

1ST PARLIAMENT OF BHUTAN
10TH SESSION



Resolution No.10

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
BHUTAN**

(FEBRUARY 08 – MARCH 06, 2013)

Speaker: Dasho Jigme Tshultim

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PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 10TH SESSION OF THE 1ST PARLIAMENT

I. OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening ceremony of the last session of the first elected parliament after the introduction of democracy in the land of Palden Drukpa commenced on the 28th Day of the 12th Month of the Water Male Dragon Year corresponding to February 8, 2013. His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo was received with elaborate *Chipdrel* and *Serdrang* ceremony to the Parliament Hall, followed by the traditional *Zhugdrel Phuensum Tshogpai* ceremony.

II. ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE SPEAKER

The Hon'ble Speaker in his opening address welcomed His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, Her Majesty the Gyaltseen and Members of the Royal Family to the last session of the First Parliament. He also welcomed the senior government officials, international dignitaries and people witnessing and listening to the proceedings of the session on television and radio. Further, he congratulated the President, candidates and supporters of the newly established political parties.

He informed that the House hoped to deliberate and endorse about five bills in this session. He also said that the next General Elections would coincide with the peak monsoon season which would cause inconvenience for the people during the election; therefore, it was deemed important for the National Assembly to dissolve prematurely by a few weeks. He said that it was also imperative to disburse the retirement benefits of the Members of Parliament as per law thereby necessitating the amendment of the Parliamentary Entitlement Act in this Session.

He also apprised that, the visit of His Majesty as the Chief Guest during the 64th Anniversary of the Republic Day of India in New Delhi on 26th January has further deepened the excellent relations between Bhutan and India. The Speaker therefore, on behalf of the Parliament expressed his deep appreciation to His Majesty. The Parliament on behalf of the Bhutanese people and the Royal Government also expressed gratitude to the Government and people of India for inviting His Majesty the King as the Chief Guest and for the continued financial support in the development

activities of Bhutan. He also expressed his appreciation to His Holiness the Je Khenpo for the conduct of the historic *Pel-Dechog-Khorlo-Dompai Wangchen* at Punakha.

In conclusion, he expressed his hopes for a successful conclusion of the 10th Session.

(28th Day of the 12th Month of the Water Male Dragon Year corresponding to February 8, 2013)

(A copy of the Opening Address is annexed in Annexure I)

III. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE BHUTANESE PARLIAMENT TO JOIN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)

The member from Menjay-Gangzur constituency, who is the Chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee, moved the motion for the Bhutanese Parliament to join the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Moving the motion, he presented a brief background on the IPU and the rationale for joining the Union. He informed that the IPU was first established in 1889 as an international organization of the parliaments comprising of sovereign

states. The IPU currently has 162 members and serves as a platform for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and exchange of experiences among parliaments of member countries. He said that the Union works for peace and contributes to the defense and promotion of human rights which is an essential ingredient of parliamentary democracy. The Chairperson informed the House that the IPU helps member countries to implement international agreements of the United Nations and its agencies. The IPU also provides support in strengthening the capacity of national parliaments through development of information technology. He further added that the move to join IPU would strengthen our identity as a sovereign nation in the international arena and therefore submitted that the House support the proposal for Bhutanese Parliament to join the IPU.

During the deliberation, the House supported the motion moved by the Foreign Relations Committee to join the Union. The members acknowledged the immediate and future benefits of joining the IPU as presented by the Chairperson. Further, the minister in-charge of the

Foreign Affairs said that as supported by other members he assured that Ministry of Foreign Affairs would immediately start processing for its membership once endorsed by the Parliament.

The House voted on the motion submitted to join the Inter-Parliamentary Union by a show of hands. All the 37 members present and voting raised their hands in favour of joining the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The House therefore decided to join the Inter-Parliamentary Union and further instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to expedite the procedure of joining the IPU.

(10th Day of the 1st Month of the Water Female Snake Year corresponding to 20th February 2013)

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE REVIEW REPORT OF ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2008, 2009 AND 2010 BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Hon'ble Speaker directed the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to present its reports to the House as mandated by Article 25(5) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan to review and

report to the Parliament for its consideration on the Audit Report and any other reports received from the Auditor General. Hon'ble Member from Kengkhar-Werringla Constituency, PAC Member presented the following reports, in accordance to Article 25 (6) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan:

- i. Review Report of Annual Audit Reports 2008, 2009 and 2010;
- ii. Review Report on Budget underutilization for the Financial Year 2010-11;
- iii. Review Report on the Implementation of the resolution passed in the 9th Session of the First Parliament;
- iv. Performance of the Public Accounts Committee in the 1st Parliament of Bhutan.

It was reported that the PAC had submitted the Annual Audit Report 2010 to the 9th Session of the Parliament along with the review reports of Annual Reports 2008 and 2009. The House had then directed the Royal Audit Authority to resolve the irregularities reflected in the

Audit Report 2008, 2009 and 2010 and subsequently report its findings to the 10th Session.

It was reported that in compliance to the directives of the House, the RAA had conducted meetings with its regional audit offices, Follow-up Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, concerned Ministries and their related departments and other agencies on the unresolved issues. Consequently Nu. 229.504 million of the total irregularities of Nu. 507.636 million has been resolved with a balance of Nu. 278.132 million.

It was reported that of the total unresolved irregularities of Nu. 11.027 million reflected in the review report 2008, an aggregate amount of Nu. 10.910 million (98.94%) have been resolved. As per the irregularities reflected in review report 2009, an aggregate amount of Nu. 68.082 million (83.61%) out of the total irregularities of Nu. 81.427 million have been resolved. It was also submitted that of the total unresolved irregularities of Nu. 507.636 million in the review report 2010 an aggregate of Nu. 150.512 million (45.21%) have been resolved.

In the case of underutilization of budget, it was reported that this has always been maintained in every audit report in the past. Therefore, it has become imperative to present a review report on budget underutilization in the FY 2010-2011 to inform the general public.

The Committee after its review on the underutilization of budget for the FY 2010-11, it was found that a total of Nu.16,383.131 million was released out of the capital budget of Nu. 20,480.584 million in the FY 2010-2011. Of the total sum released, Nu.14,786.847 million was utilized leaving a balance of Nu. 1,596.295 million unutilized. The main reason for this underutilization of budget was found to be due to delay in release of funds.

It was also submitted that the Annual Report 2011 of the Public Accounts Committee was presented to both the Houses in the 9th Session of the Parliament. Both the Houses extensively deliberated on the report and the committee was directed to review the important resolutions and submit a report in the 10th Session. Accordingly with regard to resolution no. 7 (c) of the National Council pertaining to the pending issue of

government land leased to private individual (Changijji Trowa Theatre), it was reported that the ACC had reviewed the matter as per the resolution of the House and declared that there was no policy corruption that warranted further investigation. Further, on this issue the Statutory Audit of RAA as raised by National Assembly as per resolution number 7, it was submitted that though the audit has been completed the report is still in draft form. It was reported that the report shall be considered in the next Parliament as the final report may be ready by April and May 2013.

