

**Address by Tshogpon Wangchuk Namgyel at the Concluding Ceremony of
the Second Session of Third Parliament of Bhutan
(June 27, 2019)**

1. On behalf of the Members of Parliament, it is my honour to welcome His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo with immense gratitude for gracing the Concluding Ceremony of the Second Session of the Third Parliament of Bhutan.
2. I would also like to welcome senior government officials, foreign dignitaries, and the public who have come to witness the occasion.
3. From the summit of the Golden Throne, may I take the opportunity to inform that in the recent Lok Sabha election, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been elected as the new government. Furthermore, Shri Narendra Modi has been reelected as the Prime Minister of India for the second term. Therefore, the Parliament would like to congratulate Shri Narendra Modi and his party. We are hopeful that the leaders of the two countries will strive toward further strengthening the existing ties of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.
4. If I may now inform the public regarding the proceedings of the House:

41. During the First Session of the Third Parliament, we ratified the Air Service Agreement between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of the United Arab Emirates, and accordingly the Agreement has been granted Royal Assent for enforcement. It is therefore imperative that the relevant authority enforce the Agreement accordingly.

4.2 Similarly, the National Assembly of Bhutan has extensively deliberated on the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan, and the Civil and Criminal Procedural Code (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan, and accordingly forwarded to the National Council of Bhutan. The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has been ratified as well. Furthermore, the Mines and Minerals Bill of Bhutan has been introduced and forwarded to the relevant committee for review. It is also hopeful that the bill would be adopted in the next session of the parliament.

4.3 During the deliberation on the Annual Budget 2019-2020, the Parliament had approved a total budget of Nu.64,826.725 million, out of which recurrent expenditure is Nu.34,652.765 million, and the capital expenditure Nu.30,173.960 million. The Parliament had also allocated 50% of the budget to the central government and 50% of the budget to the local government. Hence, it is imperative that the ministries, agencies and the local government to implement the planned activities to the benefit of the nation and the people. We are also hopeful that the civil service leaders will work in accordance with the laws of the

country to prevent any corruption and vice practices during the implementation of the planned activities.

5. Moreover, in addition to the approved budget of Nu.47,698.129 million for the FY 2018-19, an additional Supplementary Budget of Nu.1,627.410 million was also passed by Parliament, and thus a revised budget of Nu.49,325.539 million has been adopted as per the Supplementary Budget Appropriation Bill.
6. For the benefit of civil servants, public servants and people serving under the local government, the Government submitted a pay revision bill of Nu.4,530 million. The Parliament deliberated and approved an increase in pay and allowances, and it is therefore imperative that civil servants, public servants and people under the local government to be mindful, responsible and accountable always, and serve with full dedication and loyalty to the Tsa-Wa-Sum.

In line with that, considering the similar problems with the employees under the private sector, we are hopeful that the private firms and civil society organizations would also support in increasing the pay for those employees of the private sector as well.

7. The National Assembly also deliberated on Achieving the Vision of Sustainable Development Goals in the 12th FYP with priorities set on Health and Education as submitted by the Social and Cultural Committee. It is optimistic that the Government would comply and implement the recommendations accordingly as per the international standard.

8. The Public Accounts Committee while reviewing the findings of the Performance Audits of the Royal Audit Authority found that the relevant agencies have effectively implemented the observations and produced fruitful results. Such fruitful outcomes were possible due to effective auditors, and fruitful services by the agencies and ministries, and holistic review by the Public Accounts Committee. For that, the Parliament would like to extend appreciation to all.
9. As per the Anti-Corruption Report 2018, it was reported that Bhutan has been ranked the 25th least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perception Index (TI-CPI). Bhutan ranked 6th in the Asia-Pacific Region and one among the cleanest country in the SAARC region.
10. The Prime Minister presented the first Annual Report on the State of the Nation, including the Legislative Plans and Annual Plans and Priorities of the Government to the Joint Sitting of the Parliament.
11. If I am to report to the gathering here, I have led the Members of Parliament to Wangdue Dzung Reconstruction Project and the Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric Projects from 14-15 June, 2019. During the visit to Wangdue Dzung Reconstruction Project, it was found that the estimated cost of project in 2014 was Nu.1,323,828 million and the project is expected to be completed by 2022.

Regarding Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric Project-I, the estimated cost of project in 2008 was Nu.35.148 billion and it was expected to be completed

by 2016. However, due to the landslides, the dam construction was delayed. With additional revised budget of Nu.93.756 billion, the project is expected to be completed by 2023-24, and about 85 % of the project has been completed as of today. On Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric Project-II, the estimated cost of project in 2010 was Nu.37.778 billion and it was expected to be completed by 2017. However, due to collapse of wall in the powerhouse, the walls had to be rebuilt. With additional revised budget of Nu.72.906 billion, the project is expected to be completed by 2022, and the status of completion of project is 83 % as of today.

12. Prime Minister visited Brussels, Belgium, from June 18-19 to participate in the 13th edition of the European Development Days (EDD). The visit further strengthened the development cooperation between the EU and Bhutan. During the visit, the EU approved an additional funding of 7.3 million Euro to Bhutan for the establishment of the National Training Centre for Search and Rescue and the Water Flagship Programme. The EU also assured its continued support to Bhutan through the next EU Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027. Since all these fruitful outcomes have been possible due to Lyonchen's strategic capability, the Legislative Body would like to thank Lyonchen for making a successful visit.
13. With the blessings of the Triple Gem, wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, prayers from the Monastic Body led by His Holiness the Je Khenpo, collective merits of the Bhutanese people, support and cooperation from Members of Parliament, I would like to express deep gratitude for the successful conclusion of the Second Session of the Third Parliament.

14. In conclusion, we would like to offer prayers for the long life of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, Members of the Royal Family, His Holiness the Je Khenpo, and for the continued prosperity and harmony of the Bhutanese people.

THANK YOU