

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE HON SPEAKER DURING THE 4TH SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

The 4th Session of the First Parliament of Bhutan commences today, on the auspicious 4th Day of the 10th Month of Earth Female Ox Year corresponding to November 20, 2009.

On behalf of the Members of Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to extend a very warm welcome and humbly thank our King of destiny, the embodiment of our collective merit, His Majesty the King for gracing the Inaugural Ceremony.

I would also like to welcome Hon Chairperson of the National Council, Hon Cabinet Ministers, Hon Opposition Leader, Hon Members of the National Council and Hon Members of the National Assembly to the Inaugural Ceremony.

I would also like to welcome Civil Servants, Dignitaries from International Agencies, Observers, Media and all those who are watching and listening through television and radio to this Inaugural Ceremony.

On behalf of the Parliament, I would like to congratulate Hon Sonam Kinga, National Council Member from Trashigang Dzongkhag on his election to the post of Deputy Chairperson for the National Council.

The recent earthquake in the six Eastern Dzongkhags and fire in Wamrong town has led to the loss of lives besides causing major damages to Choetens, Lhakhangs and government offices. To this, we the Members of Parliament would like to express our deep condolence to all the affected people. The Parliament would like to pledge full support to the government for the initiatives taken in mitigating the problems.

We would like to express our unforgettable gratitude to His Majesty for personally visiting and meeting the victims of the earthquake and fire in the remote areas and compassionately looking after their welfare.

On behalf of the Parliament, I would like to express appreciation to the employees of the Dzongkhag Administrations, Community Leaders, Defence personnel, trainees of the Vocational Training Institute and all volunteers and generous donors who contributed in cash and kind for the relief initiatives.

The Parliament would like to express profound appreciation to the Trashigang Dratshang, Dzongkhag administration and public of Trashigang for initiating to conduct annual *Kurim* and *Moelam Chenmo* henceforth, as per the directives of His Holiness the *Je Khenpo*, for peace and happiness in the country in general and for the wellbeing of all those people in the eastern Dzongkhags affected by the natural disasters such as earthquake, floods, fire and windstorm in particular.

Similarly, by the merit and fortune of our people, His Holiness *Dungse Rinpoche* visited Bhutan and conferred *Bazaguru Lung* and blessings to the people for which, we would also like to express our gratitude.

Due to the blessings of our protective guardian deities, prayers of Lams and constant Kurims conducted by the Dratshangs and Gomdeys, it is hoped that disasters of such magnitude would not occur in future.

The signing of the renewed Bilateral Trade Agreement between Bhutan and Bangladesh and lifting of tariffs on exports from Bhutan to Bangladesh during the state visit by Her Excellency, Sheik Hasina Wajed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Ministers immensely benefit our people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Moreover, the opening of a new trade route from Tamabil in Bangladesh would greatly benefit the people in the eastern Dzongkhags in terms of trade and business development. To this, on behalf

of the Parliament, I would like to express appreciation to Her Excellency the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and our Prime Minister.

The main agenda for the current Session are the Bhutan Standards Bill, 2009, Royal Monetary Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2009, Tobacco Control Bill of Bhutan, 2009 and Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2009 which were deliberated and endorsed in the 3rd Session of the National Council.

The Entitlement and Service Conditions Bill for the Holders of the Constitutional Offices of Bhutan, 2009 and The Civil Service Bill of Bhutan, 2009, were deliberated by the two Houses in the 3rd Session and it is hoped that these Bills will be passed in the current session.

Since most of the issues submitted through Local Governments pertain to development issues, they are forwarded to respective ministries by the National Assembly. It is crucial that the ministries take necessary and timely actions on these issues.

Lastly, it is my earnest hope that the Hon Members of the Parliament would engage in effective deliberations on the above agenda and adopt substantive resolutions in the light of the present benefit and future wellbeing of the country and the people. ***(4th Day of the 10th Month of the Earth Female Ox Year 20th November, 2009)***