It was also submitted that the committee is in receipt of three Performance Audit Reports; Audit of IT controls in revenue accounting systems, System Audit of Hydroelectric Energy and Constituency Development Grant. However, the committee has not been able to conduct the necessary review on these Reports due to time constraint and therefore, the Performance Audit Reports may need to be considered by the next Parliament.

The 10th Session being the last session of the First Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee also reported on its performance and achievements in the past four and half years. He reported that as resolved during the 5th Session of the Parliament the PAC established a secretariat under the order of the Hon'ble Speaker on the 24th of August 2010.

It was further submitted that all the pending audit irregularities since 1981 to 2006 and 2007 have been resolved and reported during the 9th Session of the Parliament. This was possible due to the strong support and dedicated service provided by the Royal Audit Authority, the Anti-Corruption Commission, Office of the Attorney General, Royal Civil Service Commission, other concerned agencies and authorities and individuals.

It was submitted that the Bhutanese PAC has been a member of the Asian Regional Association of Public Accounts Committee (ARAPAC) since December 2010 and has actively participated in establishing the association. In fact, the Bhutanese PAC with support

from the Parliament hosted the 2nd Working Group Meeting here in Thimphu. It was also apprised that the Bhutanese PAC has been recognized as one of the founding members of the ARAPAC and currently serves as the Member Secretary of the Association.

Over the years, the Committee has conducted numerous committee hearings with many government and non government agencies as a part of its review activity. This exercise has helped in resolving many irregularities, the achievement of which is a testimony of good governance under the wise leadership and guidance provided by the democratic government.

During the deliberation on the Report, the House expressed its appreciation to the Committee on the successful outcome resulting from meticulously following up on the unresolved irregularities. The Labour Minister said that the Royal Audit Authority has an efficient auditing system, however it was reminded that the auditing system needs to be further improved in accordance to the changing democratic system. Further, the Minister for Health submitted that the Ministry of

Health was grateful for resolving most of the irregularities pertaining to the Ministry of Health. However, he requested that the irregularities reflected in the current report also needs to be resolved and updated. The Hon'ble Speaker instructed the PAC to update the report accordingly as submitted.

The Parliament commended the Public Accounts Committee, the Auditor General and the employees of the Royal Audit Authority for not only fully resolving the irregularities from 1981-2006 and 2007 but also for the significant achievements made on resolving the irregularities of 2008, 2009 and 2010.

(10th Day of the 1st Month of the water female snake year corresponding to 20th February 2013.)

V. REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS BY THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER

5.1. The six important responsibilities of the government

The Hon'ble Prime Minister reported on the performance of the government in the past five years in accordance with Article 10, Section 10 of the Constitution of Bhutan which states that the Prime Minister shall present an Annual Report on the state of the nation, including legislative plans and the annual plans and priorities of the Government, to the Druk Gyalpo and to a joint sitting of the Parliament.

In his report, he said that the first and most important wealth of our country, which is intangible and imperceptible, is sovereignty. The country will naturally lose its sovereignty if the people's freedoms are not protected. Therefore, since the institution of the new government, the government has accorded the upholding of the sovereignty of the country as the foremost important responsibility.

He said that the government has endeavored to further the sovereignty of the country for which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken the major responsibility. Besides similar responsibilities being entrusted to all the Ministers, the Government Secretaries and people working for the government, it is expected of every Bhutanese people of all walks of life to be mindful in not restraining such endeavors and to provide their utmost support in enhancing the country's sovereignty.

He reported that one of the ways to strengthen our sovereignty, was to showcase presence of the Bhutanese in international gatherings in order to cultivate the confidence, trust and respect of the other nations as an equal. Therefore, despite limited capacity and resources, the government had made sincere efforts to selectively participate in international conferences and meetings to enhance the standing of Bhutan in the international arena.

Similarly, to strengthen the identity of a small country like Bhutan, it was necessary to assume a pioneering role. It was imperative to create an impression to the

international community of an exemplary country with good initiatives that can be imbibed by the other nations. In doing so, the sovereignty of the country will obviously be strengthened. Today, due to capable government leaders and officials under the visionary leadership of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, Bhutan is recognized as the champion in the preservation of culture and conservation of environment in the world.

This has been largely due to the noble principles of Gross National Happiness propounded by His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo which has become so popular not only within the country through successfully implementation in our country. But it has also been a subject of enthusiasm in other countries who wanted to learn more about this concept. Therefore the government is putting continued efforts to propagate this philosophy to other countries as well.

The Hon'ble. Prime Minister also reported that another strategy to strengthen the sovereignty of our country was to foster friendship through foreign relations. Foreign relations were of paramount importance for small

countries and hence if we had good relations with other countries, we would always have the benefit of support and cooperation from sympathetic and friendly countries.

Further, it was reported that ever since instauration of the present government, utmost endeavor was made to enhance Bhutan's foreign relations. This effort has paid off and today we have diplomatic relations with 50 countries as compared to only 21 countries before. This has not only significantly enhanced the status of our country but has further strengthened our sovereignty.

It was also reported that the government did not incur any additional expenditure during the campaign for a seat in the United Nations Security Council while only a small amount was spent for the conference on Gross National Happiness as most of the cost was funded by the United Nations. Therefore, people should not be concerned about this small expenditure incurred but should be concerned about our sovereignty.

Secondly, it was reported that another valuable wealth of a country was the prevalence of peace and law and order in a country. Therefore, irrespective of a country's degree of independence, there was always a risk of losing this peace and law and order situation of a country in a short span of time if these attributes are not properly cared and protected.

Our country stands strong today despite being situated in a geographically risky and vulnerable location. Notwithstanding our location, we have been able to prevent both external threats and internal strife. The Royal Bhutan Army has been able to secure our borders with loyalty and dedication. The security forces have also been able to successfully repel any intrusions from outside.

Similarly, it was reported that the internal law and order was equally being upheld by the Royal Bhutan Police with loyalty and dedication. The Royal Bhutan Police ensured that all perpetrators were ultimately apprehended and brought to justice. Unlike in some other countries where the police forces are involved in

unethical practices, our police forces should be appreciated for performing their duties with Honesty and sincerity. In recognition of this, the government has also ensured to adequately equip the Royal Bhutan Police with whatever facilities are necessary.

It was reported that the Royal Bhutan Army has been able to maintain the security of our country because of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo who as the Supreme Commander in Chief, has instilled dedication, loyalty and integrity in the armed forces.

It was submitted that besides preventing any external threats and interference in the country, the government through the initiatives of Prime Minister, has built good relations with the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Assam. Further, the Ministers also not only enjoyed good relations with their Indian counterparts but carried out frequent consultations with them.

Moreover, the Foreign Minister, Foreign Secretary and other ministers have not only met with the Prime Minister and President of Nepal but they are also

frequently in touch with relevant officials of Nepal. It was also informed of the meeting with China.

