

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE 65TH SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM 13 JULY TO 24 JULY, 1987**

1. REGARDING GASA DZONGKHAG

The Chimi of Gasa Dzongkhag requested that for the general welfare of the people of Gasa, the Dzongkhag be retained and not be brought down to the level of a Dungkhag as had been decided by the Government for the Sixth Five Year Plan.

In response, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs informed the National Assembly that the decision was taken because as compared to other Dzongkhags where there were more than 500 to 600 households under one Gewog, there were only slightly more than 409 households under all the four Gewogs in Gasa. Therefore, the population was too small to justify it to be a Dzongkhag. On the other hand, the Deputy Minister explained that there were 3,343 households under 11 Gewogs in the new Dzongkhag of Chukha. Previously these Gewogs were under the Dzongkhags of Paro, Thimphu and Samchi. As these Gewogs are very far from the Headquarters of the above mentioned Dzongkhags, there were difficulties in Administration. The Deputy Minister also said that the business community in and around Chukha was fairly well developed because of the Chukha Hydel Project.

On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that there would be neither shortcomings in the welfare of the people nor inconvenience caused by making Gasa into a Dungkhag. His Majesty explained that whereas the budget allocation for Gasa during the six years of the Fifth Five Year plan had been Nu.10,148 million only, the Royal Government was considering a sanction of Nu.20,389 million for the Sixth Five Year plan.

The National Assembly decided to abide by the decision of the Royal Government.

2. REGARDING THE LAND BETWEEN GAYLEGPUG AND ASSAM

The Chimi of Sarbhang of Gaylegphug district called the attention of the National Assembly to the boundary between Gaylegphug and Assam. He stated that the road between Gaylegphug and Sarbhang had been initially constructed within the boundaries of Bhutan. However, now 4 kilometres stretch of the road between Leopani and Toribari near Dolkhola had fallen under India. This was causing great problems to the people living in the area and therefore it was reported to the National Assembly. Earlier, members of the Royal Advisory

Council had undertaken an inspection tour of the area, but nothing substantial had come out upto this date. Therefore, he requested for a quick settlement of the issue so that there would be no problems for the public and also future differences between the Government of India and the Royal Government could be avoided.

In this connection, the Surveyor General stated that this matter had been reported to the National Assembly before. Accordingly, in 1979 the Royal Advisory Council together with the Survey of Bhutan and the Survey of India made an inspection of the area. The inspection revealed that formerly the area beginning from Jari road upwards was under Bhutan. Therefore, any person felling trees or otherwise using the forest had to obtain prior permission from the Royal Government of Bhutan. For instance the Maharaja of Gauripur paid taxes to the Bhutanese Government for catching elephants in the area. The elephants trap holes dug by the Maharaja were also discovered during the inspection and can still be seen today proving that the area was under the possession of Bhutan. The reason for the area having gone to the Indian side, the Surveyor General said, was because the demarcation was done on the basis of a map prepared by the British between 1911 and 1914 when they were ruling India, which explains the present controversy. He informed the Assembly that talks between the two countries were in progress and the matter was being decided.

Many Chimis pointed out that, although, the demarcation was supposed to have been done a long time ago, the fact that it had still not been decided once and for all was a matter of great concern. They said that it was also very important on the part of the Royal Government to immediately settle other boundary questions so that friendly relations could be maintained with the neighbouring countries.

The National Assembly re-collected that the same question had been brought before the 52nd session of the National Assembly in agenda item 40. Following the discussions of the Assembly, the Indian Government had been invited for talks. The Indian Government while agreeing to discuss the matter proposed to do it later in view of the Assam agitation which was going on at that time. As the Assam trouble is now over, the National Assembly resolved that discussions be initiated immediately and settlement of the issue be brought about as quickly as possible.

3. ISSUES REGARDING BORDER TALKS WITH CHINA

The Chimi of Kartshog and Bey of Haa district reported that their pasture land along the northern border was being used by Tibetan herds-men. Therefore, there was an acute shortage of fodder for their cattle. As the people in that part of the country are entirely dependent on cattle for their livelihood, the chimi requested for an early settlement of the border with China.

In response, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that several enquiries regarding the border talks had been made in the Assembly in the earlier sessions also. He informed the Assembly that the Royal Government has so far had four rounds of discussions with the Chinese Government. However, in such talks according to international practices, countries have to first agree to principle guidelines for discussion. Consequently, the Chinese Government proposed five principle guidelines while the Royal Government insisted on only four. So far the two governments have agreed on three principles. There is still one more of the guidelines to be discussed. This would be decided when the Bhutanese representatives visit Beijing next year.

On the above issue, His Majesty the King gave the following clarification. The main concern of the National Assembly was whether the border with China would be successfully settled or not. In this regard although Bhutan is a small country, our government had already successfully held four rounds of discussion with the Chinese Government. Therefore, His Majesty was confident that the border with China would be demarcated in due course. As the border between our two countries are clearly defined along traditional boundaries covering about 470 Kms the process of demarcation will naturally take some time. However, the National Assembly was assured that the Royal Government would bring the border talks to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible.

As regards the immediate problems of the people living along the border, His Majesty the King commanded the Ministry of Home Affairs to look into their kidug.

The National Assembly thanked the Royal Government for the efforts made to settle the northern border. They requested the government to make still further efforts to settle the border with China as early as possible.

4. REGARDING IMPORTED LABOUR FOR CARRYING CASH CROPS

The Chimis of Sarbhang informed the National Assembly that formerly imported labour was used for carrying cash crops. But, following the decisions taken during the 36th session of the National Assembly, the Royal Government issued orders to stop bringing in Non-national labourers. However, inspite of the efforts made, it was impossible to employ the country's own labour. Therefore, the chimi requested that the people be allowed to import labour during the harvest season, until the Royal Government had finished constructing adequate feeder roads.

In this regard, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs recalled the following previous Assembly resolutions:

1. During the 49th session of the National Assembly, permission to import labour was sought by the Southern Bhutanese people. The National Assembly accordingly granted permission for three years.
2. As the three years period drew to an end the people approached His Majesty the King for extension of three more years. This request was granted on the condition that the people make necessary alternative arrangements for the future.
3. The three years granted by His Majesty the King ended but still the owners of the orange fields had not made any arrangements to solve the labour problems. Consequently, the people of Gaylegphug and Samchi made another request in the 60th session of the National Assembly in 1984 to be permitted to continue importing labour. During that session, the National Assembly did not approve the request. The people were told that since the system benefitted only a few of the people and not the general public the request would not be granted.

However, His Majesty the King commanded the Dzongdas of Gaylegphug and Samchi to help the people solve the problems. The Food Corporation of Bhutan was also given orders to render necessary assistance so that the problems could be solved within 1984 and 1985.

4. Accordingly the Royal Government immediately undertook the following measures :

- a) Feeder roads were constructed to Chengmari, Buca Tading and up stream along the Amo-chu in Phuntsholing. The feeder road from Kerabari to Homa was also initiated.
- b) The Royal Government started giving Bank Loans at only 10% interest to the growers of the cash crops. This was intended to stop the people taking loans from the cash crops contractors for which they have to pay 40 to 50 percent interest. Last year loans totalling to Nu.7,50,000/- was given out. Presently, the Royal Government has earmarked Nu.20,00,000/- to be given as loans to cash crops growers.
- c) The Royal Government had also given rural credit during the Vth Plan for buying horses. Sufficient funds for rural credit have also been allocated in VIth Five Year Plan.

In view of the above background, the Deputy Minister expressed his view that the request made was not for the general public, but on behalf of a few influential contractors. If the contractors could pay more to acquire internal labour and horses there would not be any problems.

In accordance with the explanation given by the Deputy Minister, the National Assembly decided that no changes should be made to decisions taken earlier on this matter.

On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command the Dzongdas of the affected Dzongkhags to clarify on the extent of the problems and whether they were able to solve them.

