**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE AT THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) OF BHUTAN AT THE 33RD UPR WORKING GROUP, 8 MAY 2019**

Mr President,

 We acknowledge Bhutan’s success in reducing the percentage of its citizens living below income poverty and for reducing its multi-dimensional poverty rate during the period under review. Bhutan’s achievements were secured through broad-based and targeted programmes in education, health, agriculture and social infrastructure.

We commend in particular Bhutan’s efforts to enhance access to education through the Central School system and the expansion of large boarding primary and secondary schools, especially in rural areas. Bhutan also sought to address growing youth unemployment through the Youth Employment Skills and Graduate Skills program and the Direct Employment Scheme.

We **recommend** that the government continue expanding rural access to quality education and enhancing the job prospects of its youth, including through technical and vocational education training as envisaged in the Bhutan Education Blueprint (2014-2024).

Beyond eradicating poverty, Bhutan has rightly identified reducing inequality as one of the key targets of its 17 National Key Result Areas (NKRAs). We **recommend** that Bhutan continue to work with all relevant stakeholders and the international community through technical cooperation and the sharing of best practices in combating inequality.

As a fellow-small state Singapore wishes Bhutan every success in achieving its goals of creating a “just, harmonious and sustainable society” and to graduate from a Least Developed Country to a Middle-Income Country in 2023.

 Thank you Mr President.

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