It was also reported that India has been the most important and helpful country to Bhutan be it on the development front or the security front. It was informed that the excellent relations that existed with India have been further strengthened and deepened by His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

As a result, we have not only strengthened the position of our country but have also eliminated the risk of losing our sovereignty. It has also enabled the Bhutanese people to travel freely both within and outside the country without fear and worry of being robbed and abused.

He expressed gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for strengthening the internal law and order, who through his profound wisdom initiated a special *Desung* Training Programme. This programme has seen over 700 personnel trained till date who are ever ready to respond and serve in times of disasters in the country.

Thirdly, an important jewel of a nation is the peace and happiness of the country. It was therefore the Government's duty to strengthen the already existing peace and happiness in the country more than ever before.

It was reported that peace and happiness was so essential to the country without which no progress could be made and nothing could go well. Business persons, farmers and even religious practitioners including those who meditated in the mountains would not succeed in their purpose if there was no peace and happiness in the country. Therefore, having realized this fact, it was reported that the government continued to dedicate efforts in strengthening these attributes in the country.

Notwithstanding her small size, Bhutan is characterized by a diversity of dialects, local religious beliefs and ethnicity. These groups have been further divided into political groups with the recent emergence of democracy. Because of these diverse groups of people, the government has been very mindful in formulating not only good policies but ensuring that these policies

were implemented without favour or prejudice. Therefore, the fact that there have been no criticisms of discrimination arising out of ethnicity or religious beliefs directed at the present government is testimony to the government having performed with equity and justice.

The government has ensured equitable provision of facilities, amenities, equipments with human resources and budget across the country contributing to peace and happiness of the people in the country.

Fourthly, it was reported that the environmentally rich country of ours is situated in a vulnerable location of the Himalayan mountain range. Therefore, if we don't take good care of our natural environment, the risk of deterioration would be much faster than in other countries. Realizing this fact, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo commanded that if the rich biodiversity of Bhutan was not protected, there were possibilities of the flora and fauna depleting and Bhutan turning in to a barren land thus forcing the Bhutanese people out to other countries. Taking cognizance and in respect of this

command, in order that the pristine environment that we enjoy today is passed on to our future generations, it is necessary to protect and take good care of our natural environment.

The government has therefore been always careful and made it mandatory to assess the impact that the formulation of a development project or a policy may have on the environment. The conservation of environment has been upheld to the extent that projects and policies have been shelved despite their economic return potential if they were found to be detrimental to environment.

It was reported therefore that through emphasis on such environment policies, the forest coverage of the county has increased from 72 % to 81% while 50% of the country has been allocated as national parks and protected areas.

As a result of such policies, Bhutan has secured a leading role pertaining to environment conservation in the world. It was reported that Bhutan has pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emission and increase the

production of oxygen as the main threat to our natural environment was from the climate change. It was reported that harmful activities of one country affect the environment of other countries as well. Therefore the exemplary lead role played by Bhutan in the conservation of environment has been appreciated by other countries resulting in a few who have also started to follow in the footsteps of Bhutan.

Contrary to international experts who are of the view that socio-economic development of a country must come at the cost of forest depletion and natural environment, Bhutan has demonstrated that strong policies for forest conservation, provided a solution for sustainable development. It was hoped that such policies would not only benefit Bhutan but also other societies in the world.

Fifthly, there are threats of losing the sovereignty and other freedoms of Bhutan if we are not able to achieve self sufficiency and self reliance. The threat of harm to our country is evident when listening to discussions of other countries pertaining to security, natural

environment, culture and politics. Therefore, the policy to pursue self sufficiency and self reliance in Bhutan was initiated from the day His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo ascended the Golden Throne. It was reported that although the people were mindful of this noble aspiration of His Majesty the King, the Hon'ble Prime Minister wondered when Bhutan could achieve self reliance and self sufficiency given that we were a poor country dependent on others in our development endeavors. Nevertheless, in line with the royal command, the government put in appropriate policies that have been able to fulfill and meet the current expenditure of the country from our internal revenue.

It was also reported that in the 10th plan, the internal revenue not only met the current expenditure but 20% of the capital expenditure was also met from the internal revenue. This fiscal achievement was made possible because of the taxes paid to the government by our traders, industrialists and people. It was also reported that witnessing the progress of trade and industries, the potential for further growth in this area is possible given various opportunities available.

It was also informed that everyone was aware of the phenomenal progress in tourism and hydro power sectors. However, the present government has not only emphasized on the hydro power alone for the economic development but has also emphasized on other policy alternatives which are well on track in strengthening a solid economic base.

Therefore, it was reported that the command of His Majesty the Druk Gyal Zhipa and the prayers of the Bhutanese people for a self reliant country was no longer a dream but an inevitable reality. It was reported that considering the policies and plans in place, Bhutan would become a self reliant country in the year 2020 with the final phase of work to be implemented in the 11th plan.

Lastly, one of Bhutan's important wealth is energy. At present, our main source of energy is fuel and electricity. While we import fuel from others, we have not only sufficient electricity for ourselves but enough for export to others. However, this is not the case for most

developed and developing countries around the world who are threatened by energy shortages.

The energy shortages could disrupt international serenity as most current armed conflicts in the world have ensued from struggle for energy. The Hon'ble Prime Minister further mentioned that as an exporter of energy, there should not be any reason for Bhutan to be worried but the world trends indicates that we should be concerned.

It was reported that our biggest concern was the effect of global warming which was melting our snow with the risk of depleting the glaciers leading to the extinction of our water sources. Since the main source of our energy is dependent on water, we should be concerned of its sustainability over the next 20 or 50 to hundred years.

Furthermore, he mentioned that the elected leaders should not confine their plans to only five years of their tenure. Because it was important to plan for hundreds and thousands of years, this government has not only planned but started implementation to increase hydro electricity generation by over 10,000 mega watt in

addition to the present 1,500 mega watt. Besides this, the government was also exploring ways of generating energy from other sources.

It was reported that the biggest benefit from the hydro power projects was that the excellent existing relations between Bhutan and India would be further deepened and strengthened. As a result, if such reliance on each other is enhanced, the relations between the countries would be naturally strengthened. The Hon'ble Prime Minister reiterated that the above six issues that he presented were considered the biggest responsibilities of the government.

5.2. Report on the performance of the government based on the four pillars of Gross National Happiness First Pillar: Enhancing Sustainable and Equitable Socio-Economic Development

The Prime Minister reported on the achievements made in improving living standards through sustained high GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth, equitable and just development. The Prime Minister said five years ago Druk Phunsum Tshogpa had pledged a high growth

rate of 9%. He said that he was pleased to inform that the average GDP growth of 8.8% has been achieved for the plan period. He further informed that out of the total of 153 pledges made

- i. 135 pledges (88%) have been fully met
- ii. 15 pledges (10%) have been partially fulfilled
- iii. 3 pledges (2%) have not been fulfilled

He added that the goal of national self reliance would soon be realized when all the additional 10800 MW of hydropower are realized in 2020 under the accelerated hydropower development program. With this the country's GDP at current prices is expected to grow by 139% to Nu. 227 billion in 2020. This will increase our GDP per capita between US \$ 5,700 and US \$ 7,000 in 2020.