The Samchi Dzongda reported that most of the Dungkhags of Samchi Dzongkhag have no problems. He, however expressed some reservations about Sibsoo Dungkhag as it had not been discussed in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung. The Gaylegphug Dzongda reported that there would be no problems if the feeder road from Kerabari to Homa was completed. The Chirang Dzongda reported that there would be no problems in Chirang Dzongkhag if the Royal Government could help in constructing mule tracks in Doronang and Danasey.

Based on the above reports, His Majesty the King commanded that no changes were necessary to be made to the decision taken by the National Assembly during the 36th session.

To bring about faster solutions to the problems, His Majesty commanded the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Home Affairs, Food Corporation of Bhutan and the Dzongdas to discuss matters further in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs.

5. REGARDING ALLOTMENT OF UNAUTHORISED ORANGE & CARDAMOM PLANTATION TO THE POOR PEOPLE.

The Chimi of Gaylegphug district requested for a quick allotment of the unauthorised orange and cardamom plantations to landless people in accordance with the decision taken during the 60th session of the National Assembly. He also requested that the people be allowed to register those lands in their own Thrams.

In response, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs recalled the decision of the 60th session of the National Assembly. It had been decided that the lands which were being cultivated without the prior permission of the Royal Government would be confiscated and the fines to be imposed. While the fines were exempted by His Majesty, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Forestry were instructed to find out whether the illegal plantations adversely affected the forests or not. On receipt of the report, those lands which were determined as being appropriate for agriculture and had no adverse effects on the forests would be considered for allotment to the poor. The Ministry of Home Affairs accordingly carried out the inspection.

The Director General of Forestry informed the National Assembly that the Department also conducted similar inspections. Accordingly, those lands which were rightfully owned by cultivators were allotted to them, while illegally occupied land was confiscated by the government. In some of these areas, trees had already been planted. The department also encountered some land cases, which were submitted to the High Court for decision. The representative of High Court explained the time taken to impart decisions on the land cases. Further, he said once decisions are taken by the High court, they would be obliged to impose fines in accordance with the law. But this he said the court couldnot do as His Majesty the King had already granted exemption of fines during the 60th session of the National Assembly. Therefore, final decision on the cases had been left for the National Assembly.

His Majesty the King was pleased to command the following :

- a) The land cultivated by the people with due authorization or permission from government authorities although not registered in their names should not be strictly classified as illegally occupied land. Such land would therefore be allotted to the people who cultivated them.
- b) The land which were cultivated by the people on their own initiative and without any form of authorization or permission from government authorities will be strictly classified as illegally occupied land. Such land would therefore be confiscated by the government.
- c) Regarding the allotment of confiscated land to the landless people, the resettlement of these people will be carried out according to the resettlement programme of the Six Five Year Plan.

His Majesty the King said that firm measures must be adopted as there are no less than 24 thousand acres of illegally cultivated land in the country. If illegally cultivated land were given to the people who occupied them it would result in making redundant the Land Act which had been passed by the National Assembly only a few years ago. It would also mean that the National Assembly would be endorsing the circumvention of the very laws passed by it to safeguard the interests of the people and the country.

The National Assembly endorsed the command of His Majesty the King concerning unauthorized cultivation of land.

In this regard, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Department of Agriculture and the Dzongdas were commanded to discuss the methods of implementing the National Assembly decision.

6. REGARDING COST OF LANDS REQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT

The Chimi of Chang of Thimphu Dzongkhag stated that so far the people were surrendering their land whenever it was required by the government. During the 50th session of the National Assembly it had been decided that the owners of lands would be paid according to the existing cost of land in the country. However, they pointed out that the compensation given by the government for 1 acre of land is not even enough to buy 1 decimal of land in the town area. Therefore, the chimis of Chang and Kawang requested the government to go by the decision taken earlier by the 50th National Assembly session in this regard.

In response, the Deputy Minister for Finance clarified that the decision of the National Assembly had several problems as there are no uniform existing values of land in the country. Prices were set independently by buyers and sellers. The result was that the government departments paid different rates for the lands bought. This caused great inconvenience especially with regard to accounting & auditing of the government. Similarly, the sellers of the lands had problems as they were paid differently. The government also had enormous difficulties in buying lands as the sellers were charging between 4 to 5 lacs for 1 acre of land. The consequence was that many plan projects could not be implemented and the Royal Government of Bhutan also had problems utilizing assistance given by donor countries. On the other hand, the Deputy Minister reminded the Assembly that as stipulated by law the government can take any land which is required for developmental purposes and the land owner would be paid accordingly as decided by the government.

The Deputy Minister stated that in 1986, the premium price of an acre of land was Nu.24,000/- only. However, the government classified the land into 4 divisions and decided that the best land would be paid at double the amount of the existing rate of land i.e. Nu.65,300/- per acre.

The Deputy Minister also gave a clear explanation regarding the difference in the value of lands in the towns and the villages. In the towns, he said that, besides the actual cost of land various charges made by the City Corporation, for roads, water supply, sanitation and electricity supply are also included. Therefore, land in the towns would command higher value than land in the villages.

On the basis of the above reasons, the Deputy Minister felt that no changes should be made in the system of paying compensation for land adopted by the cabinet.

During the discussions some of the members were of the opinion that the land in Thimphu should command higher compensation than in other Dzongkhags. Some were of the view that those people whose lands have been taken over by the government, and have to go to other places to be resettled should be given extra 'Soilra'. Some members also requested that the present system of compensation adopted by the Cabinet should be altered, in the next session of the National Assembly. They stated that the rate of the land should be increased and the price of land in all Dzongkhags should be equal.

On this issue, His Majesty the King informed the National Assembly that the Cabinet has never passed any resolution which was against the decision of the National Assembly, at any time. Similarly, the system of compensation for land required by the government adopted by the cabinet was not in anyway initiated by the cabinet, but was based on the National Assembly decisions. His Majesty explained that clear responsibilities had been entrusted to both the forums and accordingly, the cabinet decides only on those matters related to its authority.

His Majesty was pleased to command that while the system of compensation for land adopted by the cabinet should remain unchanged for the present a distinction between land acquired for commercial purposes and land acquired for development works should be made. Land acquired for commercial purposes, due to the very nature of its purpose, should be given a higher compensation than land acquired for development works for which the existing value established by the government is more than adequate. His Majesty was also pleased to command that consideration may be given for the free allotment of a plot, for constructing a house, to the owners of the land from whom the land is acquired.

The National Assembly endorsed the decision given by His Majesty the King.

7. REGARDING A LABORATORY FOR TESTING SOIL

The Chimi of Lamidara said that since about 90% of the Bhutanese population depended on agriculture for their livelihood, it would be extremely useful if the government could get up a laboratory for testing soil.

In response, the Director of Agriculture reported that the government already has plans of setting up such a laboratory at Wangdiphodrang during the 6th Five Year Plan. A national who had been sent to Norway for training in this field has also returned and he would prove very helpful. However, this would take sometime as a lot of ground work has to be done, equipments acquired and the services of an expert also sought.

According to the Director this laboratory would prove very useful in the following fields:

1. To test the suitability of soil for making irrigation channels.
2. To test the suitability of different kinds of seeds.
3. To find out the overall productivity of the soil.

4. To test the suitability of fertilisers.

8. REGARDING TAX LEVY ON DANTAK FOR USING FOREST PRODUCTS.

The Chimi of Gyene, Dagala & Mewang enquired whether the Dantak paid any tax to the Royal Government for using sand, stones and other forest products.

In reply, the Director General of Forests informed the Assembly that the government provides them with the necessary forest permits, when they are undertaking developmental works only, like construction of roads etc. But full tax was levied for forest products utilized when they undertake contract works for the Ministries and Departments.

9. REGARDING MOTORABLE ROAD IN PATALEY SIDE OF CHIRANG DISTRICT

The chimi of Chirang requested for the construction of a motorable road from either Chachey to Pataley via. Burichu or from the Wangdiphodrang road to Pataley. He said that this would help four of the villages in that area.

