

# **THIRD PARLIAMENT OF BHUTAN**

## **TENTH SESSION**



**Resolution No. 10**

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

October 01 -20, 2023

Speaker: Wangchuk Namgyel



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**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL**

**ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN**

**1. Proceedings of the Opening Ceremony**

The Tenth Session of the Third Parliament of Bhutan commenced on the 17<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year, corresponding to 1 October 2023. His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo graced the Opening Session which commenced with the Zhugdrel-Phunsum Tshog-pai Tendrel.

**2. Opening Address by the Speaker**

The Speaker in his opening speech welcomed His Majesty the King and other guests to the Opening Ceremony.

On behalf of the Parliament, the Speaker expressed profound gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen for bestowing upon the nation the invaluable gift of the birth of the Gyalsem on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. Additionally, he extended heartfelt prayers for the good health, well-being and prosperity of Her Royal Highness the Gyalsem

Under His Majesty the King's command, the Zhung Dratshang declared the day as Dratshang Yojay Gi Nyim, signifying the day to make offerings to the central monastic body in commemoration of Her Royal Highness the Gyalsem's birth. The Parliament expressed deep appreciation to His Majesty the King and His Holiness the Je Khenpo for this initiative.

Furthermore, the Speaker also expressed deep gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for his frequent visits abroad and engaging with global business leaders in the interest of our country's economic development. Additionally, he extended sincere gratitude to His Majesty for personally overseeing the Kidu and relief support provided for those impacted by the recent flood calamity at Ungar in Lhuentse Dzongkhag.

The Parliament extended deep appreciation to the Zhung Dratshang, under the guidance of His Holiness the Je Khenpo, for consistently organizing prayers for the welfare of the world and in particular the country and the people.

In conclusion under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty the Thigpen Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal Family, His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Zhung Dratshang prayers, Tshogpoen expressed hope for the successful conclusion of the Tenth Session of the Third Parliament. Concurrently, the opening session concluded.

**The opening speech by the Speaker is annexed in Annexure 1.**

### **3. Follow-up Report on the resolutions of the 9<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

The Finance Minister presented the implementation status of 5 resolutions - 3 resolutions pertaining to the Economic and Finance Committee's Annual Budget 2023-2024 and 2 resolutions submitted by the National Council. The details are as follows:

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**3.1 To review the non-performing state-owned enterprises, considering exorbitant financial deficits, and to come up with measures through the retrenchment of supplementary budgets for SoE's by the Government.**

The Finance Minister mentioned that State Owned Enterprises are established to take tasks beyond the capacity of private entities, to regulate societal prices, and to fulfill social obligations in accordance with the Public Accounts Act 2007. Under the Finance Ministry, there are 14 State Owned Enterprises. Among them, only a few generate profits, while others are basically fulfilling their social mandates.

The Government, cognizant of the increasing fiscal deficit and increasing national debt level has continuously reviewed the performance of the State-Owned Enterprises, and has adopted various cost-saving measures to achieve efficiency gains such as the reduction in the supplementary budget amount from Nu. 1,140.23 million to Nu. 836.7 million during the fiscal year 2022-2023 was also reported.

Additionally, the report highlighted the need to promote self-sufficiency and streamline the management of state-owned enterprises. If an enterprise demonstrates business viability, it is transferred to Druk Holding Investment. Also, enterprises with similar responsibilities and functions are consolidated for more efficient operations.

To this, the Opposition Leader and Members expressed their belief that this initiative could result in immediate benefits. They also sought clarification regarding the existence of recognized distribution enterprises and suggested the formulation of policies aligned with the government's goals.

In a clarifying statement, the Minister for Finance explained that certain enterprises are legally mandated to be operated by the state. The deficits primarily arise due to their fulfillment of social obligations. Efforts to address the deficit include the development of robust regulations, and the suggestions made by the members will be taken into account during this process.

### **3.2 To continue improving the incentive packages and other viable strategies to attract more tourists, considering the tourism industry's ability to contribute enormously to the national exchequer.**

The Finance Minister stated that despite the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector, there were 315,599 visitors in total in 2019, out of which 72,199 were USD paying tourists. In the initial three months of 2020, 9,020 visitors arrived before the borders were closed. Since then, up until now, a total of 89,000 tourists have visited the country.

