

**Inaugural Address by Tshogpon Wangchuk Namgyel, Hon'ble Speaker at
the Opening Ceremony of the Third Session of the Third Parliament
(15 January, 2020)**

1. The Third Session of the Third Parliament commences on this auspicious day with the mighty grace of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
2. On behalf of all Members of Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for gracing the Opening Ceremony, leaving aside numerous royal engagements.
3. I would also like to welcome Her Majesty the Gyalsuen and the Members of the Royal Family for the Opening Ceremony.
4. Similarly, I would like to welcome representatives of the Monastic Body, senior government officials and other foreign dignitaries to this gathering.
5. His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and Her Majesty the Gyalsuen made a royal visit to Japan and the United States of America. The visit strengthened our bilateral ties with the two countries. In addition, Their Majesties also granted audiences to our people, particularly our youth studying and working overseas, and imparted words of wisdom and guidance. Such noble initiatives from Their Majesties inculcated a sense of belonging to our nation. Therefore, the Parliament would like to offer our deepest gratitude to Their Majesties.

6. During the 112th National Day celebration, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo in his Royal Address to the nation focused on three broad areas to guide us:
 - a. **Firstly**, on the need to chart a clear economic roadmap for 21st Century Bhutan;
 - b. **Secondly**, on the need for creating a smooth and convenient working environment that would maximize output;
 - c. **Thirdly**, on the importance of youth as an asset and equivalent to a country's health.

His Majesty the King shared that what other countries take years can be a matter of months for our country to change and commanded that the roadmap should come up within 1 to 2 years. Therefore, the Parliament would like to express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo. I would like to urge all the people of Bhutan, civil servants, public servants, private sector and military officials to respond to the call with a deep sense of duty and dedication.

7. Under the visionary guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, the *Desuung* programme was rolled out for the security of the nation. It has immensely benefited the country and the people to a greater extent. Now, His Majesty has announced the *Gyalsung* programme to enhance the skills and to strengthen the capacity for our youths. Therefore, the Parliament would like to offer gratitude and prayers for the successful achievement of the *Gyalsung* programme as per the royal aspirations of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
8. The joyous announcement on the Birth of a Prince or Princess to Their Majesties in the Iron Male Rat Year has brought immeasurable joy and sense of pride to the Bhutanese people. It is indeed a symbol of eternal continuity of the glorious Wangchuck Dynasty and therefore, we the people would like to

express our heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and Her Majesty the Gyaltshen.

9. In recognition of selfless service to the nation, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo has awarded the national merit of *Druk Wangyal*, *Druk Thuksey* and Gold medals to Ven. Dorji Lopen and other officials. The Parliament offers sincere gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for conferring the recognition.
10. His Majesty has always shown love and compassion to the Bhutanese people. In October 2019, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo granted land holding certificate to 4,532 households in Paro Dzongkhag, and 131,801 households in other 18 Dzongkhags, amounting to a total of 137,745 acres of land to the people. The Parliament offers deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
11. Under the patronage of Her Majesty the Gyaltshen, Bhutan Red Cross Society was established, and the subsequent Act passed by the Parliament. Bhutan's Membership to the recent International Red Cross Society will ensure that the nation will be able to garner aids and assistance during the times of emergency. Hence, the Parliament would like to offer deep thankfulness to Her Majesty the Gyaltshen.
12. His Holiness the Je Khenpo and other religious masters have been performing numerous *kurims* (prayers) for the wellbeing and prosperity of the people and the country. Therefore, the Parliament would like to offer sincere gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo.

13. I would take the opportunity to apprise on some of the key engagements of the Parliament:

After the conclusion of the second session, the Members of the Parliament have been carrying out Legislative, Representative and Oversight functions through conduct of numerous Committee meetings, and field visits in the designated areas and public hearings.

14. In September, 2019, a delegation led by the Speaker attended the 4th South Asian Speakers' Summit held in Maldives, and also attended the Asian Parliamentary Assembly's Executive Meeting held in October, 2019 in Turkey. Similarly, a delegation led by the Chairperson of the National Council of Bhutan attended the 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly held in October 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia. Such visits promoted exchanges of inter-parliamentary related information and knowledge sharing, and also strengthened the bilateral ties between the parliaments.

15. I would also like to take the opportunity to share some of the important agenda items that will be deliberated during this session:

- a. The Parliament will be deliberate on new bills, Income Tax Amendment Bill and other tax bills, and ratification of international conventions/agreements/protocols.
- b. Other includes Question Hours and motions.
- c. In addition, there will be deliberation on 3 committee Reports on Sustainable Development Goals.
- d. The Public Accounts Committee will also present 3 reports on audits and audit bill will be deliberated in the Joint Sitting of the Parliament.

16. Lastly, under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal Family, prayers from His Holiness the Je Khenpo and monastic bodies, collective merits of the Bhutanese people, support from the Members of the Parliament and Civil and public servants, I would like to offer prayers for fruitful deliberation in the session and successful conclusion of the Third Session.

Thank You