In this regard, the Director of PWD informed the Assembly that Chirang besides being the centre of three important road systems (Sarbhong to Chirang, Dagana to Chirang, and Wangdi to Chirang), also has several feeder roads connecting most of the villages. Moreover, during the 6th Five Year Plan the objective to complete the construction of the roads from Chirang to Wangdi and Chirang to Dagana and to help maintain them properly. These alone would cost an estimated amount of Nu.20,233 million, whereas the department's budget was only Nu.27.462 million. Therefore, the government would not be able to undertake the construction of a road from Chachey to Pataley.

10. REGARDING A MOTORABLE ROAD FROM TAKSHINGTHANG TO GASA

The Chimi of Gasa thanked the government for constructing a motorable road from Punakha to Takshingthang during the Vth Five Year Plan. But as the Gasa people have great problems bringing their necessities from Punakha, he requested for the construction of a road from Takshingthang to Gasa during the 6th Five Year Plan.

In this connection, the Director PWD stated that the government had so far incurred Nu.15.180 million on the construction of the 28 km Punakha to Takshingthang road. While

the road is motorable, it is still not fully completed. Therefore, an outlay of Nu.4.752 million has been made for its completion during the VIth Plan. The road from Takshingthang to Gasa would come to about 25 kms for which the government would have to incur about Nu.22.500 million. Therefore, a feasibility study would have to be undertaken before any decision could be taken. Further, the Director said that the main policy of the government during the 6th Five Year Plan was to maintain 1,521 kilometres of roads in the country. Therefore, the construction of a road from Takshingthang to Gasa would not be undertaken, during the VIth Plan.

11. REGARDING A BRIDGE OVER THE BARANADHI RIVER

The Chimi of Bhangtar stated that due to the absence of a motorable bridge over the Baranadhi river about 10 Kms of road has been rendered useless in that part of the country. Therefore, he requested for the construction of a permanent motorable bridge over the river. This according to him would be very useful to the school, the newly opened fishery project and about four villages.

In response, the Director of PWD said that there are presently no problems for the people as, there are two suspension bridges already over the river and a third is under construction. Moreover, the proposed bridge would come to about 330 feet which would cost about Nu.0.60 crores. There was no budget provision in the 6th Five Year Plan for such a large sum. Further, the Director felt that even if the department were to undertake the construction it would be of little use, as there is no motorable road at the other end.

12. REGARDING RIVER EMBANKMENT SYSTEM

The Chimi of Gaylegphug said that since the majority of the population of Bhutan are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood it is very important to take care of the fields. Therefore, he requested for the construction of river embankments to protect the fields from being carried away by floods during the rainy seasons.

In response, the Director of Agriculture stated that although it is very important to protect the fields, the department would be unable to undertake the construction at the moment because of the following reasons :-

- i) The rivers are mostly seasonal and it is difficult to calculate their discharge and course.
- ii) The small embankments do not provide permanent services.
- iii) The government would have to carry out an economic analysis of cost effectiveness of the embankments.
- iv) The government cannot afford to sanction any additional funds for Gaylegphug Dzongkhag as it had already been allocated with the highest budget provision for the 6th Five Year Plan among the Dzongkhags.

13. REGARDING THE SPREAD OF NEW SECTS OF HINDUISM

The chimis of Gaylegphug and Kalikhola informed the National Assembly that, although the government has allowed the practice of only Buddhism and Hinduism, different sects of Hinduism have been emerging lately in the country. The preachers besides trying to convert the innocent people from the mainstream of Hinduism to their sects, also rob them of their properties in the name of religion. Since this is going to disturb the peace of the country in the future, they requested that a stop be put to this practice immediately.

In reply, the Secretary for Dratshang Lhentshog and Special Commission stated that since the Hindus and Buddhists worship almost the same gods and goddesses, there have been no problems so far. Therefore, if there are people bent on disturbing the peace and cheating the people of their properties, the Dratshang Lhentshog would take necessary actions against them.

The National Assembly requested the Dzongdags to conduct an investigation and discuss the matter in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung. On receipt of the report the government would assess the extent of the problems affecting the people and accordingly take necessary action.

14. REGARDING RESETTLEMENT OF LANDLESS PEOPLE

The Chimis of Gaylegphug & Sarbhang requested for the resettlement of the landless people from scattered villages in some suitable place so as to be able to make available to them social services extended by the Royal Government.

In response, the Secretary of the Planning Commission stated that this request has been provided for in policy five of the 6th Five Year Plan framed by His Majesty the King. In this regard the Dzongdags have also been told to look for such suitable areas for resettlement of

landless people. Therefore, further discussion in the National Assembly was not needed at this stage.

15. REGARDING HAA WANGCHUKLO DZONG

The Chimi of Haa Dzongkhag informed the Assembly that Haa Wangchuklo Dzong had been provided to the Imtrat since 1962. Later when His Late Majesty visited Haa, the people were assured that their Dzong would be returned to them after one or two years. In addition, they were also told that the Zimchungsarpa and Kotilhakhang which were initially constructed as the residence of Haa Dungpa, were private properties. In keeping with the assurances of His Majesty, the people made several requests in the National Assembly for the return of the Dzong. But still the Dzong was being retained for the Imtrat. The chimi added that the Dzong was most strategically located as it is situated at the western end of the country. Further, he said that a Dzong is a centre of the culture and tradition of the country, as it houses the monk body and offices of the Royal Government. In the case of Haa, the Monk body is stationed in the village and the offices of the Dzongdas and Thrimpons are located in the town which are not in keeping with their importance.

On the basis of the above points and also because the main policy of the 6th Five Year Plan is towards strengthening the culture and tradition of the country, the people requested that the Dzong be returned to them as early as possible.

In response, Goonglyon, the Chief of Operations Officer said that he fully understood the sentiments of the people. However, Wangchuklo Dzong, being in the very centre of the Training School compound, if handed over to the people right now would create many problems for the proper functioning of the school. He, therefore, requested that the Dzong be kept with the Royal Bhutan Army.

On the above issue, many chimis supported the requests of the Haa people that the Dzong be returned to them.

The Speaker called an end to the discussion by reassuring the people that the Dzongkhag headquarters and the Rabdey would be ultimately housed in the Wangchuklo Dzong. However, considering the problems presently faced by the Army it would be inconvenient for them to hand over the Dzong immediately.

16. REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA

The chimi of Gyene, Dagala and Mewang said that South Korea is highly developed in the fields of agriculture as well as modern technology. Therefore, he suggested that it would be most beneficial for Bhutan to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea.

To this suggestion, the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that relations with South Korea are very important for our country. Accordingly Mr. Lee, the head of Hyundai Company of South Korea, had been appointed Honorary Consul of the Royal Government in the capital, Seoul. The Royal Government has also decided to send one Ambassador to South Korea in the near future. Similarly, the Minister informed that South Korea is also looking forward to opening an Embassy in Bhutan.

After the discussions on the regular points of the agenda were concluded, the session was moved to the conference hall. A review of the Fifth Five Year Plan and the presentation of the Sixth Five Year Plan and policies was then carried out by the Planning Commission and the sectoral heads of the government.

17. REVIEW OF THE 6 YEARS OF THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

In accordance with resolution number 6 of the 64th session of the National Assembly, the Planning Commission distributed printed copies of the review of the 6 years of the Fifth Plan.

The review highlighted the objective of the Fifth Plan which were to achieve a greater overall economic self-reliance in order to fully meet the relevant costs of the development process and to directly involve the people in the planning and execution of development programmes and the five major strategies that were incorporated in the formulation and implementation of the Fifth Plan.

