

General Debate Statement by Mr. Namgyal Dorji, Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the United Nations
ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, 21 May 2020

Thank you Mr. Chair

1. At the outset, Bhutan aligns itself with the statements delivered by Guyana on behalf of G77, Malawi on behalf of LDCs and Kazakhstan on behalf of LLDCs.
2. We thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of GA reso 71/243 on quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) 2016 and the repositioning of the UN Development System (UNDS). We also thank the Deputy Secretary General for her leadership in the process. Indeed, this year's OAS occurs at an important juncture that will see completion of what has been a comprehensive and productive process of reform.
3. We would like to thank the Secretary General for his recommendations to mandate the OHRLLS and the Inter Agency Task Force to develop a common guideline to ensure LDCs are prioritized in all programming and budgeting, and that it supports countries' smooth transition from the LDC Category.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly become much more than a health crisis that is resulting in significant socio-economic impact. While Bhutan is fortunate with a strong national leadership steering proactive response to the Pandemic threat centered on resolute surveillance, prevention, and containment, these measures however pose significant strain on our already limited resources and capacity constraints, including fragile health system. We have had to mobilise all available human and material resources to these efforts. Plans and programs of our ongoing National Development Plan have been re-oriented to meet urgent and immediate needs. Worse, sectors key in our national strategy to build productive capacity, generate employment, and strengthen economic resilience are among the hardest hit.
5. In this regard, we would also like to recognize the efforts of UNCT for being at the forefront helping the Royal Government from the early stages of the crisis.
6. As a country that is on the graduation track from LDC status in 2023, Bhutan is concerned over the impact this crisis will have on its smooth transition. Bhutan needs an enhanced support of the UN Development System to help us remain on track for smooth transition from the LDC category by 2023 as well achieving the SDGs. Bhutan welcomes the CDP's recommendation to find new and innovative forms of assistance for graduating and graduated countries and looks forward to the graduation support package the Committee will prepare as an input towards the LDC V preparatory process.
7. The impact of COVID-19 is already deep, widespread and cross-cutting. Our focus is to build back better for early and sustainable recovery. As we do so, Bhutan will look towards UNDS through its UNCT to continue its catalytic role, to help us prevent reversal of decades of hard earned development gains towards graduation, and to enable us to emerge from the crisis as a stronger, more sustainable and resilient society that is inclusive and just.
