

**Statement by Hon'ble Chimi Dorji, Dy. Speaker of the National Assembly of
the Kingdom of Bhutan at the 9th Plenary Session of the Asian Parliamentary
Assembly ("Promoting the Peace & Sustainable Development in Asia")
27th November 2016**

His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrie HENG Samrin, President of
APA,

His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Reza Majidi, Secretary General of APA,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to take this privilege to convey the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty the King and people of Bhutan. I am equally privileged to participate in this important meeting which signifies our legitimate concerns for the future. Peace and sustainable development are in fact inalienable from each other and more importantly these are underlying factors for global harmony.

In my country, peace and sustainable development are elaborately emphasized through the philosophy of Gross National Happiness. This philosophy of ours is nothing but development guided by human values. Today, as I am bestowed with this wonderful opportunity, I would like to urge my fellow parliamentarians to be mindful of our role in ensuring peace and sustainable development because it is the political institutions which shape economic and social institutions.

Bhutan has had significant progress on achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially in enhancing sustainable access to sanitation and safe drinking

water. MDGs were instrumental in Bhutan's graduation from being a least developed country and have helped prioritize poverty alleviation.

There is one thing in common which we Asians share both in spirit and fortitude. It is the commonality of our culture, a culture which holds the basic human values like loving kindness and collective happiness. The fundamental purpose of development is peace and this notion should navigate our approach to sustainable development.

Asian Parliamentary Assembly over the years has provided an excellent platform for sharing great ideas and experiences. In order to further our noble endeavor to foster bonds between our parliaments, we must prioritize and continue to render our cooperation and support to fulfill our common goals.

Economic and social developments can only be sustained if we work along the principle of judicious utilization of resources. In other words, I would like to underline and say-a balanced development. These are where our values play a pivotal role. I am confident that each country which we represent here today has a rich history which narrates how our forefathers have built our nations for generations beyond theirs'. This simply reflects that idea of sustainability was born yesteryear and we can't afford its implementation to be delayed any further.

Our world is increasingly become materialistic with consumerism dominating most of the societies. We have exploited our planet far beyond one could imagine and thus we have already started bearing the brunt of our ignorance. Most of the emerging economies of the world are based in Asia and this makes us more vulnerable to unsustainable developmental practices.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which was adopted by the United Nations last year has been very timely. The governments of the world have pledged their role in achieving the SDGs and now it is the lawmakers who should shoulder the responsibility at par with the government machineries.

I strongly feel that the parliaments can do our share of efforts in achieving SDGs by aligning these goals with our functions. Our laws, policies and resolutions all must orient itself to achieving SDGs and ensure that parliamentary oversight power guarantees its timely implementation.

At a time when our world is continuously inflicted with the agony of conflicts and climate change, universal brotherhood has become more important than ever as it requires our collective effort to secure international peace. We, as parliamentarians must be on the forefront of cementing international ties and promoting peace through parliamentary diplomacy. We must remember that together, we are accountable to more than 4 billion Asians who have elected us with a single objective to uphold peace for a better living.

In this context, Asian parliamentarians have greater reason to reach consensus for regional and world peace because of our diversity. We must ensure that we see unity in our diversity. And having such perspective will harmonize our endeavors for a peaceful region and world at large. But more importantly, our national parliaments must act and legislate inclusive of all segments of society without which peace would be a distant dream.

Social consciousness must influence governance and state functions, absence of which will turn any other effort to ensure peace futile. At the same time, it is good

governance with democratic principles which will guarantee peace not only for today but times to come.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

A responsible development is characterized by the right balance between equitable and sustainable livelihood ecological conservation, good governance and a thriving culture. This in reality will undoubtedly promote contentment which will ultimately lead to peace and harmony.

I personally believe that it takes a very simple perspective to achieve peace and sustainable development and that is by recognizing the principle of interdependence. However, it is our approach that has to be reformed transcending individual interest.

On our return to our respective countries, whatever we discuss and resolve in this meeting must be translated in to reality. We may be faced with challenges in implementing the consensus we have reached and therefore it is imperative that we reinforce our commitment through legislations.

Before I conclude, on behalf of the Parliament of Bhutan, I would like to recommit our pledge for continued peace and sustainable development for our region and the world at large.

THANK YOU!