He reported that forest cover in the country has been expanded from 72.5% to 81% and protected areas to 51% . Unemployment has been reduced to 2.1% in May 2012 against the declared target of 2.5% from 4.2% in 2008.

He reported that rural poverty has been greatly reduced with the percentage of rural folks living below the poverty line reduced to 16.7% in 2012 from 30.9% in 2007 which is better than the target set at 20%.

With regard to motorable roads, he reported that the government has been able to provide 38 gewogs with roads in addition to the 149 gewogs that already had access to it. About 70 % of the works has been completed and the remaining is expected to be finished within the plan period.

He said that 33,848 households have been electrified in the last five years and under safe drinking water supply for every community, 1,182 rural water schemes have been constructed or renovated against the target of 1,004, exceeding the target by 17%.

The Royal Government to improve the coverage, content, quality and process of education towards fulfilling the national aspiration of promoting a wise and knowledgeable society in pursuit of GNH reported the following achievements. He said at the female participation rate at the tertiary level has increased from

54% in 2008 to 71% in 2012. The house was also informed that tertiary education enrollment has increased by 40 % in the last five years. Within five years enrollment rate for College has increased by 40% and enrollment in tertiary education increased by 32.49% from 18-20% in 2009.

While reporting on the initiatives taken to support the private sector, he said that the government has accorded high priority to both the development and growth of the private sector and diversification of the Bhutanese economy. He reported that private sector growth as measured by Corporate Income Tax has grown by over 46 % since 2008 and Business Income Tax by 35 % during the period from 2008-12. This is attributable to the favourable investment climate created through policy, administrative and other measures put in place by the government.

The Prime Minister also reported the achievements made in health sector through improved health care and health care service delivery in the past five years. He said that currently 11 Dzongkhags have three doctors,

five Dzongkhags have 2 doctors and 4 Dzongkhags have one doctor each. In addition all Dzongkhags hospitals have been provided with at least two ambulances and the referrals hospitals have at least five.

Second Pillar: Reinforcing Environmental Conservation

The Hon'ble Prime Minister highlighted the international recognitions received for Bhutan's Leadership in Environmental Conservation. In 2011, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo was inducted into the Kyoto Earth Hall of Fame to Honor in perpetuity the outstanding contribution made by His Majesty to conservation of global environment. Bhutan was also one of the three countries nominated to the Future Policy Award 2011 by the World Future Council. In 2012, Her Majesty the Gyaltshen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck also received recognition and was appointed as the United Nation's Environment Protection Ambassador for Ozone at the 25th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol.

He said that in addition, policies have been implemented towards conserving our precious natural environment.

Sustainable management of Forest Resources has been followed and human wildlife conflict has been mitigated. Policies to achieve clean hydropower energy have been initiated. Effort has also been made in creating a central agency for promotion of renewable energy in addition to hydropower. Initiatives have also been taken in mainstreaming environment, building capacity, strengthening legal framework and monitoring capacity. Climate change plans have been made and international commitments fulfilled. Further local green initiatives have been taken and a central agency for managing natural disasters has also been established.

Third Pillar: Preservation and Promotion of Culture

The Prime Minister reported that the Royal Government has been committed in preserving our age old tradition and culture as manifested in our beliefs, language, dress, customs, literature, arts, architecture and crafts. He said that as promised the country has witnessed tremendous spiritual growth and nourishment with the establishment of the *Choedhey Lhentshog*.

He said that in addition many new festivals, songs and mask dances have been inaugurated and exhibited. The national colour guard ceremony at Tashichhodzong was also initiated. Actions have also been taken to promote our national language-the sound that unifies all Bhutanese. He added that Bhutan has also witnessed a growth in literary activities and ignition of cultural growth and advancement. Efforts have also been made to promote our rich heritage of indigenous arts and crafts which is the source of income for artisans.

Similarly, He also reported on the steps taken to promote *Driglam Namzha*, the tradition that forms the essence of Bhutanese culture and unique identity and the supports provided by the State to support our village Lhakhangs and on the accomplishments of the Film Industry.

Fourth Pillar: Consolidating Good Governance

The Hon'ble Prime Minister reported on the measures taken and achievements in the promotion of good governance. Towards this, under the Acceleration of Bhutan's Socio-economic Development (ABSD) project

200 services were identified under the government to citizen project. He reported that as a result of this project, services such as security clearance, health helpline center, Royal Audit Clearance, budgeting and accounting system, civil registrations including birth and death, culture, law and order, passports, agriculture livestock and forestry, trade and industry, labour service and job portals, higher education, examination systems, scholarships, pension, municipal services, housing, construction related services and engineering have now been made easily available online.

With regard to strengthening the Rule of Law which is imperative for the success of democracy, the Parliament has passed 39 bills and ratified 15 international conventions after the adoption of the Constitution of Bhutan. He added that the case viz Government and the Opposition Party, the country's first constitutional case was an example of government's adherence to the principles of separation of powers and to the Rule of Law.

With regard to foreign policy advancement in promoting cooperation, national image and security, he reported on the strengthening of existing ties and establishment of new diplomatic ties with many other countries. He said that strengthening and deepening of our relationship with India is one of the main properties of the government policy. He reported that, in the past five years Bhutan has established formal diplomatic relations with 29 countries, taking the total number of countries with which Bhutan has formal diplomatic relations to 50.

The Prime Minister said that with the wise guidance and inspiration provided by His Majesty the King's at the formative stage of democracy, the first democratically elected government completed its term successfully without any problem. In appreciation, the Prime Minister offered prayers to His Majesty and to Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen for their good health, long life and happiness.

He also expressed his gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo, the monks of the Central Monastic Body, Civil

Servants, Parliament, Judiciary, Constitutional Offices, the three Armed Forces, Local Government Leaders for serving the *Tsa-Wa-Sum* with unflinching dedication.

Further, on behalf of the members of the Lhengye Zhungtshog and the Members of Parliament of the governing Party, the Prime Minister thanked all the supporters of the Druk Phunsum Tshogpa for making it possible for Druk Phunsum Tshogpa to have the Honour of serving the *Tsa-Wa-Sum* as the first elected government. He expressed his gratitude to the voters. Finally, He also expressed his hopes that the supporters will be proud and satisfied after hearing the last report of the government.

The Prime Minister particularly expressed his appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition Tshering Tobgay and Hon'ble Member Damcho Dorji for their participation and contribution in the National Assembly discussions and for correcting the government on their mistakes.

The Report on the performance of the government in the past five years by the Hon'ble Prime Minister concluded

with the Hon'ble Speaker expressing the government has successfully completed its term having surpassed all expectations in socio-economic development. He also said that this have been possible with the blessing of *Kenchog Sum*, the wise guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers and the Members of Parliament who have served the *Tsa-wa-Sum* with unflinching dedication .