This year, beginning in June, the government introduced three SDF incentives, including the 4+4 package, and implemented a 50% reduction

in the SDF to attract tourists. The government is currently engaged in discussions with relevant stakeholders to assess the feasibility of reducing airfare.

To this, the Opposition Leader and members voiced concerns about the frequent changes in the tourism policy using the Act's power, leading to a loss of people's trust in the policy. They suggested transforming the policy into an Act to uphold trust, which they deemed as a favorable approach. Additionally, they expressed dissatisfaction with the new tourism policy, stating that it is not advantageous for the local populace. They also highlighted that the co-mingling of tourists with ordinary people at border terminals is deterring tourists from visiting the country.

The Minister responded that, moving forward, any required review of the tourism policy will necessitate a declaration two years in advance to ensure certainty. Additionally, a feasibility for a different terminal at the border to facilitate tourism is currently underway.

### **3.3 To reinstate credit access for those economic activities that do not generate adverse implication on the reserve.**

The impact on reserves due to accessing credit is inevitable, and the fundamental structure of the country's economy must change. Currently, the reserve heavily relies on contributions from the tourism sector, hydropower, and foreign aid. Recognizing that injecting every Ngultrum into the economy results in 60% imports, the government has taken

steps to reinstate access to credit in the agriculture sector to boost local production capacity. The National Cottage and Small Industry (CSI) disbursed Nu. 2.1 billion, and an additional Nu. 900 million has been allocated to the National Credit Guarantee Scheme (NCGS) to promote economic activities without adversely affecting the reserves, stated the Finance Minister.

Furthermore, the opposition leader raised concerns about the National CSI Development Bank Limited, mentioning a seed money of Nu. 5 billion from the government's support fund. They requested detailed account statements to be presented to the House. In response, the Finance Minister explained that in 2020, Bhutan Development Bank Limited faced a 28% deficit due to non-performing loans, primarily from the CSI bank's loans rather than BDBL's loans. Efforts to address this financial deficit are in progress, and as a temporary solution, the government imposed a moratorium on loans.

**3.4 To direct the National Statistical Bureau to re-examine the method of calculating inflation to correct any anomalies and ensure that the calculation reflects the economic reality in Bhutan rather than just following international methods that may not apply to Bhutan.**

The Finance Minister explained that the primary cause of inflation is the import of commodities and associated factors, such as transportation, which are calculated with rounding up. The Macro-economic Framework Co-ordination Committee reviewed commodity prices every three

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months. Based on the recommendations provided by the House, changes to address these issues are currently in the process.

In response, the members highlighted that inflation affects two categories of items: non-essential and essential food items. They emphasized that for the general public, inflation in essential food items is a major concern. Given Bhutan's heavy reliance on imports, it is crucial to maintain accurate records of revenue sources and their amounts. When declaring the inflation in the financial ledger, transparent and trustworthy information should be presented, reflecting the actual situations accurately.

### **3.5 To work closely with the Royal Monetary Authority to avert possible violations of the Constitution and any other economic risks arising from the rapid depletion of foreign reserves.**

The Finance Minister emphasized that Bhutan relies 90% on imports, therefore, to maintain the country's economic stability, having substantial foreign reserves is indispensable. Annually, approximately Nu. 3 billion is spent on vehicle imports alone. Consequently, the government has initiated a moratorium on vehicle imports to address this economic challenge.

Similarly, construction loans have been halted, and in consultation with the Royal Monetary Authority with an aim to encourage Bhutanese residing abroad to send more money back home, incentives on remittances have been increased from 2% to 10% for the foreign reserves.

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Moreover, in collaboration with the Reserve Bank of India, a SWAP arrangement has been made, providing up to USD 200 million for three months. The interest rate, previously at 5%, has been reduced to 2.5%. This amount needs to be repaid after the three-month period. Additionally, a Standby Credit Facility has been established. If the foreign reserves become insufficient and create problems, short-term loans from India will be obtained to address the situation.

