

**Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Bhutan – 08 May 2019**

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka welcomes the delegation of Bhutan and expresses appreciation for the comprehensive national report and presentation today.

We are pleased to note the progressive actions taken by the Government of Bhutan in recent years to strengthen the legislative and judicial branches of the State. In particular, the establishment of a Green Bench in 2015 with special procedures in the High Court is a welcome step while enhancing the capacity in other areas of the judiciary.

We welcome Bhutan’s ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption in 2016 and the important steps taken towards combatting corruption such as adoption of Gift Rules and Asset Declaration Rules in 2017 and the Model Guideline on Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector 2017.

We are encouraged by the progressive measures taken by the Government of Bhutan to guarantee the right to education for children. Sri Lanka commends the strengthening of the primary and secondary educational infrastructure in Bhutan through the establishment of large primary and secondary schools as well as a system of central schools to cater to the rural communities and also welcomes efforts to enhance quality of education.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka recommends Bhutan to;

1.  Continue further interventions targeting the right to education including through non-formal education and access to technical and vocational training facilities;

2.  Take all appropriate steps to encourage and facilitate women's participation in tertiary education including in STEM;

3.  Further strengthen the public healthcare system in Bhutan, including by enhancing physical infrastructure and allocation of resources to healthcare facilities benefitting rural communities.

We wish Bhutan success in its UPR engagement.

Thank you.