These Strategies were :-

- I. Dzongkhag self-reliance
- II. Decentralization of development administration
- III. Control of maintenance expenditure

IV. Mobilization of internal resources

V. People's participation

I. Dzongkhag Self-reliance

As self-reliance at the local and district levels are crucial to attain self-reliance at the national level, Dzongkhag self-reliance was adopted as one of the important policy objectives and strategies of the Vth Plan.

There were numerous problems which needed to be addressed in order to implement this objective. The problems included, among others, low tax base, inadequate technical and managerial personnel, limited infrastructure and transportation difficulties in the Dzongkhags. Measures to overcome such constraints included strengthening of technical and managerial capabilities through posting of trained and qualified personnel, along with provision for training and extension back up, financial and technical support to build infrastructure to facilitate implementation of development programmes, etc.. As a result a certain degree of capability for planning and implementation now exists within the Dzongkhags, and hence they are in a much better position to implement the Sixth Plan. The discussion of development activities in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung (DYT) and the production of the Dzongkhags plan documents has also increased the awareness and understanding of the people at the Dzongkhag level. The preparation of detailed individual Dzongkhag plans have facilitated incorporation of more realistic local level needs and development based on the potentials of the area. The pursuance of the Dzongkhag self-reliance policy has been a very crucial learning and understanding process for both the Royal Government and the people.

II. DECENTRALISATION OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

While decentralized administration has been a traditional practice in Bhutan, the devolution of responsibilities of planning and implementation of development programmes to the local administrations is new and only introduced in the Vth Plan. Consequently many serious problems and difficulties associated with management, shortages of qualified and capable staff emerged. The difficulties encountered in the implementation should not be mistaken as indicative of an inherent in-appropriateness of

the strategy, but rather recognized as initial teething and adjustment problems of a major administrative change. Since, similar problems also exist at the national level, the strategy has by and large been successful. One of the most visible impact of this policy is that from a total staff of only 361 in 18 Dzongkhags, prior to the start of the Vth Plan in 1981, manpower strength has reached 3270 in 18 Dzongkhags by the end of the plan. Dzongkhag Administration is now established as an invaluable part of the development process and at the same time the DYT has proved to be an important forum for decision making at the Dzongkhag level. It is evident that the experience of decentralization programmes during the Fifth Plan will prove invaluable for the implementation of the Sixth Plan.

III. CONTROL OF MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE

As a result of stringent financial and administrative measures to control civil service growth and consolidation of social services, the recurrent expenditure growth has been kept below 10 percent per annum. Some of the initiatives taken by the Royal Government to control unnecessary government expenditure include : reorganization, merger of complementary departments, rationalization of vehicles, and other government properties, privatisation and commercialization of certain government organization such as Druk Air, BGTs, Press, the Central Workshop and Tourism. Under the various retrenchment/ reorganization exercises the Royal Government has been able to reduce about 3427 employees from 1977-78 to date. While this is an encouraging outcome, efforts are required to be continued during the Sixth Plan.

IV. MOBILIZATION OF INTERNAL RESOURCES :

Mobilization of internal resources was closely related to the objective of meeting recurrent cost and reducing government expenditure. The total internal revenue generation at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan was Nu. 101.90 million. For the Fifth Plan, against a target of Nu. 942.00 million, actual revenue generation was Nu. 1324.40 million. The total maintenance cost for the plan period of six years was Nu.1612.20 million. In comparison, towards the end of the Vth Plan, in the financial year 1985-1986, the annual maintenance expenditure was Nu.363.00 million, against the annual internal resources generation of NU.336.20 million, leaving a deficit of only Nu.26.80 million or 7.5%. In comparison with the past mobilization of internal resources, the increases has been dramatic. Further, the achievement is even more important since it was

obtained without increase in any of the rural taxes. Therefore, there are reasons to be proud of the results obtained so far.

V. PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

People's participation in community and public works is not a new practice in Bhutan, it has a long tradition. It was, however, recognized that this practice was being increasingly undermined under the onslaught of the development process and that there was a need to revive the traditional systems in the interest of both the government and the people. This was emphasized during the Fifth Plan Period.

The forum of DYT for decision making has been successful not only in giving more articulation to rural problems and in bringing their concerns to decision makers, but it has also improved the perception of people toward participation. However, while the implementation of Shabtog Woola has been fairly successful, the implementation of Chunikang has faced many difficulties. The Secretary of the Planning Commission pointed out that Chunikang mobilization for development activities were carried out satisfactorily only in few Dzongkhags. In some others, although labour was contributed, the quality of work was not to standard. In many Dzongkhags no activities under Chunikang were carried out at all. Many development programmes, particularly in the roads sector, were adversely affected due to problems faced in the mobilization of Woola labour. While there are reasons to be less than satisfied with Chunikang Woola participation, because of its importance in the development of the country renewed emphasis must be given both by the people and the government.

In response, the members of the National Assembly stated that people's participation being a new system started only during the Fifth Plan, the people had difficulty in following it and as a result, labour contribution to many projects had not been satisfactory. However, now that the people have fully understood the plans and programmes of the government, the people would not fail to participate in the implementation of the Sixth Five Year Plan.

Looking back to the Fifth Plan, the people expressed satisfaction with the achievement of the Royal Government. They were particularly happy to learn that the country's internal resource mobilization increased by more than the target set for plan period. The country's internal resources in the last year of the Fifth Plan came to Nu. 132 crores as

compared to Nu.10 crores in the last year of the Fourth Five Year Plan. Consequently, the government was able to meet more than 90 percent of the current expenditure from its own income.

FIFTH PLAN OUTLAY

The total fifth plan outlay was Nu.4711.218 million out of which Nu.1612.22 million was for current expenditure and Nu.3098.996 million was for capital expenditure. The largest allocation was made to the PWD., Education and Agriculture sectors. The sectoral outlay for the Fifth Plan is given in the following table:

5th Plan Budget Outlay - Based on actual expenditure

| Sectors | Total | Current | Capital | % |
|--|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Agriculture (incl.FCB) | 431.004 | 102.794 | 328.210 | 9.14 |
| Animal Husbandry | 105.593 | 39.455 | 66.138 | 2.24 |
| Forest | 200.184 | 60.487 | 139.697 | 4.25 |
| Power | 345.443 | 18.882 | 326.561 | 7.33 |
| Industry, Mines (incl. Trade & Commerce). | 303.475 | 33.102 | 270.373 | 6.44 |
| Civil Aviation (incl.Druk Air) | 60.447 | 12.195 | 48.252 | 1.28 |
| Commun- ications | 33.922 | 23.309 | 10.613 | 0.72 |
| Education | 410.037 | 212.280 | 197.757 | 8.70 |
| Information & Broadcasting | 98.343 | 12.161 | 86.182 | 2.09 |
| Others | 1211.767 | 585.577 | - | 25.72 |
| Dzongkhags | 524.019 | 292.658 | 231.361 | 11.12 |
| Sub total : | 4711.218 | 1612.222 | 3098.996 | 100 |
| Chukha | 1800.000 | 1800.000 | | |

Grand Total : 6511.218 3412.222 3098.996

Note : % Column for sub-total only.

18. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE SIXTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

The Secretary of the Planning Commission distributed the copies of the nine principal policies of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-1992) and explained each one of them to the National Assembly.

