

NATIONAL STATEMENT BY TASHI PEM, MINISTERIAL
REPRESENTATIVE, MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

Mr. President

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates,

1. At the outset, Bhutan would like to congratulate and express our appreciation to the UNEA President and the bureau, UNEP and the Government of Kenya for convening UNEA-6 and giving us this multilateral platform.
2. Bhutan ascribes to the unique platform provided by UNEA to date, charting some of the boldest resolutions to foster collective environmental action.
3. And we are hopeful that this UNEA too, under the theme, *effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution* will deliver outcomes to accelerate our action to address the interlinkages of the **triple planetary crisis**.

4. Bhutan took a bold step to declare carbon neutrality and maintain 60% forest coverage, as a constitutional mandate, giving right to nature. This reflects our seriousness in protecting our nature and environment. And yet, we are not safe from the impacts of the changing climate.
5. Our food, water and energy security are under constant threat from Climate Change making our developing small economy and the fragile mountain ecosystems most vulnerable.
6. Mitigating Climate change impact needs are mounting and competing with developmental needs, stressing the limited resources and capacities.
7. Excellencies, our mountains and glaciers, which are our natural water storage, and our economic lifeline are severely impacted too. The rapid melting of glaciers has increased the disaster risk from *Glacial Lake Outburst floods*, not just on the lives and livelihood of the mountain people alone but also millions of lives and livelihoods downstream and contributing to the rising sea levels.

8. This underscores the urgency to Act fast for ecologically balanced sustainable development.
9. Bhutan wishes to express its unwavering commitment to the objectives outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. We believe that protecting a thriving biodiversity is a shared responsibility for addressing the triple Planetary crisis.
10. On this front, Bhutan under successive visionary Monarchs have put environmental stewardship at the forefront of development, safeguarding the future of the planet and people. We are guided by the unique development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which recognizes the intrinsic linkages between a healthy environment with human well-being.
11. More than half of the country is declared as **protected areas** covering five national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries and a strict nature reserve. These protected areas are connected by biological corridors.

12. Another example worthy to share here is the alignment of our Tourism policy with ecologically balanced sustainable development, sacrificing short-term economic gains for longer-term sustainability.
13. The Queen of Bhutan launched a monthly Zero-Waste hour in 2019 and we aspire to become a Zero-Waste society by 2030. A multitude of integrated waste management initiatives promoting circular economy joining forces with the private sector are underway.
14. Bhutan has developed a national strategy to establish an HFCs quota and licensing system to kick-start phasing out of HFCs after it was added to the list of controlled substances. We are hopeful to achieve their gradual reduction target by the late 2040s.
15. On the technology front, we advocate for a balanced approach that considers environmental, social, and ethical implications, ensuring that technological solutions contribute positively to

accelerating environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation.

16. Bhutan welcomes the concerted effort of UNEP to promote the role of private finance in delivering environmental actions. And it is time that we assess the alignment of the financial system to advance sustainable green growth.
17. Bhutan stands committed to environmental multilateralism and in delivering its outcomes in an effective, inclusive, and sustainable way to address the triple planetary crisis.
18. And also calls upon the international community to redouble its efforts and not leave behind the vulnerable ones.
19. As we collectively work together towards a resilient and safe planet, let us be guided by the moral responsibility to pass a healthy planet to our children, their children and many generations to come.

Thank you and Tashi Delek