

English Translation of the Speech delivered by the Speaker during the Opening Ceremony of the 2nd Session of the Second Parliament (22nd January, 2014)

1. The historic Second Session of the Second Parliament commences today on this auspicious day. We are greatly honored by the presence of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, the epitome of our leadership and guidance. Therefore, I on behalf of the Parliament and on my own behalf with deep reverence would like to welcome His Majesty to this Opening Ceremony. I would also like to welcome the Members of the Royal Family, members of the religious organizations, international dignitaries, senior government officials and Members of the Parliament.
2. The House, in this session will, debate on the following Bills;
 - 1) Right to Information Bill;
 - 2) Bio-Safety Bill;
 - 3) The National Assembly (Amendment) Bill;
 - 4) Local Government (Amendment) Bill;91
 - 5) Bhutan Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill. The amendments of Bills are proposed in accordance to the resolution of the First Session. It is aimed at updating and developing consistency in the various legislations.
3. It is crucial that the deliberations on the Bills are conducted based on the Rules of procedures. Therefore, any new Bills or Amendment Bills tabled in this session will be delegated to the relevant Committees for review after the First and Second Readings, which will be passed in the next session after the Third Reading based on the report of the Committees. This is aimed at providing adequate time for the Committees to review the Bills and enable the House to engage in substantive deliberation in passing an Act entailing uniform provisions of the Bills and reap the benefit of not having to resort to frequent amendments. Therefore, we would like to request the Ministries and agencies to submit the Bills to the Secretariat one or two months before the session.
4. The Ministry of Works & Human Settlement will submit a report on the study conducted for the amendment need of the Tenancy Act 2004 as submitted during the First Session. The Minister for Home & Cultural Affairs would also present a report on the entitlements of the Local Government Officials to the House in this session. I would also like to inform that the Pay Commission has been instituted as per the directives of the government in order to revise the salary of the civil servants. Thus, the deliberations will be held on the findings of the review carried out by the Pay Commission.
5. The various Committee reports prepared based on the resolutions of the First Session would also be tabled in this Session. Further, the House will deliberate and ratify the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards.

6. Despite more than five years of Parliamentary democracy, the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly has not been adopted. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt Rules of Procedure in this session for the smooth and efficient conduct of businesses of the House.
7. Upon the invitation of the President of India, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen visited New Delhi on 6th of January, 2014. During the visit, Their Majesties met with the President, Prime Minister of India and the Opposition Leader of Rajya Sabha and other Senior Officials. The commitment of the Government of India and their continued support in our Socio-Economic development and hydro-power development projects expressed during Their Majesties ' visit is the testimony to the further deepening and strengthening of existing relations between India and Bhutan. For this, the Parliament would like to express our sincere gratitude His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
8. Their Majesties were the first State Guests in 10 years to be hosted at the newly refurbished Guest Wing of Rashtrapati Bhavan. This is indeed a matter of great pride and honour for all the Bhutanese people. Therefore, the Parliament of Bhutan would like to thank the Government of India for according great respect and honour to Their Majesties.
9. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo for initiating numerous religious activities for the benefit of the world at large and in particular for the benefit of our country and for all the sentient beings. Further, I would also like to express my gratitude to Lama Namkhai Nyinpo, Dzongsar Jamayang Khentse and other religious leaders for organizing prayers & blessing ceremonies in Phuentsholing and many other places.
10. As per the resolution of the previous Parliament, the Parliament of Bhutan participated in the 129th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and joined the IPU as its 163rd Member. Along the sidelines of Assembly, my delegation also had opportunity to meet with the Speaker of Swiss Parliament, Officials of the Swiss Development Co-operation, HELVETAS, Officials of Swiss Local Governments and the Red Cross. These meetings would go a long way in strengthening our relations and pave way for a greater relations and co operations between Bhutan & Switzerland.
11. Similarly, a delegation from our Parliament also participated in the 7th Conference of the Association of the SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians convened in the Republic of Maldives.
12. The conference focused on the capacity building of the parliamentary institutions and resolved to establish a South Asia Association of Women below 40 years and also resolved to establish similar Association for men below 40 years. This initiative was aimed at encouraging greater youth participation in the political affairs and the Association would meet once a year.

13. I would like to inform the House that the 8th Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Association was resolved to be convened in Sri-Lanka in 2014. I would also like to inform the House that the 9th Conference of the Association is scheduled to be convened in Bhutan in 2015. As the other SAARC member countries have already hosted the conference more than once, it was imperative to host at least once in our country. As His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo is the pioneer of establishing the SAARC, it was decided to host the conference in our country coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo.

14. Lastly, it is hoped that the Second Session would be successful with the blessings of Triple Gem, grace of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, Members of the Royal Family and the collective merit of the Bhutanese people. We offer our prayers for the long life and fruitful endeavors of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, Members of the Royal Family and the Dharma propagators. We hope and pray for the peace, prosperity and happiness to prevail in our country.

Kadinche!