

**Statement to be delivered by Mr Phuntsho Norbu, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.,
Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations during
the First Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board 2024 – Agenda
Item 4: UNICEF Country Programme Document on Thursday, 7th February
2024.**

Thank you Mr. President for giving me the floor.

Mr President,

Members of the Executive Board,

Distinguished delegates

1. Allow me to convey our appreciation to Mr Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, for his presentation. My delegation welcomes the UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) of Bhutan for the period 2024-2028 as contained in document E/ICEF/2024/P/L.5.
2. UNICEF has played a pivotal role in Bhutan even before the establishment of the Country Office in 1994. The partnership commenced with a water supply programme in 1974, evolving into sustained support for the Royal Government of Bhutan's endeavours, particularly in enhancing the well-being and lives of Bhutanese, especially children and women. More recently, during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF's contribution facilitated the swift delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and syringes from the COVAX facility and other bilateral partners, which resulted in rolling out one of the fastest and most successful vaccination campaigns during the pandemic. The Royal Government of Bhutan deeply values this long-standing collaboration with UNICEF.

Excellencis,

3. The UNICEF-Bhutan CPD is aligned with Bhutan's national development priorities articulated in the 13th Five-Year Plan and the United Nations Sustainable

Development Cooperation Framework 2024-2028. We also acknowledge the consultative and participatory nature of the CPD development process, initiated by the UNICEF Regional Office in Kathmandu and UNICEF Country Office in Thimphu, involving the Royal Government, the CSOs, other UN agencies in Bhutan, youth and parents of children with disabilities.

4. The UNICEF-Bhutan CPD has been drafted considering the context of Bhutan's LDC graduation and continuing to sustain the gains achieved in the social sector over the last few decades. The CPD's focus areas, encompassing education, health, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene, and child protection, align closely with the Royal Government's social protection priorities under the 13th Five-Year Plan. We eagerly anticipate collaborative efforts with UNICEF to successfully implement the CPD, addressing last-mile challenges post-LDC graduation, particularly supporting communities in remote areas and marginalised groups such as children with disabilities.

Excellencis,

5. Bhutan remains committed to closely collaborating with UNICEF to achieve the expected results of the CPD. By the end of 2028, successful CPD implementation will result in more children, including adolescents and women, benefiting from quality, comprehensive, and affordable health; accessing quality and resilient early learning and education; and being safer and better protected from violence, exploitation, and abuse. Overall, more children will benefit from quality, child-sensitive policies and social protection programs.
6. In this regard, I am delighted to extend the full support and endorsement of the Royal Government to the UNICEF-Bhutan CPD for the period 2024-2028. Furthermore, we request the Executive Board's approval of the new CPD and the allocation of resources towards achieving its comprehensive implementation.

I thank you, Mr President.