The nine policy objectives of the Sixth Plan are as follows :-

- I. Strengthening of Government Administration
- II. Preservation and Promotion of National Identity
- III. Mobilization of Internal Resources
- IV. Enhancement of Rural Incomes
- V. Improving of Rural Housing and Re-settlement
- VI. Consolidation and Improvement of Development Services
- VII. Development of Human Resources
- VIII. Promotion of People's Participation
- IX. Promotion of National Self-reliance

I. STRENGTHENING OF THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

During the last 26 years, due to the heavy emphasis on initiation of development activities, sufficient attention and importance was not given to improving the efficiency and capability of the Government Administration. The call for strengthening the government is not an indication of weakness as the standard of administration is highly satisfactory despite the late start in development, it is rather a recognition of the fact that in order to accomplish national goals and to implement any policies and objectives in an effective manner, it is essential to reorganize and restructure the government machinery from time to time. It is absolutely essential that the Government must be strong, responsible and capable of meaningful leadership and deserving of confidence and respect of the people. It is necessary for the administration to develop a well defined code of ethics and discipline emanating from the age old values and a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare and the security of the people and the country. In the discharge of its responsibilities, the Government must ensure that there is

appropriate decentralized and delineation of responsibilities to officials and organizations to facilitate both initiative, productivity and accountability. It must be fully recognized that effective implementation of development plans, the security and sovereignty of the country all depend on a strong and efficient Government. Initial steps towards implementation of this important objective such as reorganization of bureaucracy, timely auditing of accounts and stringent procedures for employment of civil servants has enhanced productivity and efficiency of government administration. Future proposals being considered include increased remunerations and merit based promotions. In general, a vigorous system of reward and punishment is being adopted in pursuance of the objective of an efficient administration.

II. PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

The well-being and security of the country depends on the strength of its culture, traditions and value systems. Therefore, every effort must be made to foster the unfailing faith, love and respect for the country's traditional values and institutions that have provided the basis and ensured the security and sovereignty of the nation while giving it a distinct national Identity.

This unique national character is extremely important for the peace, prosperity and happiness of the Bhutanese people and should not be allowed to be eroded by some of the negative attitudes and values that emerge along with the development process. This national goal must be reiterated and reflected in every sphere of development of both the individual and society.

Actions to promote this objective were initiated even before the start of the Sixth Plan. Among the measures taken, the re-organization of the Central Monastic Body, strengthening of the Special Commission for Religious and Cultural Affairs and the production and circulation of information on traditions and culture on a regular basis must be carried out.

For promotion of culture, traditional learning institutions in the Kingdom such as "Sanskrit Pratshallas", "Shedras", "Dubras", "Rigney" Schools etc. which have already been established will be strengthened and others proposed will be set up systematically. Other important strategies to translate the objectives into reality include education system that recognizes and promote loyalty to the monarchy, a sense of pride and

commitment to the nation and a feeling of communal harmony and shared destiny based on tradition, customs and the value system.

III. MOBILIZATION OF INTERNAL RESOURCES

The fact that the process of development in Bhutan was initiated and to a large extent still sustained by external assistance has been fully recognized by the government. While this was un-avoidable in the past due to changes in the fiscal system and non-monetization of the economy, since the Fifth Plan the Government has been extremely concerned that the country must assume increasing responsibility of the financial requirements of development. Consequently the Government declared mobilization of internal resources as a priority during the Fifth Plan. A target of meeting all current expenditures was set. The performance was satisfactory. However, recognizing the importance of this objective, it has again been adopted for the Sixth Plan. This objective cannot be under-rated, it is an integral part of the country's policy of self-reliance.

In order to meet this objective further strengthening of the tax collection system is required together with introduction of new taxes. While taxation must increase, the levels and mechanisms must be simple and conducive to economic growth. The main thrust for increasing internal resource lies in encouraging industrial growth for which an outlay of about 30% of the Sixth Plan Outlay has been earmarked. Further investments in viable industrial ventures in the private, joint and public sectors are extremely important, given the fact that substantial increases in agricultural and rural taxes are not feasible. In fact the 1985/86 total rural tax of Nu.0.350 million comprising of land house, cattle and grazing tax hardly constituted 1% of the annual maintenance cost of that year. On the other hand, the total internal resource mobilization efforts succeeded in meeting 92.5% of the total maintenance cost cited here (i.e. Nu. 363.00 million). During the current plan, the major changes initiated during the Fifth Plan for increased internal resources mobilization such as improvement in the management and collection of revenues (taxes, royalties etc). reduction and better scrutiny of government expenditure and broadening of the revenue base will continue to be practised. An additional need during the Sixth Plan will be to generate an increase in the convertible currency earning capacity of the nation to meet its foreign exchange requirements.

IV. ENHANCEMENT OF RURAL INCOMES

While the growth of incomes in the country has been steadily increasing, rural incomes remain low as compared to other sectors of the economy. Given the fact that bulk of the country's population live in rural areas, the lack of significant growth in income of the rural population is a matter of serious concern, as a rise in income is essential for improving the standard of living. Further, the modest increases in rural incomes were being affected by price increases and inflation, undermining the standard of living despite development efforts. Therefore, it has been decided that a serious effort must be made to bring about an enhancement of rural incomes and accordingly this has been adopted as an objective of the Sixth Plan. The main source of increasing rural incomes would be through improvement of agriculture and livestock productivity, diversification and enhancement of cash crop production and through employment and sale of rural produce at development project sites. Against the total Sixth Plan Capital outlay of Nu.5987.09 million, sectoral allocation for agriculture development is Nu. 1142.82 million. Bulk of these expenditures would help in increasing rural incomes. This objective must be seen within the context of the national goal to bring about balanced development of the various sectors of the economy and between various parts of the country.

V. IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL HOUSING AND RESETTLEMENT

a) RURAL HOUSING

During the past plan there has been an enormous increase in construction both in rural and urban areas. In fact between 1980-86, the Government alone disbursed a sum of Nu. 80.80 million as 'Kidu' for rural house construction (approximately 4988 houses). The number of houses built without 'Kidu' is not known. While this is a positive development, a majority of the houses were built in the traditional style without any improvement in design, structure or quality. They did not include improvement in any important aspects of sanitation and insulation which are vital for comfort and improved standard of living. The designs are not cost effective and durable in the long run. Since a proper house is a source of security, happiness and contentment for people particularly in the rural areas, the objective during the present period will be to improve the overall standard of rural housing and enhance the quality of village life and living standards. To ensure that sub-

stantial improvements are brought about to the standard of rural houses constructed, a package of subsidies will be granted to those adopting the new designs and changes. Further, rural carpenters and craftsmen will be given training and incentives. An important aspect of this objective is to ensure that there are no wide disparities in the living conditions between urban and rural areas.

For improvement of rural houses, the following specific activities are envisaged. Improved locally available roofing materials for longer life in place of costly imported materials, proper insulation materials and design for warmth, improved window panes and wire mesh for insulation and keeping insects out, improved smokeless stove and latrines for fuel efficiency and better sanitation. In addition, where applicable solar powered light would also be made available.

b) RESETTLEMENT

The government is considering to resettle rural people who live in scattered, remote and poverty stricken areas which are unlikely to be ever covered by development programmes and services. One of the primary considerations is the past experience which shows that much of the land allotted as 'Kidu' (about 4900 acres) was either in very remote areas or of poor quality soil as productive/fertile land was already owned by other farmers, and did not prove very useful in enhancing the socio-economic status of the recipient villagers.

Under the proposed new resettlement policy, the objective is to identify suitable areas in the various Dzongkhag in which the selected villagers can be settled. Such an approach would be more cost effective to the Government to develop the area and to provide developmental services like schools, BHUs, extension and even roads and power etc, since a substantial number of household would be located in the same area. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the traditional socio-cultural environment, all efforts will be made to resettle the people, where possible within their own Gewogs or Dzongkhags, failing which other areas would have to be considered.

Therefore, during the VIth Plan enhancement of rural income and resettlement has been adopted as a distinct objective by itself. This of course is a recognition of the

highest importance attached to raising the quality and prosperity of rural life by the Royal Government.

VI. CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

While a significant headway was made in providing social service facilities to the people, not enough impact was achieved in actually improving the quality of life of the people as they were scattered in 191 Gewogs. Therefore, substantive work is necessary to strengthen and rationalize rural services so that they can be effective in improving the standard of living. The tasks include standardization of facilities and quality of proper spatial distribution of services particularly in education, health, Agriculture and Livestock extension, and grouping of such facilities into Development Service Centres (DSC) whenever required and necessary. Such centres would not only provide social services to people in the coverage area, but also act as vehicles for local level economic growth and administration as they would become units viable for providing physical infrastructure such as roads, water supply and power. In addition such DSC would have the potential to serve as market for produces by virtue of the number of salaried people concentrated there. Once DSCs are properly established they would also provide mobile services to cover surrounding areas effectively.