(Note: the report on the performance of the government has been distributed to the House in both Dzongkha and English, for details please refer the report)

(22nd Day of the 1st Month of the Water Female snake Year corresponding to March 4, 2013)

VI. RATIFICATION OF RESOLUTION

During the ratification of the resolution in the 15th Sitting of the National Assembly held on March 5, 2013, the Labour and Human Resource Minister suggested to incorporate, “**the Opening ceremony of the last session of the first elected parliament after the introduction of democracy in the land of Palden Drukpa,**” in the beginning of the resolution on Opening Ceremony. He

also suggested to incorporate, “**the Royal Audit Authority has an efficient auditing system, however it was reminded that the auditing system needs to be further improved in accordance to the changing democratic system,**” in the report of the Public Accounts Committee. The House resolved to incorporate the above submissions and adopted the resolution of the 10th Session.

(23rd Day of the 1st Month of the Water Female Snake Year corresponding to March 5, 2013)

VII. CONCLUDING CEREMONY OF THE 10TH SESSION

7.1. ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY THE DRUK GYALPO

In 2008, we took on the enormous responsibility to usher in a democratic system of governance. It gives me great pleasure today to find us all here five years later, at the final session of the first parliament.

Today we have a happy, prosperous country that is stronger than ever before. It is the culmination of all the hard work and commitment of our forefathers, the selfless service of our successive Kings, and the

continual support rendered by the people that laid the foundations and enabled us to introduce democracy so successfully.

Many things went through my mind as we embarked on this journey in 2008. I thought about the extraordinary service that His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo rendered to the people in the 34 years of His Reign, as well as the sacrifices he made to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the people.

I thought about the great expectations that the people had from the new system of governance.

I was mindful of the enormity of the responsibility that we had all been given, and felt heavily, the weight of all that it entailed.

In the five years that have passed since, we have continually strengthened the foundations of our democracy, and firmly established strong democratic institutions. Most importantly, we have gained valuable experience, which will be indispensable not only for the democratic process, but also for our country and people in the times to come. I commend the Prime Minister,

Cabinet Ministers, and Members of the first Parliament, for participating in the elections and serving the people without faltering in their duties.

After I ascended the Golden Throne as the Fifth King of Bhutan, we have had five events of historical importance take place in our country – the introduction of Parliamentary democracy, the adoption of our Constitution, the Coronation, the Royal Wedding, and the *Pel Dechhog Khorlo Dompai Wangchhen*, which gave more than a hundred thousand devotees the opportunity to receive sacred blessings. All these events were carried out successfully and were truly auspicious for our country.

This year marks the end of the 10th Five Year Plan, under which development activities were implemented well in the past five years. It is promising for the future of our democracy that five parties have come forward to participate in the next elections.

It is important that we nurture our democracy as a unique political system. We sometimes see other countries embroiled in the difficult challenge of bad

democratic practices. It is imperative that we abandon democracy's vices and cultivate only the good practices so that we can put them into our service. Our democracy must always be clean, healthy and strong. The most important thing is that we are always able to inspire our people's complete faith and trust in our democracy.

I convey heartfelt gratitude from the people of Bhutan to the People and Government of India, for the unwavering support given to us, which has played no small part in our success. In January this year, I was invited as the Chief Guest at the 64th Republic Day Celebrations of India. His Majesty the Third Druk Gyalpo graced the celebrations in 1954, and His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo was the Chief Guest in 1984 and 2005. These invitations reflect the admiration, respect and support that the people and Government of India have for Bhutan. The friendship between India and Bhutan, which was born with the historic visit of Pandit Nehru in 1958, is unique and exemplary. I am confident that our friendship will grow stronger in times to come.

I express deep gratitude to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, who is a truly farsighted leader, for entrusting us to set up and build a vibrant democracy in a strong, successful nation that he worked tirelessly to build.

In conclusion, I would like to say a prayer for our country. I pray that we build a vibrant democracy based on our Constitution, and through it, ensure that powers continue to reach the hands of our people. I pray that with the support of our people, we strengthen the Rule of Law and through the Rule of Law, we consolidate institutions of check and balance, which in turn promote good governance. And I pray that good governance becomes the means to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of our people, reinforce the security and sovereignty of our country and foster the prosperity of our people.

I pray that the sun of peace and happiness shines in our country for all times to come.

Tashi Delek.

7.2 EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

Eminent member from the National Council Kuenley Tshering, Hon'ble member from Minjay-Gangzur, Hon'ble member from Haa-Sombaykha on behalf of the Opposition Party, Hon'ble member from Dorokha-Samtse, Education Minister, National Council Chairperson, Hon'ble Prime Minister, President of the Druk Phunsum Tshogpa, Leader of the governing party expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty the the Druk Gyalpo for the wise guidance and for the Royal Address.

They said that the people were greatly concerned about the success of the democratic system of government when it was first established. However, the five year term of the first democratically elected government has completed without any setback coupled with an unprecedented socio-economic growth. This has been possible because of the existing peace and sovereignty of the country signifying the existence of harmony between the King and the people and the blessings of the guardian deities.

Moreover, they said that it is also attributable to the continued guidance provided by His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo over the last five years and expressed their immeasurable appreciation to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

7.3. CONCLUDING SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE SPEAKER

The Hon'ble Speaker in his concluding speech highlighted some of the initiatives taken by the government since the inception of democracy in the past five years some. Some of the historic events were the endorsement of the Constitution of Bhutan, enthronement of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck as the Constitutional Democratic Monarch, enthronement of Her Majesty the Gyalsuen Jetsun Pema as the Queen of Bhutan and the hosting of the 16th SAARC summit in Bhutan.

He said that, as per the provisions of the Constitution not only the Supreme Court of Bhutan was established but the Constitutional post holders were also appointed. Further considering the importance of media five radio

stations, 12 newspaper organizations and two TV channels have been established. This has benefited in strengthening the foundation of democracy.

He further informed that in the past five years the Parliament has passed a total of 39 Acts and ratified 18 international Conventions.

On behalf of the Parliament, he expressed his appreciation to His Holiness the 70th Je Khenpo Trulku Jigme Choeda, Central Monastic Body and other religious bodies for organizing and performing various religious ceremonies and blessings for the benefit of the country and the people.

He also expressed the gratitude of the Parliament to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Ministers, Secretaries to the Government, Civil Servants, Local Government Leaders, NGOs, corporations, agencies, the excavator operators and all the Bhutanese people for the successful outcome of the 10th Plan and for having demonstrated strong dedication and faith in serving the King, Country and the People.

The Hon'ble Speaker prayed for the cessation of disasters, diseases, famine and conflict with the blessings of Triple Gem and guardian deities and the noble guidance and leadership of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo. He also offered his prayers for timely rainfall, bountiful harvest, peace and happiness for the people and perpetuity of Buddha Dharma.

Lastly, the 10th Session of the First Parliament concluded on the 24th Day of the 1st Month of the Water Female Snake Year corresponding to March 6, 2013 with the offering of Tashi Moenlam for the long life of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal Family by the Members of the Parliament.