Furthermore, foreign expenses amount to USD 100 million per month. Given this critical economic situation, it is imperative to regulate imports based on their essential nature. Detailed plans for this regulation are incorporated in the draft of the 13th plan.

In response, the Opposition leader and members pointed out discrepancies in the minimum amount of the foreign reserve account between the Finance Ministry and the Royal Monetary Authority. They stressed that the measures recommended by the government are temporary solutions and emphasized the necessity for more sustainable solutions to address these challenges in the future.

The Finance Minister responded, stating that a committee, chaired by the Chief Justice and comprising members from relevant ministries and corporations, has been formed. During the country's challenging situations, the minimum limit for foreign reserves is set at around USD 550 million.



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The House engaged in an extensive discussion with the Finance Minister regarding the Annual Financial Report for 2023-2024. They also reviewed the follow-up report on the resolutions. It was noted that the adoption of the resolution report did not necessitate further deliberation. However, the members' suggestions were acknowledged, and they were advised to consider these suggestions when implementing. This marked the conclusion of discussions on the Annual Financial Report 2023-2024 and its associated follow-up report and resolutions.

**4. Follow-up report on the resolution for the requirement of structural drawings for the construction of one-storied concrete houses in rural areas and the provisions of drawings free of cost for the construction of multi-storied buildings.**

- 4.1 The Minister for MoIT reported that the Bhutan Building Regulation was reviewed and the procedure for acquiring permits from relevant authorities were made easy. The Minister also reported that consultation with engineers is underway to standardize one-storied buildings. In an effort to offer a variety of structural drawings, study of structural designs on the field is under process.

The member emphasized that the revised Bhutan Building Regulations did not incorporate the necessity for a specific design, potentially leading to a lack of adherence to House resolutions in the future. They stressed the importance of standardizing designs and accounts in all districts.

Additionally, the member pointed out that government-provided designs might not be suitable for every landscape, urging careful consideration of these factors during building construction.

The House reviewed the follow-up resolution on the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport's work, noting that some tasks have been completed, and others are still in progress. It was emphasized that there is no need for additional resolutions, but the recommendations and proposals should be taken into account by the ministry while carrying out their work. With this, the follow-up resolution was concluded.

(18<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8th Month of Water Female Rabbit Year corresponding to 2 October 2023)

**5. Good Governance Committee's review report on Anti-Corruption Commission's Annual Report 2022-2023.**

The Chairperson of the Good Governance Committee (GGC), Member from Khatoed-Laya constituency, presented the Committee's review report on the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) Annual Report 2022-2023 as follows:

The Chairperson reported that the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has transitioned its focus from complaint-driven to proactive, intelligence-based investigations in areas deemed high-risk and high-impact. The shift has resulted in a significant increase in proactive investigations, rising from 5% in 2021 to 25% in the current reporting year.

It was reported that the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) partnered with the Office of the Attorney General, Royal Audit Authority, and Land Commission of Bhutan, as well as international agencies. This collaboration has been instrumental in reviewing and disposing of case referrals while simultaneously enhancing ACC's investigation capacities.

The Central Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has established Regional Offices in Bumthang, Phuentsholing, and Trashigang to strengthen its deterrence strategy, enhancing its presence. The regional offices reviewed 104 complaints and 28 Action Taken Reports and conducted 24 Information Enrichments (IE) in collaboration with the Head Office. Notably, an amount of Nu. 29.158 million was successfully restituted.

The attrition rate in the reporting year was 15.06%, surpassing the previous year's 13. Despite a high attrition rate in the ACC, the performance score was achieved 96.26% by using the principle of Agility-all for one and one for all and the ACC remains steadfast in its pursuit of cultivating a motivated workforce aligned with its values and Mission 114.

The report highlighted that the ACC has conducted over 8,800 vetting processes in the past years with 9 'Adverse Records', aiding in informed decision-making and deterring potential misconduct. Additionally, the National Integrity Assessment 2022 report has given a 'Good' rating

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of 8.01 which is an increase from 7.95 in 2016 to 8.24 in 2022, despite falling short of the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP's target of 8.50.

