

**Opening Address of the Hon'ble Chairperson during the 22nd Session
commenced from 20/05/2018 – 27/06/2018**

(29th Day of the 11th Month to 18th Day of the 12th Month of the Earth Male Dog Year Corresponding to 4th January to 23rd January 2019)

The Chairperson expressed his appreciation to the Hon'ble Health Minister, High Dignitaries and Gewog Tshogde Chairpersons for gracing the opening ceremony of the 22nd session of the National Council. He also welcomed the Hon'ble members of the National Council, the Secretariat staff, media and all the people of twenty dzongkhags who are following on television and radio to the opening ceremony.

The Chairperson said that Bhutan have always enjoyed peace and prosperity and continues to exist as a gross national happiness country mainly due to the immense sacrifices made by the Wangchuck Dynasty in building this precious nation. He said that we are forever grateful to them. Moreover, on behalf of all the Bhutanese people, he offered his deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for his extraordinary services in strengthening the peace, security and sovereignty of the nation under his visionary leadership.

He said the selfless deeds of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo are unimaginable and that he cannot speak of it entirely. But most importantly, he emphasized that His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo is the true patron of democracy in the country. This is because, after the introduction of democracy in the country and with the conduct of elections, there is always a risk of people losing focus of long-term objectives in the pursuit of current benefits.

Further, influence of politics on the people also poses risk in the decline of the exceptional traditional qualities like fidelity and karma that exist between our people. Despite such risks, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo has always represented as the symbol of strength and unity of the nation and people of Bhutan and a true

patron of democracy in the country. As a result, peace and happiness have prevailed in the country more than ever before. Therefore, on behalf of all the people of Bhutan, the Chairperson expressed his heartfelt appreciation to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

Similarly, the Chairperson said that His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck had carried out many deeds well-known across the world, and in particular, promulgated the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness in the country and ushered in great political transformation with the gradual process of decentralization culminating in the transition of the country to a parliamentary democracy.

Moreover, even after abdicating the Golden Throne, His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo continues to be deeply concerned about the welfare of the people and the country day and night. For these reasons, the Chairperson expressed the debt of infinite gratitude to His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo on behalf of the Bhutanese people. He also offered heartfelt prayer for His Majesty's long life, good health and prosperity of deeds.

The Chairperson also expressed appreciation and gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo Trulku Jigme Choedra and the monastic body for performing numerous religious programs for the promotion of Buddha Dharma and sustaining peace and harmony in the country. The Chairperson on behalf of the people of Bhutan and on behalf the National Council conveyed heartiest congratulations to His Holiness the Je Khenpo for receiving the Highest Civilian Decoration, the 'Nga Dag Pal Gyi Khorlo' from His Majesty the King during the 111th National Day in recognition of his lifetime of service to the nation.

Further, the Chairperson offered prayers for long life, prosperity of deeds and continued extraordinary spiritual guidance and blessings of His Holiness the Je Khenpo. He also congratulated the Election Commission of Bhutan and the four media reporters of the Bhutan Broadcasting Service for receiving the institutional Druk Thuksey Award and National Order of Merit (silver) medals respectively from His Majesty the King during the 111th National Day in recognition of the successful conduct of both the Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

The Chairperson extended his appreciation to the four political parties of Bhutan KuenNyam Party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, Druk Phuensum Tshogpa and Peoples Democratic Party which contested in the primary round of the National Assembly elections. He congratulated the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa for forming the government and the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa as the opposition after the general round of election.

Furthermore, he hoped that the members of the Third National Assembly will be mindful of the immediate and long-term welfare of the people and country and serve to the best of their ability in fulfilling the national objectives. Reflecting on His Majesty's address during the 111th National Day that called upon the capable public servants to shoulder the responsibilities and to render their unstinted support in ensuring continuity in pursuit of our timeless national goals and objectives, the Chairperson conveyed his best wishes to the public servants to perform their tasks with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition, he said that the National Council will also shoulder its responsibilities effectively and efficiently in order to fulfill the aspiration of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo by upholding the wise advice and guidance received from His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo. The Chairperson also informed that the current National Council had conducted a three-day retreat workshop to develop a strategic roadmap for the next

five years after the conclusion of the 21st session of National Council. Based on the priority, the workshop identified about 36 important issues in total for the National Council to review in the next 5 years of its tenure.

He said that all the issues are also distributed to the Committees of the National Council. He informed that an Interim report on Review of Harmful Use of Alcohol in the Country and an Interim report on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will be presented during the current 22nd Session of the National Council. The Chairperson informed that the agenda of the 22nd Session of the National Council will include most importantly the deliberation and adoption of the 12th Five Year Plan and the Budget Appropriation Bill for Financial Year 2018-19. He also informed that the Joint Sitting of the Parliament will deliberate on the Annual Audit Report 2017 and Review Report on the Annual Audit Reports 2010-2016 presented by the Public Accounts Committee.

In conclusion, the Chairperson offered prayers for the successful completion of the 22nd Session of the National Council without any obstacles with the blessings of the Triple Gem and the protection of our Guardian Deities, the profound advice and guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the prayers of His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Clergy.