(Copy of the concluding address is annexed in Annexure II)

VIII. DOCUMENTS DIRSTRIBUTED

1. Contract Bill of Bhutan, 2012
2. Alternative Dispute Resolution Bill of Bhutan, 2012

3. Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipments on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment.
4. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) Convention
5. SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters

IX. LIST OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 10th SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

1. Speaker, Jigme Tshultim, Radhi-Sakteng constituency, Trashigang Dzongkhag
2. Prime Minister, Jigme Yoezer Thinley, Nanong-Shumar constituency, Pemagatshel Dzongkhag
3. Lyonpo Yeshe Zimba, South Thimthrom constituency, Thimphu Dzongkhag
4. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Lamgong-Wangchang constituency, Paro Dzongkhag
5. Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, Bartsham-Shongphu constituency, Trashigang Dzongkhag
6. Lyonpo Ugyen Tshering, Kawang, Lingshi, Soe-Naro constituency, Thimphu Dzongkhag
7. Lyonpo Zanglay Durkpa, Khar-Yurung constituency, Pemagatshel Dzongkhag
8. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, Kanglung-Uzorong constituency, Trashigang Dzongkhag

9. Lyonpo Thakhur Singh Powdyel, Dorokha-Tading constituency, Samtse Dzongkhag
10. Lyonpo Dr.Pema Gyamtsho, Choekhor-Tang constituency, Bumthang Dzongkhag
11. Lyonpo Nandalal Rai, Shompangkha constituency, Sarpang Dzongkhag
12. Lyonpo Dorji Wangdi, Panbang constituency, Zhemgang Dzongkhag
13. Leader of Opposition, Tshering Tobgay, Sombeykha Constituency, Haa Dzongkhag
14. Deputy Speaker, Yangku Tshering Sherpa, Kilkhorthang- Mendrelgang constituency, Tsirang Dzongkhag
15. Karma Wangchuk, Chumey-Ura constituency, Bumthang Dzongkhag
16. Ugay Tshering, Bongo-Chapcha constituency, Chukha Dzongkhag
17. Chencho Dorji, Phuentsholing constituency, Chukha Dzongkhag
18. Sonam Jamtsho, Drujeygang-Tseza constituency, Dagana Dzongkhag
19. Hemant Gurung, Lhamoizingkha-Tashiding constituency, Dagana Dzongkhag
20. Kinley Dorji, Goenkhamy-Lunana constituency, Gasar Dzongkhag
21. Damchoe Dorji, Goenkhatoe-Laya constituency, Gasar Dzongkhag
22. Ugen Tenzin, Bji-Katsho-Uesu constituency, Haa Dzongkhag
23. Karma Rangdol, Minjay-Gangzur constituency, Lhuentse Dzongkhag
24. Tshering Tenzin, Menbi-Tsengkhar constituency, Lhuentse Dzongkhag

25. Ugyen Wangdi, Dremitse-Ngatshang constituency, Mongar Dzongkhag
26. Sonam Penjor, Kengkhar-Weringla constituency, Mongar Dzongkhag
27. Karma Lhamo, Mongar constituency, Mongar Dzongkhag
28. Chenchu Dorji, Dogar-Shaba constituency, Paro Dzongkhag
29. Choida Jamtsho, Nganglam constituency, Pemagatshel Dzongkhag
30. Tshering Penjor, Kabji-Talo constituency, Punakha Dzongkhag
31. Namgay Wangchuk, Lingmu-Toewang constituency, Punakha Dzongkhag
32. Ugyen Dorji, Dewathang-Gomdar constituency, Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag
33. Norbu Wangzom, Jomotshangkha-Martsala constituency, Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag
34. Prahlad Gurung, Pugli-Samtse constituency, Samtse Dzongkhag
35. Durga Prasad Chhetri, Sipsu constituency, Samtse Dzongkhag
36. Lila Pradhan, Ugyentse-Yoeseltse constituency, Samtse Dzongkhag
37. Choeki Wangmo, Thrimshing constituency, Trashigang Dzongkhag
38. Lhatu, Wamrong constituency, Trashigang Dzongkhag
39. Dupthob, Bumdeling-Jamkhar constituency, Tashiyangtse Dzongkhag
40. Kesang Wangdi, Khamdang-Ramjar constituency, Tashiyangtse Dzongkhag

41. Rinchen Dorji, Drakteng-Langthel constituency, Trongsa Dzongkhag
42. Nidup Zangpo, Nubi-Tangsibji constituency, Trongsa Dzongkhag
43. Nar Bahadur Gurung, Patalay-Tsirangtoe constituency, Tsirang Dzongkhag
44. Passang Thrinlee, Athang-Thedtsho constituency, Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag
45. Gyem Dorji, Nyisho-Sephu constituency, Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag
46. Tshering Dorji, Bardo-Trong constituency, Zhemgang Dzongkhag

List of Members absent during the 10th Session of the First Parliament

1. Prem Kumar Gurung, Gelephu constituency, Sarpang Dzongkhag (Medical Leave)

Annexure I

**Opening Address by the Hon'ble Speaker during the
Opening Ceremony of the 10th Session of the First
Parliament**

1. *Kuzuzangpo!* I on behalf of the Members of the Parliament would like to welcome His Majesty to the closing ceremony of the 10th Session which is the last session of the First Parliament and thank His Majesty for gracing this very auspicious day in accordance to the provision of the Constitution. I would also like to welcome and thank Her Majesty the Queen and Members of Royal Family.
2. I would like to extend our warmest welcome to the senior government officials, Defense officials, international dignitaries and all those who are present here and those who are witnessing and listening to the session on television and radio.
3. Today is a historic landmark in the political landscape of Bhutanese society. The voyage of

political reforms steered by our enlightened and benevolent monarchs culminated into the introduction of Democratic Constitutional Monarchy in 2008. 8th May 2008 entered into the annals of Bhutanese history when the first elected Parliament convened its first sitting. Five years have passed since the First Parliament came into existence and the term of the current Parliament has come to the last syllable of the recorded time. The adoption of the Constitution signaled our advancement to the very last stage of the complete democratization of the Bhutanese society. What now remains is our passion and diligence to live up to the values, ideals and principles of democracy.

4. In the last five years, the Parliament convened ten sittings. I am proud to report that the Parliament as the highest legislative body and one of the institutions through which the interest of the nation and the aspirations of the Bhutanese people are communicated, safeguarded and

fulfilled has passed 39 legislations and ratified 18 International Conventions and Protocols.

5. His Majesty the King has put Bhutan on the path of a unique process of development based on the belief that the primary purpose of development is to achieve Gross National Happiness. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the nation remains true to this philosophy, unwavering in its conviction that true development can only be pursued by a judicious balance between spiritual and material advancement.
6. Due to the Blessings of our guardian deities, the wise and judicious counsel of His Majesty the King, and our own steadfast dedication to the *Tsa- Wa- Sum*, our country has continued to make steady progress on its journey towards Gross National Happiness. I am pleased to report that five years after our historic transition to a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy, the state of our nation remains sound and resilient. We have witnessed unprecedented development

across diverse spectrum of our society in the areas of health, education, agriculture, energy, trade, commerce and industries, roads and bridges, urban development & housing, information and communications, foreign relations, good governance, legislative, judiciary and national security.

