

**Statement by**  
**Mr. Nicholas Rosellini**  
**Resident Coordinator, UN System in Bhutan**  
**On UN Day, 24 October, 2008**

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Jigmi Y Thinley

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Hon'ble Ministers

Hon'ble Ambassadors, Dashos,

Heads of Partner Organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Royal Government for this symbolic ceremony. The lighting of the butter lamps and prayers for world peace and prosperity is very special. In terms of significance, depth and symbolism on UN Day, today's ceremony organised by the Royal Government is unmatched.

2008, with the Centenary Celebrations, the Coronation of His Majesty the 5th King, and the transition into a constitutional democracy, forms a major milestone in the history of Bhutan. A milestone that represents an opportunity for reflection, acknowledging past achievements, and reflecting on how we can do better in supporting Bhutan meet its development challenges.

Looking first at the global picture, the UN system and the UN member states are faced by a set of existing and emerging challenges; challenges that today are very different from those of 63 years ago, when the UN was founded. These include continued issues of peace and security around the world, concerns over global governance and effectively delivering development for the people most in need. In addition, the impact of climate change and the immediate consequences of the food and fuel price rises and current financial crisis pose serious new challenges to human development. The UN and its member States have much to do to ensure world peace, security and sustainable development.

Looking ahead, the next major milestone, globally and nationally, will be 2015 when we will assess global progress on the Millennium Development Goals and to what extent the living conditions of millions of poor people around the world have improved. In a message to mark the Day, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has highlighted the need for greater partnership and leadership to tackle global challenges to help member countries in attaining the MDGs. As emphasised by the Hon'ble Prime Minister during his address to the UN General Assembly last month (and I quote) "the pursuit of the MDGs are among the most laudable consensual agreements achieved by the General Assembly to bring about a more just and equitable world. And emerging global challenges threaten to undermine what has been achieved collectively and as individual states". (unquote)

Bhutan has already made good progress in the Millennium Development Goals, having achieved some of the targets and being on track to achieve most of the rest by 2015. Certain development challenges still need attention, such as further reducing income poverty, increasing employment, addressing high maternal mortality rates and ensuring higher

numbers of girls enter tertiary education. Let's work together to address these challenges.

Your Excellencies

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Bhutan on becoming the youngest democracy in the world following the successful parliamentary elections in March. Bhutan must be lauded for its unique approach whereby a democratic Bhutan was born; not out of compulsion, but out of the genuine belief in its rich attributes. A vibrant democracy requires checks and balances, as envisaged in the Constitution, and informed participation by the people. In this respect, the roles of emerging civil society organizations and the independent media in Bhutan are important and their capacities need to be strengthened.

The United Nations considers democratic governance and respect for human rights central to the achievement of human development. This year, we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The adoption of Bhutan's first written Constitution in July this year which includes specific provisions for women and child rights is an important step towards further promoting democracy and good governance.

Bhutan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, and was one of the first countries in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 without any reservations.

Bhutan is a success story in development, and a model of balanced economic, social and environment sustainability. This success is recognized by the fact that by international measures, Bhutan has now reached the status of a middle income country. We must together ensure that this is maintained and taken to greater heights in the future. The United Nations will do its best to support the Royal Government to build on these fine achievements made by the people of Bhutan under the far sighted vision and leadership of its Monarchs.

It has been 37 years since Bhutan joined the United Nations, and for the UN in Bhutan, 2008 is also seen as a milestone for renewal.

Today, a priority for the UN system is on making the assistance to Bhutan as effective as possible. The joint UNDAF and CPAP, which the government and 14 UN agencies have agreed upon, and which started this year, is hence a major milestone for the UN system in ensuring that our support to Bhutan does not only grow in terms of quantity but also in quality.

On behalf of the entire UN system in Bhutan, I would like to thank you for the intimate and fruitful relationship the UN system enjoys with the Government of Bhutan, and to re-affirm that we stand ready to assist Bhutan in the best possible way as you move ahead with the pursuit of holistic development and GNH.

I am hopeful that the partnership between the United Nations and Bhutan will evolve and continue to bear fruits made visible through improved living standards of all Bhutanese people. As stated by the UN Secretary General "the United Nations must deliver results for a safer, healthier, more prosperous world".

Thank you and Tashi Delek