Measures taken to implement this objectives so far include an evaluation tour of all the Dzongkhags in 1985, to assess existing services and to identify possible DSC sites. Despite the huge cost involved in the establishment of DSCs during the 6th Plan, it is proposed to identify and set up about 10 DSC's in the Kingdom.

VII. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

In Bhutan virtually every sector of the economy, Government service and development activity is constrained to some extent by the shortage of manpower, particularly of appropriately trained and experienced personnel. The situation is deteriorating with each passing year as the requirement for more specialized manpower is generated by the development process as compared to the number of people available from the education system and the population at large.

The fifth plan has seen major efforts on the part of the Government to promote increased literacy, orient the majority of children towards vocational skills, especially

farming which absorbs over 90% of the population and to ensure that eligible students received higher education. For this purpose about 189 learning and training institutions exist in the country as of date. In addition the Royal Government also carries out various kinds of inservice and on the job training both in and outside the country. These efforts must be continued and a greater emphasis given to the education sector and the development of vocational, higher levels of technical, administrative and managerial skills. This is in line with the Government's desire to develop a smaller and more professional civil services, the introduction of new appropriate and advanced technologies, the increased requirements of a dynamic and self-sufficient economy. Therefore, the government has decided to adopt human resources development not only to support the development process, but also an important development objective in itself. Serious attempts must be made to enhance and develop the human resources available in the country in all fields through education and trainings so that the needs of manpower for the development of the nation can be fully met. Failure to meet the manpower requirements of development would leave the Government with no alternative but to slow down the pace and cut back on development.

VIII. PROMOTION OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The Fifth Plan was a combined effort of the people and the Government. There was close coordination both in decision making through the forum of DYT (Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung) and implementation of programmes at the Dzongkhag level through Shabtogwoola, and to a smaller extent, Chunikang. While there is reason for satisfaction it has not been without difficulties both at the level of the community and the government. During the implementation of the plan problems of the works scheduling and the lack of required skills and equipment at the village level emerged. As it is government's intention to continue this important co-operative mechanism whereby the people are fully involved in their own development this objective has again been adopted for the Sixth Plan. As informed during the recent Dzongkhag tours, the Chunikang Woola is proposed to be replaced by a new system called "Gunda Woola".

If there is anything to be learnt from the last 26 years experience, it is that while the government had shouldered the full burden and responsibility of implementing and providing socio-economic development services, the people in most cases were just passive recipients of such goods and services. Henceforth, not only should the people

take part in decision making and implementation of development projects, but should also realise the immense constraints under which the Government has been providing services. Therefore, the people should acknowledge, appreciate and be grateful to the Royal Government.

The objective of people's participation for the 6th Plan, also recognizes that money and materials are not the only key factors for successful implementation of development plans but rather the people's commitment, cooperation and will that are important.

IX. PROMOTION OF NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

The objective of self-reliance which in the Bhutanese context means ultimately to be able to stand on one's own feet, have the power of decision in our own hand and not to be dependent on others is the most important national objective of a kingdom. All development programmes and policies are directed towards achieving this objective of preserving the sovereignty and security of the nation and towards the strengthening and promotion of our Bhutanese identity, values and aspiration.

Prior to the initiation of development activities, the country was fully self-reliant considering the needs of the people at that time. With the introduction of major development programmes, including large scale infrastructure works to raise the living standards, it was inevitable that the Government had to rely on external resources. While this fact will continue to remain for sometime to come, every effort must be made to bring the country to its original self-reliant state as soon as possible. In order to give further impetus to the national goal of self-reliance, this has been again adopted as an objective of the Sixth Plan. The economic and social capacity for enhancing and sustaining production must be established firmly. All programmes and plans must be clearly directed towards achieving this objective. There must be proper planning and co-ordination of the various sectors of the economy so that gainful investments and careful management of the country's financial, human and natural resources lead to steady growth and development towards self-reliance.

Infact all social, economic, political and cultural development objectives and efforts will have no meaning if an acceptable level of national self-reliance is not achieved. The quest for self-reliance be it at the household, village, Dzongkhag or national level is vital for the sovereignty and dignity of the people and the country.

His Majesty the King was pleased to state that these nine objectives had been formulated with the utmost care and attention and that achieving them was of the greatest importance to the future well being of our country. If the people and the government joined hands and worked hard together to achieve these objectives, our country would become firmly established as one of the most progressive and stable nations of South Asia by the end of the plan period.

The nine policy objectives were un-animously passed by the National Assembly which comprised of the following :

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|-----|
| a) | Representative of the Public | - | 101 |
| b) | Representative of Monk Body | - | 8 |
| c) | Royal Advisory Council | - | 8 |
| d) | Govt. official Representative | - | 40 |

All the members agreed to render full cooperation to the Royal Government in its efforts to accomplish the objectives set for the Sixth Five Year Plan.

19. BUDGET FOR THE SIXTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

The Deputy Minister of Finance presented the following financial details to the National Assembly

The total outlay of the 6th Five Year Plan budget was set at Ngultrum 950 crores. Of this amount Ngultrum 350 crores earmarked to meet the current expenditure of the various departments of the Royal Government and Ngultrums 600 crores for developmental projects and programmes. The sectoral budgetary allocations are as follows :-

| Sl.No.Ministry/Deptts. | Amount in Crores |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture & Irrigation | Nu. 70.81 |
| 2. Food Corporation | Nu . 8.62 |
| 3. Animal Husbandry | Nu. 34.84 |
| 4. Forestry | Nu. 31.13 |
| 5. Trade & Industries | Nu.161.36 |
| 6. Public Works Departments | Nu.102.36 |

| | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 7. | Hydel | Nu.113.50 |
| 8. | Bhutan Govt. Transport Service | Nu. 0.50 |
| 9. | Civil Aviation | Nu. 4.87 |
| 10. | Tele-Communications | Nu. 25.65 |
| 11. | P & T, Civil Wireless | Nu. 7.30 |
| 12. | Information & Broadcasting | Nu. 9.97 |
| 13. | Education | Nu. 105.20 |
| 14. | Health Services | Nu. 40.05 |
| 15. | National Urban Development Corporation | Nu. 29.88 |
| 16. | General Govt. expenditure | Nu. 203.95 |

The Deputy Minister of Finance also informed the National Assembly of the following financial sources to meet the budget of the 6th Five Year Plan.

| | | |
|----|--|-------------------------|
| a) | Internal Revenue earning estimate | - Nu. 260 crores |
| b) | Internal burrowing estimate | - Nu. 50 crores |
| | Total internal revenue estimate | - Nu. 310 crores |
| c) | Grants from the Govt. of India estimate | - Nu. 300 crores |
| d) | Loan from the govt. of India estimate | - Nu. 86 crores |

The total grants and loans from the Government of India was estimated at Nu. 386 crores. In addition the government of India would provide Nu. 17.27 crores to meet the cost of spillover projects.

- e) Assistance from international agencies friendly countries was estimated at - Nu. 129.34 crores.
- f) Loans from International Financial Institutions estimated at Nu. 83.66 crores.

The total of the above figure amounting to Nu. 926.27 crores is more or less finalised leaving a deficit of Nu. 23.73 crores in finances required for the 6th Five Year Plan. This deficit is likely to go up by Nu. 200 crores, if the government is able to undertake the construction of two mineral based industries and a medium Hydel for generating more revenue for the government.

Therefore, the likely total deficit is estimated at Nu. 223.73 crores.

In this regard, the Deputy Minister of Finance informed the Assembly that the Ministry and the Planning Commission together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were working on mobilizing additional financial assistance from donor countries in accordance with the command of His Majesty the King.