7. The present government took the reins of governance at the threshold of 10th Five Year Plan. In a departure from the past FYPs, the Tenth Plan, in fact, set out to achieve a unique and ambitious set of goals to address the serious problems of poverty, equity and sustainability, to eradicate poverty through equitable and effective delivery of basic services and infrastructure and to accelerate the realization of Bhutan's freedom from dependence on foreign aid.
8. Among the various development achievements under the present government, it is heartening to see that there is motorable road to almost every Gewog centers, provision of universal primary

education, easy access to basic health facilities, safe drinking water supply for almost every home and mobile phone connectivity for every community.

9. In the last five years the nation witnessed many significant and epoch making events such as signing of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, centenary celebration of monarchy, introduction of Constitutional Democratic Monarchy, Royal wedding, conduct of local government elections, hosting of 16th SAARC summit, Fourth Druk Gyalpo inducted to Kyoto Earth Hall of Fame, Japan and State visit by His Majesty to India to recollect few.
10. While the nation enjoyed great peace, advancement and happiness, we were also reminded of the nature of impermanence with many disasters like seven students being washed away by Wangchu in 2009, devastating earthquake in 2009, fire disaster in Wamrong and Bumthang Chamkhar town and the painful

consummation of historic Wangdue Phopdrang Dzong by fire last year. Despite resource constraints and lack of past experience in dealing with such large scale destruction, the response to the tragedy was a model for disaster recovery. On the command of His Majesty the King, personnel of the security forces were immediately deployed to the affected areas to provide immediate assistance and support to the affected people. It was very heartening to see that all the Bhutanese people coming together as symbolic gesture of solidarity to console and comfort the victims during such times. We are now better prepared to face such disasters in future with better institutional, legislative and infrastructural facilities in place.

11. As His Majesty led us into a new era of historic political reforms, it is our duty to ensure that we exercise our franchise responsibility. We must choose our leaders and representatives carefully and responsibly, be it at the GYT, DYT or at the national level. We must select those who are not

only capable but are worthy of our leaders, we must remain concerned and be informed of their actions and have the courage to hold them accountable or remove them from office if necessary.

12. The successful transition to democracy and the current functioning of the government are no indicators of how governments will operate in the future if the very bases of democracy and democratically elected governance are on shaky grounds. Bhutan is, yet, only an emerging democracy faced with real and immediate risks and uncertainties.
13. My fear arise from the growing complacency which, among others, is giving rise to a feeling that democracy and good governance is the responsibility of the elected representatives alone and that the role of the electorate is to simply pass judgments or remain passive. There is an excessive reliance on the legal and institutional arrangements that are put in place by

the Constitution. But many democracies are failing and have failed not for lack of good laws and governance structures. They fail because parties exist to serve ends that are vastly different from the aspirations and needs of the people. They fail because parties are not accountable to the people. We need to understand that parties are institutions that must not come and go. They are institutions that make or destroy democracies.

14. We are a small country, with tiny economy and population. What larger democracies and populations can absorb and tolerate, we cannot and must not. We must not go the way of failed, failing or sham democracies. Parties must be the instruments of the people to play their role in electoral process.
15. Ours is a nation blessed with a wise and compassionate King to guide us. Ours is a land of peace and stability where freedom, security and hope are not the stuff of dreams but

an every-day luxury. We live in the comfort of an amazing natural setting and a caring society that is united and harmonious-where difference of mind and opinion add happily to the vibrancy of our democracy. We are a people blessed with exceptional talent, confidence, hope and grace.

16. Before I conclude, on behalf of the Bhutanese people, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all our development partners for their support and generous assistance that made possible the achievements we have seen so far and in particular, I wish to thank the Government and the people of India for their good will, understanding, and excellent co-operation. Without their generosity and support, much of what we take pride in today would have remained a dream.
17. Most respectfully, I on behalf of the parliament wish to offer to His Majesty the King our heartfelt gratitude for the wise counsel, affection

and support that we have always received. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay our heartfelt appreciation to each and every Bhutanese people, civil servants, local government leaders and our armed forces, NGOs, Corporations and agencies for their dedication and loyalty in the service of the *Tsa-Wa- Sum*.

18. Finally, I wished to acknowledge the blessings of our Guardian Deities and the collective merit and hard work of all the Bhutanese people for the peace, stability and continued advancement we make toward higher goals of Gross National Happiness.
19. The people and the Royal Government offer our deepest gratitude to His Majesty for the love and care that he has given us and the sacrifices that he has made so that we the people of Bhutan may find Happiness in life. To His Majesty, we renew our pledge of unwavering loyalty. We

pray for the long life of His Majesty and the happiness of our beloved Royal Family.

20. Lastly, with blessings of *Triple- Gem*, grace of His Majesty, merit of the Bhutanese people, support and cooperation of His Excellency Lyonchen, Cabinet Ministers, Chair person of the National Council, Opposition Leader and the Members of Parliament it is hoped that the Bhutan will always remain a land of Gross National Happiness and the colors of glorious *Palden-Drukpa* fly high in the infinite space forever.

Kadinche!

Annexure II

Concluding Address by the Hon'ble Speaker during the Closing Ceremony of the 10th Session of the First Parliament

1. While it is not imperative for me to add on the earlier submissions made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and other Hon'ble Members of Parliament, I on behalf of the Members of Parliament and on my own behalf would like to say few words because this is the last session of the First Parliament. We feel that the five year tenure of the democratic Parliament came to an end like a dream, momentary and fleeting. The first democratic elections in the year 2008 were conducted smoothly and peacefully without any turmoil in the country. Similarly, as everyone is aware, in the last five years there was not only peace and harmony but also economic progress like never before.
2. As a result of the election and the support rendered by majority of the Bhutanese people,

Druk Phuensum Tshogpa was entrusted with the opportunity to take the reins of the Government. Among the numerous historic initiatives taken under the leadership of the Party President and the First Prime Minister of Bhutan Jigmi Yoezer Thinley, some of the significant events are:

3. The Constitution drafted by our beloved parent, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo was endorsed by the Parliament. Consequently, as per the provisions of the Constitution, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck was enthroned as the Constitutional Democratic Monarch. Besides commemorating the hundred years of Wangchuck Dynasty, Her Majesty the Gyalsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck was enthroned as the Queen of Bhutan. Further, the 16th SAARC Summit was also held in Bhutan for the first time.
4. The Local Government Elections held as per the provision of the Constitution has strengthened the decentralization of power and enhanced

capacity of the Local Government for the benefit of the people. The budget amounting to Nu.147 billion was also passed by the Parliament for the economic development in the 10th plan. This has entailed in very satisfactory socio-economic development based on equity and justice. Such commendable results were achieved because of the support rendered by the developmental partners in general and in particular due to the continued support of the Government and the people of India. Therefore, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our developmental partners and the Government and people of India.

