



## **Guidelines on Parliamentary Friendship Group 2022**

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**Introduction:** Parliamentary friendships are groups that engage in dialogue and cooperation amongst the parliamentarians of other countries that share diplomatic relations with Bhutan. It includes exchange of knowledge and experiences, the exchange of information, the promotion of common interests in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. The friendship groups can focus on specific targets based for the purpose of which the groups are formed and can also exchange the best parliamentary practices in order for the parliamentarians to be updated and perform better mandates.

Till date, the Parliament of the Kingdom of Bhutan has established five parliamentary friendship groups namely with Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Mongolia upon receipt of expression of interest.

**Expression of interest:** A parliament including of Bhutan must convey an expression of interest to the presiding officer of the other parliament to initiate a parliamentary friendship group which may consist of the following:

- 1) Aims and objectives of the friendship group;
- 2) Purpose of the parliamentary friendship group;
- 3) Desired outcome of the friendship group;
- 4) Intended plans and programmes; and
- 5) Propose members to the group.

**Procedure to review and acceptance:** Following procedures are followed for its formation:

- Upon receipt of a expression of interest from a parliament of another country, the Speaker sends the letter to the House Committee for advice.
- The House Committee reviews the aims and objectives, the benefits and the impact of long term relations. In the process of review, the House Committee has to consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to seek their opinion. The conclusion has to be submitted to the Speaker as recommendation.



- After reviewing the recommendation letter, the Speaker directs the House Committee to nominate members for the group if he deems it important to have the parliamentary friendship group formed.
- The House Committee nominates members for the group and submits the list of nominees to the Speaker who shall direct the Secretariat to convey to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the acceptance of such a friendship group along with members proposed.
- The Secretariat formally conveys to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the name list of the members nominated.
- After formation of the friendship groups, the friendship group shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson among its members. A secretary for the friendship group may be provided by the Secretariats.
- Each year, Parliamentary friendship groups must submit an activity programme for approval by the Speaker. (It could also be virtual meetings to exchange information and the analysis of subjects of common interest, mainly in the political, cultural, social and economic areas).
- The Friendship Groups may adopt a common Terms of Reference.

**Conclusion:** The Secretaries shall maintain the records of the meetings or exchange programmes of the friendship groups. The friendship groups shall submit an annual report to the Speaker. The National Assembly shall review and decide on the continuity of such friendship groups based on the annual reports submitted by the friendship groups and its contribution to the parliament.



(Wangchuk Namgyel)

**SPEAKER**