Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor,

1. At the outset, I wish to acknowledge the good work done by UNICEF in Bhutan.


3. The Royal Government of Bhutan attaches high importance to UNICEF Country Program which sets the strategic direction of UNICEF’s engagement in Bhutan. UNICEF has been a valuable development partner of the Royal Government in its socio-economic development efforts since 1974, particularly in the areas advancing the lives of children, youth and women in Bhutan.

4. In this regard, although the final report of the visit by the Executive Board Bureau to Bhutan earlier this year in April will be presented and discussed under separate agenda item tomorrow, we are confident Bureau’s observations and findings from the field visit would have further strengthened the country program document.

Mr. President,

5. The hallmark of the partnership between the Royal Government and UNICEF over the last 44 years has been a shared commitment to ensure no child is left behind in our collective pursuit of addressing challenges and creating opportunities for all children, especially for those most vulnerable, towards achieving sustained socio-economic progress. Equally note worthy is the dynamism and responsiveness of UNICEF country program to adapt to the changing societal needs and priorities of Bhutan.
6. On this note, we are happy that the broad areas of support in the Country Program Document indicates a high level of alignment with our national 12th five-year plan priorities and the National Key Results Areas relating to children and adolescent, health, gender, governance, justice, poverty and inequality reduction amongst others.

Mr. President,

7. The Country Program Document for Bhutan 2019-2023 is significant for the Royal Government as its implementation period coincides with the 12th Five Year National Plan of Bhutan which is our last full plan as a Least Developed Country. In addition to our commitment to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the transition strategy for graduation has been mainstreamed into the 12th Plan to ensure that Bhutan’s graduation is smooth, avoiding any disruption to ongoing development plans and programmes. The 12th Plan will address last mile challenges in all sectors of the economy to ensure that Bhutan does not slip back on hard earned development gains after graduation. During this critical period, we are confident that UNICEF’s targeted interventions with innovative strategies to address the challenges facing children and adolescents as highlighted in the Country Program Document will serve to reinforce the Royal Government’s efforts.

8. In conclusion, I thank UNICEF for their continued assistance and wish to reiterate the Royal Government’s commitment to implement the UNICEF Country program for Bhutan.

9. I thank you.