In the reporting year, 56 cases involving 318 individuals were completed, 2,745 charges were referred for prosecution, 84 Information Enrichments were undertaken, and 99 administrative referrals and actions were taken. Notably, the implementation of systemic recommendations resulted in a significant revenue increase of Nu. 67.461 million, primarily due to the strategic shift from direct site allocation to reserve price setting and open auctions of sites for surface collection and river dredging, as recommended by the Good Governance Committee during the 8th Session of the Parliament.

It was also presented that during the reporting period, anti-corruption strategies have seen a significant shift, with 25% of cases investigated originating from proactive research and intelligence efforts. From a total of 56 cases investigated in the reporting period, 14 cases were proactive, research, and intelligence-based investigations- a significant advancement from the 5% recorded in the previous year.

The report emphasized that the ACC organized 35 interactive sessions aimed at raising awareness and combating corruption. Additionally, profession-specific thematic sessions were conducted for regulatory officials, finance and procurement professionals, as well as Local Government leaders to educate on corruption risks and strategies for

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mitigation. Furthermore, integrity clubs were established to instill ethical values and a sense of responsibility among youth in schools and local communities. Presently, 21 schools across all 20 Dzongkhags have active integrity clubs.

The presentation highlighted the introduction of a mandatory e-learning course for civil servants by the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) to be eligible for promotions to P1 positions, with 728 civil servants taking the course in the reporting year. The ACC also developed specialized courses for parliamentarians, corporate employees, and judges/justices. Furthermore, 467 employees from Druk Green Power Corporation Ltd. enrolled in the courses designed for corporate employees.

The National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy 2019-2023 (NIACS) has led to the implementation of an Organizational Integrity Plan (OIP) in public agencies, with 101 agencies implementing the OIP in the reporting year, down from 112 in the previous financial year. Additionally, the ACC published the National Integrity Assessment and Bhutan secured the 25<sup>th</sup> position on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) with a score of 68.

During the reporting year, 342 corruption reports were received, with an average of 28.5 per month, a decrease from 36 in the previous year, which consisted of 203 known complaints and 139 anonymous complaints. Webmail (122) was the most preferred mode, followed by Walk-in (108)

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and Post (96). Social media applications like WeChat and WhatsApp were the least preferred mode, with only 16 corruption reports.

It was reported that in the reporting year, the ACC opened 38 new investigations and carried over 39 cases, resulting in a total caseload of 77. The ACC closed 56 cases, achieving a clearance rate of 72.7%. Out of these, 41 cases merited prosecution referral, increasing the referral rate to 73.2%. From the total of 41 cases that merited prosecution, 36 cases were forwarded to the OAG.

It was disclosed during the report that as of 30 June 2023, 23 cases were reviewed by the OAG and as a result, of 69 defendants charged, 51 were convicted, 17 acquitted and one deferred. Thus, the conviction rate for the judgment rendered in the reporting year excluding deferred judgment is 75.0%.

To address the challenges faced by the commission, including clustering of initiatives, inadequate budget, and delays in resolving corruption cases, the following recommendations were submitted.

The ACC made the following recommendations:

1. To enhance parliamentary oversight to scrutinize issues for delays in resolving corruption cases while also providing opportunities to address inherent capacity and operational challenges.
2. The concerned agencies implement the five recommendations of the ACC on systematic analysis to eliminate corruption loopholes

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Resolution of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parliament  
and submit an Action Taken Report to the House during the next  
session.

In addition, the Committee recommended:

1. The RCSC, to consider exempting the clustering of the expert group such as legal and ICT divisions of ACC to maintain the confidentiality of information and effective service delivery.
2. The Government, to provide adequate budgetary support for the capacity building of the ACC's officials given the high attrition rate in the ACC, which stood at 15.06% and 35.5% of the existing staff having less than two years of work experience.
3. While noting that, Nu. 29.158 million has been restituted in the current reporting year, which is a huge achievement, henceforth, the ACC is asked make all efforts to recover the balance amount of about more than one billion for restitution since 2006 and submit an Action Taken Report to the Parliament reflecting the restitution amount from 2006 to 2023 in the next reporting year.

