies to ensure net zero emissions and become carbon-neutral by mid-century. Assessments show that the Nationally Determined Contributions submitted to date are not adequate in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.
7. Therefore, there is an urgent need to raise our ambitions in phasing out fossil fuels and accelerate uptake of cleaner sources of energy. This is a race against time and the global community must scale up our climate ambitions to save the planet from catastrophic impacts of climate change.

8. We call upon all international partners to live up to the US\$100 billion climate finance commitment, scale up support through technology transfer, capacity building and increased funding for adaptation, to enable countries and LDCs in particular, to mainstream climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction into the national plans and priorities. The funding mechanism for Loss and Damage implementation should be expedited.
9. On our part, Bhutan will continue to promote a green and sustainable economy, keep our commitment to be Carbon-neutral guided by the holistic development philosophy of Gross National Happiness.
10. We thank our many partners for the support till now and our graduation is a reflection of our successful cooperation.
11. I wish the 79th session of ESCAP all the success.
12. Thank you and tashi delek