

*Keynote Address by
Her Majesty Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck
To the 54th Commission on Population and Development*

Mr. Chairman

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Members of the Commission

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings and good wishes from their Majesties the Kings, the Royal Government and the People of Bhutan.

It is a great honor and a privilege to address the 54th Session of the Commission on Population and Development. I am confident that the objectives and goals of the commission will be fulfilled under the dynamic leadership of the Chair, Ambassador Yemdaogo Eric Tiare of Burkina Faso.

Global initiatives to advance women's rights to promote their social and economic development have yielded significant results in the last 25 years since the ICPD. Maternal mortality has dropped by nearly half and contraceptive use is higher than it has ever been. Expanded access to anti-retroviral therapy and declining incidences of HIV infections has greatly reduced the number of HIV related deaths.

The introduction of the HPV vaccines has addressed the pertinent public health problem

As we celebrate these achievements, we must recognize the challenges that remain. Too many women and girls around the world are still marginalized, living at or below the poverty line, with far too little control over their reproductive health and choices. Maternal mortality

Bhutan has successfully rolled out the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccinations to over 60% of her population with assistance from India. This gesture of goodwill from India is a shining example for the world to follow. It is imperative to ensure that vaccines are recognized as global public goods, and that they are made equitably and fairly accessible to all countries.