

**Statement by His Excellency YesheyDorji
Minister for Agriculture and Forests & Vice Chair of National
Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan
At the High Level Segment of COP21/CMP11 to UNFCCC, Paris France
December 7, 2015**

*Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of His Majesty the King and the people of Bhutan, I express our deepest condolences to the people of France and those affected by the recent terrorist activity in this city.

Minister Fabius, I congratulate you on your election as the President of COP 21. We also thank the Government of France for the excellent arrangements made for the conference.

My delegation associates with the statements by the Chairs of the Group of 77 & China and the Group of Least Developed Countries.

Mr. President,

We are now in the final week of our work towards a universal agreement to act on the greatest challenge confronting this planet, and we must speed up our work to deliver an ambitious and legally binding agreement. We thank all the Parties and the Secretariat for the hard work over the last four years under the ADP.

Mr. President,

Bhutan, as a small, land-locked country with a fragile mountain ecosystem, we are among the most vulnerable countries to the adverse effects of climate change. The recent IPCC Assessment Report, and the 2013-2015 review on the adequacy of the temperature goal, revealed that high mountain areas like the Himalayas, will experience significant impacts, with an increase in global average temperature from 1.5 degrees to 2 degrees. Therefore, it is essential that we include the temperature goal of “below 1.5 degrees” in the new agreement.

Increasingly frequent extreme climatic phenomenon such as flash floods, GLOF, windstorms, changing weather patterns, forest fires and landslides in Bhutan are clearest signs that climate change has already affected my country. Climate change threatens our hydropower dependent economy and the livelihood of the vast majority of our population who are subsistence farmers.

Mr. President,

Bhutan is already a victim of climate change and we have taken on a disproportionately more responsibilities than should be expected of us to fight climate change and we are committed to doing more as outlined in our INDC. Our constitution mandates that we maintain 60% of our land under forest cover and our emissions stand at 1/3rd of the sink capacity of our forest, which covers more than 72% of the country. We have also identified strategies for low emission development towards this goal, especially to manage emissions from Transport and Industrial sectors. Our INDC also includes priority needs and actions for adaptation to safeguard the lives and livelihood of our people and measures to conserve and enhance forest carbon sinks. Fighting climate change is not about saving Bhutan. It is for a far bigger cause, for the survival of this planet. For Bhutan, leaving Paris without a legally binding agreement or

one that does not takes into consideration the concerns of vulnerable countries like mine is not an option. We therefore, call on the international community to support us in this ambitious endeavor to combat climate change.

Mr. President,

Bhutan is guided by our philosophy of gross national happiness in pursuing equitable and ecologically balanced sustainable development. Our goal is to graduate from LDC status by 2020, but climate change threatens to derail the significant gains we have made over the last few decades.

Mr. President,

Bhutan remains committed to principles and objectives of the convention and call on all parties to take strong actions to deliver an ambitious, equitable, fair and legally binding agreement here in Paris. We owe it to the past, present and the future generations of planet earth.

Thank you and TashiDelek.