Thank you Chair,

Bhutan would like to thank and commend the WHO for its leadership during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We would like to report that Bhutan under the leadership of His Majesty the King has taken extreme and unprecedented measures to prevent and contain this spread of Pandemic.

We have an extensive testing program with one of the highest testing rates and implement a robust contact tracing program. All people coming to the country must undergo a state sponsored mandatory 21 days quarantine. However, we have also tried to ensure that essential healthcare services are not hampered and disrupted.

We are deeply concerned with the emergence of new variants that are associated with increased transmissibility and greater pathogenicity.

We also take this opportunity to thank WHO SEARO, especially the Regional Director Dr.Poonam Khetrapal for the continuous support to Bhutan in our response efforts against COVID pandemic.

Madam Chair,

We have also noted the main report submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. We fully agree that we must continue to learn from this pandemic to contain it,

and to prevent future pandemic by new pathogen. To do this, we reiterate the need for all member states to work together.

We would like to thank the Secretariat for reporting on the progress made in implementing the International Health Regulations. For the COVID-19 pandemic, we are aware of the need to continue the management of the pandemic through temporary recommendations issued by the Director General as per the advice of the IHR Emergency Committee for COVID-19. Therefore, we endorse the decision under this agenda item.

Thank you!