20. PRESENTATION OF SECTORAL PROGRAMMES OF THE 6TH FIVE YEAR PLAN

On the 18th, 20th, 22nd and 23rd of July, 1987 the following departments of the Royal Government presented their sectoral programmes and policies to the National Assembly :-

1. Planning Commission
2. Ministry of Finance
3. Central Monk Body & Special Commission
4. Agriculture & Food Corporation
5. Public Works Department
6. Department of Forest
7. Ministry of Trade, Industries & Power
8. Deptt. of Animal Husbandry
9. Deptt. of Health Services
10. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
11. Bhutan Govt. Transport Services
12. Civil Aviation
13. Deptt. of Education
14. National Urban Development Corporation
15. Deptt. of Information & Broadcasting
16. Deptt. of P & T, Wireless
17. Deptt. of Tourism
18. Ministry of Home Affairs.

The National Assembly discussed the policies and programmes of each of the above in detail. After making necessary changes in both policies and programmes, the National Assembly accorded final approval of the VIth Five Year Plan. Important issues raised during the individual sectoral discussions are given below :

1. DISCUSSION WITH REGARD TO CENTRAL MONASTIC BODY AND SPECIAL COMMISSION

His Majesty the King called the Assembly's attention to the growing need for proper and timely renovations of the various places of worship in the country. It was especially regrettable that the people were beginning to neglect the conditions of their own monasteries, temples and stupas which were traditionally maintained and looked after by them. His Majesty explained that it was of the utmost importance that the people take great care in looking after their monasteries, temples and stupas as these places of worship provided focal points for the promotion of religious devotion and faith which have always been a source of our country's happiness, unity and strength.

In this regard, the Royal Government will consider every possibility for lending assistance to the people. However, it is at present heavily committed to the renovation and maintenance of the Dzongs and the various monasteries, temples and stupas for which the Dratshang and the government are both responsible. Therefore, by faithfully maintaining and looking after their own monasteries, the people would greatly strengthen the government's drive to restore and maintain the beauty and condition of the numerous places of worship in our country.

In response, the members stated that the maintenance of their temples, monasteries and stupas was not only for their own good but had always been carried out by themselves in the past even when the country was not developed as it is today. Now that our country had achieved greater development, through the efforts of the Royal Government, and the people enjoyed a higher living standard the maintenance of their temples, monasteries and stupas was well within their capabilities. The members expressed their gratitude to the government and declared their full support for this drive to preserve and maintain their places of worship.

2. DISCUSSION ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD CORPORATION OF BHUTAN

The Director stated that only about 62% of the food grain requirements of the country were produced within Bhutan and about 38% were being imported. Therefore, the main objective of the department was to produce at least 70% of the food requirements of the country by the end of the plan.

Members of the National Assembly suggested the following measures to fulfil the targets.

- a) Train the people in improved farming methods;
- b) To reduce the number of non-national labourers working in the country to the extent possible;
- c) To arrange agriculture exhibition and demonstrations in the villages so that the people could learn from them.

3. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Several members of the National Assembly requested that the following be included in the PWD's work programme:

- a) Construction of a road from Dagapela to Goshing under Chirang Dzongkhag
- b) Construction of a road from Dala to Getana under Chukha Dzongkhag
- c) Construction of a road from Phobjikha to Khotakha under Wangdi Dzongkhag
- d) Completion of feeder road from Kerabari to Home under Kalikhola Dungkhag
- e) Completion of the feeder road to Demetse in Mongar Dzongkhag
- f) Arrangement of implements for those people who come for road construction works

In response, the Director of PWD stated that the completion of the feeder road to Demetse was already included in the Sixth Five Year Plan. As regards the construction of a motorable road in Khotakha he stated that it should be done within the budget of Nu.0.75 crores allocated for agriculture feeder roads under Wangdi Dzongkhag during the 6th Five Year Plan. If this cannot be done, the Director expressed the inability to give from other budget allocations. Finally, with regard to other requests pertaining to roads, the Director said that they would be considered only if the concerned public gave

full co-operation. He informed the National Assembly that the main task of the PWD during the 6th Five Year Plan is to maintain 1,521 kilometres of road in the country.

4. DISCUSSION ON DEPARTMENT OF FOREST

During the discussion on the Department of Forest the members pointed out the need to amend certain policies of the Department.

- a) To increase the number of trees allotted at subsidized royalties to the people from the present number of trees for constructing houses in the villages.
- b) To improve the procedure of allotting the timbers for house construction to the people by the Forest Department.
- c) To extend the validity of the permits in order to give adequate time for the timber applicants in times of emergency when they have to postpone their construction works.
- d) To exempt penalty on trees/saplings destroyed while felling the allotted trees.

In response, the Director General said that all these provisions are clearly mentioned in the policy of the Department of Forest. Therefore, the people will have no problems in this regard.

On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that the main problem was that the people have not understood the policies clearly. Therefore, His Majesty commanded the department of Forest to give a clear explanation of the Forest Act and all other relevant rules and regulations. He further commanded that copies of the Forest Act and all other rules and regulations must be distributed to the DYT members of all Dzongkhags.

His Majesty also explained that the main policy of the government during the 6th Five Year Plan is to preserve the forest rather than exploit it, and as such many policies have been changed.

The Director General informed the National Assembly about the following policies and programmes of the department in the 6th Five Year Plan :

- a) Protection of trees from pests.

- b) Starting of trees planting programmes by school students and military personnel.
- c) Teach people the importance of debarking felled trees.

5. MATTER RELATING TO TRADE, INDUSTRIES & POWER

During the discussion on Trade, Industries and Power the members pointed out the following point which must be taken into account by the Ministry.

- a) Appointment of more national officials to do geological works.
- b) Grant special facilities to the people working in geological and related activities.
- c) Improve the hydels in Lhunsi, Haa Nagu and Betikha.
- d) Supply electricity to the villages around and nearby Chukha.
- e) Install hydels in Gaseylo and Demetse.

In response to point (a) and (b) the Assembly was informed that the Ministry also felt the need for changing the policy and that it would be done accordingly to the recommendations. The old hydel would be checked and there are plans to install two micro hydels at Demetse and Betikha. The houses nearby Chukha would be supplied electricity by the government. The Deputy Minister also informed the Assembly that during the 6th Five Year Plan 20 micro hydels, 3 to 4 mini hydels and a medium hydel would be constructed.

6. DISCUSSION ON DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The members made the following observations and comments :

- a) In order to supplement the consumption for butter as it is in limited supply, the Department should look into the possibility of growing 'Pangtse' oil plant which is native to Punakha.
- b) To permit setting fire to the high altitude shrubs without affecting the forests, so as to improve the growth of grass for the cattle.

- c) For checking cattle diseases, veterinary personnel should make timely visits to villages with necessary medicines.
- d) Rearing more than 5 numbers of goats should be permitted.

In response, the Director said that the government would help to supply the medicines to check cattle diseases. Regarding setting fire to high altitude shrubs, the Director of Animal Husbandry stated that it could be done only after due consultation with the Department of Forests. As for growing and processing 'Pangtse' oil the Department of Agriculture would study the possibility of it. With regard to increasing the number of goats to be allowed to be reared, the Director said that no changes were necessary in the National Assembly's decision as the number permitted to be reared was not restricted provided they were stall fed and kept in captivity.

7. DISCUSSION ON HEALTH SERVICES

The Chimis made the following comments :

- a) Need to improve the hospitals at Paro & Haa.
- b) Need to open a new dispensary at Gaseylo under Wangdiphodrang district and one at Larey under Sibsoo Dungkha.
- c) To re-install a hospital at Haa, Sangbey Denchuk.
- d) Construction of a Basic Health Unit at Chungkhar under Bongo Gewog and improving the hospital at Chimakothi.
- e) To construct a hospital at Daipham
- f) Need for an ambulance at Sibsoo and adequate supply of medicines to all the hospitals in the country.