5. The Judiciary has been serving in accordance to the law for delivery of justice to all the Bhutanese people. In addition, the institution of Supreme Court of Bhutan as per the provisions of the Constitution and the appointment of Constitutional post holders has further strengthened the foundation of democracy.

6. Considering the importance of media in democracy, the Government approved five radio stations, 12 newspaper organizations and two TV channels along with access to social media forums. This has helped people in realizing their fundamental rights and duties which has benefited in strengthening the principles of democracy.

7. As the subjects are dearer to the King and the subjects aspire peace, the law is the basis for peace. Therefore, the Parliament has enacted total of 39 important legislations and 18 International Conventions. This has resulted in strengthening the foundation of democracy and the Rule of Law which is mainly attributable to the noble guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the collective merit and good fortune of the Bhutanese people. During the opening ceremony of the First Session of the First Parliament on 8th May 2008, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo said that *“My father the Fourth Druk Gyalpo and I, hereby return the power*

vested by the Bhutanese people to the First Druk Gyalpo Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck 100 years ago. We do so with absolute faith and confidence, offer our complete support and our prayers for the success of democracy. As the power is handed over to the people, the elected members who are gathered here today have greater responsibility than ever before”. Such royal command was as big as a mountain if it was to be carried and as dearer as gold if it was to be discarded, the people therefore showed profound respect and reverence to the royal command and shouldered their responsibilities to the fullest capacity within a short span of time.

8. In the last five years, there has been peace and happiness in the country. However, as the saying goes “where the Dharma flourish, demons thrive” the country experienced many natural disasters due to wind storm, earthquake, flood and fire. The people with unity and co-operation could deal and mitigate the disasters under the leadership of His Majesty.

It is also hope that the Disaster Management Act which has been passed in this session would help in dealing with disasters in future.

9. The responsibility to preserve our sovereignty, security and make our country self reliant does not only fall on Government but on every Bhutanese individual. In view of the Gross National Happiness, it is even more important to support each other with love and compassion in the face of material development. Likewise establishment of Non-Government Organizations like Tarayana, RENEW, YDF and others and the support bestowed upon underprivileged Bhutanese people by the Members of the Royal Family with compassion and kindness have improved their livelihood. Further, this has also contributed in narrowing the gaps between rich and poor which will significantly benefit in fulfilling the objectives of Gross National Happiness.

10. The Parliament would like to express its gratitude to His Holiness the 70th Je Khenpo Trulku Jigme Choeda, Central Monastic Body and other religious bodies for organizing and performing various religious ceremonies and blessings for the benefit of the country and the people. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Hindu community for organizing mass blessing for the benefit of the people and the country.
11. With the approval and support of the Government and donations made by foreign devotees, one of the biggest statues of Lord Buddha in the world is being built at Kuensel Phodrang under the supervision of Lam Tshering Wangdi. Similarly, under the Supervision of Lam Kezang Tshultim, ground breaking ceremony has been already held for the construction of nine storied monastery and a statue of Milarepa at Minjurling in Phuentsholing. Furthermore, the construction of a statue of Guru Rinpoche at Tangmachu in

Lhuentse symbolizes the faith and devotion of the Bhutanese people in the Buddha Dharma. The constructions of such religious and spiritual monuments are possible due to the wisdom and noble efforts of our successive monarchs and we the Bhutanese people are truly fortunate.

12. The Parliament would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude on the successful outcome of the 10th plan which is attributable to all the people of Bhutan in general and the leadership and initiatives of the Prime Minister in particular. It could also due to the dedication and faith demonstrated in serving the King, Country and the People by the Cabinet Ministers, Secretaries to the Government, Civil Servants, Local Government Leaders, NGOs, corporations, agencies and even the excavator operators.
13. The Parliament would like to congratulate Major General Bato Tshering of Royal Bhutan Army and all officers and men of the armed forces who were recently awarded gallantry and service

medals of *Drakpoi Rinchen Tshuktor* and *Drakpoi Norbu Yoesel* for their dedicated service towards maintaining and strengthening the present and future security of the country.

14. We would like to thank our beloved Parent His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo who considering the benefit of the Bhutanese people, initiated Bhutan to tread on a progressive economic path based on the philosophy and principles Gross National Happiness which is widely appreciated in the international domain. Furthermore, commemoration of 20th March as the International Day of Happiness has further reinforced the sovereignty of a small country like Bhutan and famed the principles of Gross National Happiness.
15. As all Bhutanese people own land, there are occurrences of some problems and disputes pertaining to the land. Therefore, in 2009, His Majesty commanded the National Land Commission to carry out Cadastral Re-survey

with new technology and recently the Cadastral Re-survey has been completed in all 20 Dzongkhags. In 2009, beginning from Lhuentse, His Majesty granted land *kidu* to landless people and likewise granted *Tharm* to people of my constituency in Merak and Sakteng which has immensely benefited them.

16. Each and every Member of Parliament would like to thank our people for granting us the opportunity to serve the country and the people as the members of the First Parliament. Also, hereafter in order to further strengthen democracy, sovereignty and achieve economic self reliance for the peace and happiness of the Bhutanese people, it is important to elect a political party in whom they have confidence and trustworthy members to power. Therefore, it is hoped that in future elections too, the people would bear the same in their mind.
17. I would like to express my profound gratitude for providing the opportunity for me to serve as the

Speaker of the Parliament and the leader of the highest law making body due to the support of all the Bhutanese people in general and trust and confidence bestowed upon me by the people of Tashigang, Radhi, Phongmey, Sakteng and Merak in particular. I would also like to thank for this opportunity which was blessed by *Triple Gem* and His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

I personally believe that I could serve the *Tsa-wa-sum* with dedication due to the support and cooperation of the Prime Minister and Hon'ble Members of the National Assembly, National Council and the good service rendered by the officials of the Secretariats of the National Council and National Assembly.

18. I would like to express our gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for his gracious address to the concluding session of the First Parliament. I would also like to thank Her Majesty the Gyaltshen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, Members of the Royal Family, other guests and

all those who are listening and witnessing this session through radio and television.

19. Lastly, as per the provisions of the Constitution, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo graced all the sessions and granted words of wisdom through his addresses to the Parliament which immensely benefited the people and the country symbolizing our country as a heavenly nation which embraces the values of truth, kindness, cause and effect and auspicious attributes.

With the blessings of Triple Gem and guardian deities and the noble guidance and leadership of His Majesty, we pray that disasters, diseases, famine and conflict cease to exist. We also pray for timely rainfall, bountiful harvest, peace and happiness for the people and perpetuity of Buddha Dharma. Let us all offer our collective prayer of Trashi Moenlam for the long life of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal Family.

Pelden Drukpa Gyalo! Pelden Drukpa Gyalo!
Pelden Drukpa Gyalo!

Kadrinche