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**ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. KESANG WANGDI, LEADER OF
DELEGATION, BHUTAN
20 MAY 2014
16.00-17.30**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I would like to begin by extending the Royal Government of Bhutan's congratulations and well wishes to H.E. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar on her appointment as Executive Secretary of ESCAP. It is a tribute to the vast experience and strong leadership qualities that she brings to this important post. I have the honour to convey the deep appreciation of the government of Bhutan to Thailand for hosting this important conference and the ESCAP secretariat for the excellent preparations made for it. We recognize UNESCAP's vital role is shaping the Post-2015 development agenda particularly for a region that is home to two-thirds of the world's population.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. I would like to take this opportunity to share that for the past four decades sustainable development has been diligently pursued in Bhutan and remains at the heart of Bhutan's development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). It was as early as the 1970s when His Majesty the fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, for the first time, declared that Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product. Since then, GNH continues to guide and inform Bhutan's pursuit of happiness through sustainable development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. As we face the last mile of the MDGs, we must recognize that significant progress has been made in its achievement. However, challenges still remain. Progress has been uneven between and amongst nations, and inequalities continue to persist. It is imperative that we intensify our efforts in achieving the MDGs.

4. All these efforts must be complemented by effective global partnerships between governments and all stakeholders. The reality is that without

international support and assistance, least developed countries will not be able to achieve several of the goals by 2015.

5. Bhutan believes that any development agenda is incomplete without an excellent means of implementation and review. It will ultimately be the difference between success and failure of the development agenda. An ambitious Post 2015 Development Agenda must therefore be backed by an equally ambitious means of implementation and a matching review system. Concrete means of implementation must be negotiated for each SDG in the post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. The feasibility of and process for developing a regional roadmap for implementing the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, based on the SDGs, targets and indicator framework is very important. However, these are essentially only means for creating the conditions towards achieving “a higher vision of development”. Bhutan believes that this vision for a new development agenda should be based on the pursuit of happiness for three reasons:

- a. Happiness is the only universal aspiration of mankind
- b. All activities of humankind, whatever they may be and howsoever they are named or defined, are intended to achieve happiness as the end product
- c. And it is, therefore, timely to proudly admit that ‘happiness’ is the purpose of our development pursuit, especially the pursuit of sustainable development.

7. Therefore, on behalf of the Royal Government of Bhutan, we would like to recommend the inclusion of Happiness as an integral part the vision of development in the post-2015 development agenda from the Asia and the Pacific Region, to ensure that the post 2015 development agenda is wholesome, inclusive, resilient, equitable, complete and above all sustainable.

Thank you and Tashi Delek