In response, the Director General said that the departments had made provision for most of the above mentioned works. Regarding the construction of a Basic Health Unit at Chungkhar under Bongo Gewog and improving the Hospital at Chimakothi, the

members were told that it would be taken care of when Chukha Dzongkhag was fully established. However, regarding the hospital at Daipham, since it was not discussed during the Dzongkhag plan meeting it has not been included in the 6th Five Year Plan.

8. DISCUSSION ON BHUTAN GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT SERVICE

The following observations were made by the Chimis :-

- a) Need to increase the number of buses between Tashigang to Yangtse and Bartsa to Nganglam of Samdrupjongkhar.
- b) To improve the bus services between Tashigang and Bumthang via Mongar.
- c) To change the old vehicles presently in use in Chengmari.
- d) To be allowed to carry more passengers on lorry trucks.

In response, the Managing Director said that the Royal Government would study the problems and take necessary remedial steps.

9. DISCUSSION ON EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The National Assembly members stated that since the future of the country lay in the hands of the young boys and girls, besides formal education it is important to impart education on age old customs and traditions of the country. The children must be taught to be loyal to the King, country and the people. They also felt that the calibre and numbers of teachers must be upgraded and increased facilities given to them if the quality of education is to be improved.

His Majesty was pleased to command that a well conceived education policy already existed in Bhutan. The policy provides for equal opportunities to both boys and girls depending on their individual capability and qualification. However, we face a psychological barrier whereby women are generally not as career conscious as man and even educated girls usually forego career opportunities for the role of a housewife and most parents give greater importance for the education of a son rather than a daughter. This negative attitudes poses a serious problem as we are a small country with women

comprising 49 percent of our total population and we cannot afford to deprive ourselves of the increasingly vital role that women can play in the development of our country. With good education, qualified skills, ambition and dedication, there are no limits today to the posts women can hold even up to the ministerial level.

His Majesty was therefore, pleased to command that the Education Department must play its role in breaking down this barrier and bringing forth the active participation of our women in all areas of our country's development process.

Recognizing the importance of Dzongkha, the Chimis of Southern Bhutan said that it should be made more easy for students to understand. They felt that the text books in Dzongkha are of a higher standard and that the students had difficulty understanding them. They also expressed their earnest desire to learn Dzongkha. Therefore, they requested that simple books be written in Dzongkha and adequate numbers of Dzongkha teachers be sent to all schools and villages in Southern Bhutan as well as to other places within Bhutan.

In response, the Director of Education informed that new office called Dzongkha Development Advisory Committee has been opened recently in addition to the Dzongkha Division of the Education Department. A budget of Nu.0.47 crores has been allocated to the new office to write Dzongkha books and compile Dzongkha dictionaries. The Director said that the government would try to meet their requests with regard to sending teachers into the villages and circulating Dzongkha books.

The National Assembly endorsed the decision of the government.

10. DISCUSSION ON TOURISM

The Secretary for the Special Commission said that with regard to Tourism, it was his observation that the time had come to review the past policy of allowing tourists to visit our temples, monasteries, meditation centres, centres for Buddhist studies and sacred places of worship as well as the climbing of sacred mountains. Unlike our own people, the vast majority of tourist come to see our sacred places and areas of worship out of common curiosity and not from religious faith. This has resulted in indiscriminate photographing of many of our sacred religious treasures, images, temples and even the

frequent defilement of many holy statues touched and examined by the more curious tourists.

An even more alarming outcome has been the moral corruption of some of our people who have been driven by greed to desecrate stupas and steal thankas and images from temples and monasteries. Such sacrileges, which only a few years ago could not even be contemplated, continues with frequent regularity today. Since the 1970s, many stupas and over 50 monasteries and temples have been robbed and hundred of thankas, statues and numerous other religious objects have been stolen.

If firm and timely measures are not taken to protect the aura of sanctity that still pervades most of our sacred places of worship, not only will our own reverence and faith be undermined but the belief and faith of our children in our religion and culture will be placed in grave jeopardy. Comparing such serious consequences with the annual gross revenue of Nu.20 million generated by the Tourism Department, we can no longer afford to continue with the commercialization of our sacred places and areas of worship. The Secretary for the Special Commission, therefore, proposed that access by tourists, other than religious devotees, to temples, monasteries, meditation centres, centres of Buddhist studies and other places of worship as well as the climbing of sacred mountains should be banned from 1988 onwards. He said that our country was blessed with great scenic beauty and that there were many other areas for the Tourism Department to promote tourism such as trekking and rafting etc.

On this matter His Majesty the King was pleased to command that monasteries, temples and sacred religious treasures and other places and objects of worship should not be commercialized. Therefore, from 1988 onwards government laws would be passed whereby commercialization of sacred places and areas of worship will be strictly prohibited.

The National Assembly members were unanimous in approving this decision and expressed their whole hearted support and appreciation. They added that VIPs and government guests visiting temples should be properly escorted and guided so that sacred statues and scrolls are neither touched nor photographed.

11. REGARDING TELE-COMMUNICATION

The Secretary of the Planning Commission informed the Assembly that the government has plans to install satellite communications with the rest of the world. He also informed that in the 6th Five Year Plan, there are plans to connect Dzongkhags with Dungkhags and Dungkhags with Gewogs by telephone or wireless.

The National Assembly endorsed the plans in improving the communication system within the country and with the outside world. They stated that priority must be given to establishment of satellite links with the rest of the world as it was essential to facilitate development activities in the country.

12. DISCUSSION ON MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Some Chimis requested the Ministry of Home Affairs for proper guidance regarding the areas of work where the government and people have to work together. Others requested that under the policy of reducing expatriates working in Dzongkhags, the most capable and efficient people be sent to the Dzongkhags. Many also requested that the country's unique traditional system of decorum and discipline be more effectively enforced.

The National Assembly resolved that it was extremely important on the part of the Ministry of Home Affairs to enforce and strengthen discipline within the country.

At the end of the discussions on the various sectors, His Majesty the King stressed the importance of the people's awareness and active involvement in the implementation of the plan. He said that the Planning Commission had devoted great care and attention towards formulating the Sixth Plan and now it was upto the government and the people to implement it successfully. He reminded the National Assembly members that the people shared an equal responsibility with the government for the proper implementation of the plan.

During the Fifth Plan, although it was unanimously endorsed by the National Assembly members and passed by the Tshogdu, most of the people took it for granted that the responsibility for the actual implementation rested with the government and the Planning Commission. His Majesty explained that the Planning Commission was only responsible for the proper formulation of the plan. Its implementation was the joint responsibility of the people and the government and the credit or blame for the success or failure of the plan would also have to be shared equally.

His Majesty further stated that the objectives of even the best plans cannot be fulfilled if implementation is not carried out properly. Therefore, the government and people must join hands and work hard together to ensure the success of the Sixth Plan. The objectives and policies of the Sixth Plan, His Majesty said, were of the greatest importance for the future well-being of our country and he requested the National Assembly members for their firm commitment and full support and co-operation in implementing the plan.

The National Assembly members expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty the King and the Royal Government for the great care and concern with which the Sixth Plan had been drawn up. They declared their whole-hearted support for the plan and expressed their readiness to share the responsibilities of implementing it. They assured the Royal Government of their great determination to work hard to ensure the success of the Sixth Plan.

Concluding the session, the Speaker of the National Assembly stated that because of the farsighted policies and devotion of His Majesty the King, the country had been able to achieve most of the Fifth Plan developmental goals. He said that the Sixth Plan is also initiated by His Majesty the King to solve present problems and to bring about a bright future for the people and the country. The plan fully reflected the care and concern His Majesty had for the welfare of the people. He also offered prayers on behalf of the members for the successful achievement of all the aims and objectives of the Sixth Five Year Plan.

24th July, 1987

Sd/-
(Lyonpo T. Jagar)
Speaker
National Assembly of Bhutan