During the deliberation, members emphasized the significance of tackling the gravest form of corruption that is election-related corruption, which encompasses not only monetary issues but also policies, relationships, and intimidation tactics. They stressed the importance of collaboration between the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Election Commission to prevent any form of corruption during elections and put an end to such practices.

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Similarly, Members expressed concerns that repeated discussion about election-related corruption is a reflection of non-implementation of resolutions. It was also pointed out that corruption could be prevented if there was a possibility of stationing Investigation Officers at any kind of election. Therefore, the ACC and the Election Commission of Bhutan should promptly collaborate and formulate proactive measures for the 2024 election.

Some Members highlighted that while the ACC issues an integrity assessment certificate before the election, it does not effectively deter corruption that happens after its issuance. The concerns about the consolidation of civil servants, emphasizing that it is causing delays in service delivery was raised and urged the government to again assess the situation. Furthermore, there was a call to increase the budget for the Commission's operations.

The Committee's Chairperson and its members clarified that the issue of election-related corruption, which was discussed during the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Parliament, has been thoroughly addressed in the report. They emphasized that the report provides a clear response to the concerns raised and benefits of issuing Integrity Assessment Certificates before the election.

Acknowledging the collective dedication to curb electoral corruption, the House unanimously re-endorsed the resolution passed in the 8<sup>th</sup>



Session of the Third Parliament, which resolved that the ACC and the Election Commission collaborate to monitor and ensure corruption free elections.

The House deliberated and endorsed all the 5 recommendations - 2 recommendations made by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the 3 recommendations made by the Committee through show of hands and as per procedure, voted on the recommendations with all the 39 members present and voting, voting in favor. The deliberation on the ACC's Annual Report 2022-2023 concluded with the House reiterating the need for the Anti-Corruption Commission to work closely with the Election Commission to reduce electoral corruption during the country's elections, and with this, the deliberation on the Anti-Corruption Commission's Annual Report 2022-2023 concluded. **(28<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of Water Female Rabbit Year corresponding to 10 October 2023)**

**6. Question Session for the Ministry in Group A's Question and Answer**

The Speaker declared that 9 Oral Questions were tabled for the Ministry in Group A today and supplementary questions would be permissible subject to availability of time.

**A. Oral Questions**

**1. 3P10S/Q809 Question pertaining to frequent changes in Tourism Taxes**

The Member from Drametse-Ngatshang constituency questioned the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment on the frequent

revision of the tourism taxes by the Government. He said that such changes threaten to circumvent legislation and prove to be a source of considerable uncertainty and problem for the tourism and related sectors. The Member asked for clarification on the matter.

The Minister for Industry, Commerce, and Employment clarified that the authority to change tourism taxes rests with the Department of Tourism, as per Section 9 of the Tourism Levy Act. The recent changes are temporary measures and are subject to change based on the prevailing situation. The incentives package introduced will remain in effect until the end of 2024. Notably, due to this incentive scheme, 19,763 tourists have visited, significantly benefiting the tourism sector.

## **2. 3P10S/Q810 Lack of uniform rules for construction of residential house**

The Member from Khamdang-Ramjar constituency queried the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport about the construction regulations of residential houses. He pointed out that in the Simtokha area, a minimum land of 25 decimals is required, allowing only two-story structures with an attic. In contrast, the Changidaphu area permits five-story structures on 13 decimals of land. The Member requested clarification regarding these disparities in regulations.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport clarified that during the formulation of Thimphu town's master plan in 2004, the required land

was initially set at 50 decimals. However, this requirement was later reduced to 25 decimals in response to public requests. This reduction aligns with practices in other countries, aiming to allow comfortable living for everyone. While the requirement of 25 decimal land is exempted for inheritance passed down through generations, it is the minimum requirement for procurement of new land.

The Minister informed that in the past three years, only single-story buildings were permitted. However, the regulations have since been amended to allow the construction of two-story buildings with an attic. These regulations are subject to change depending upon change in circumstances in the future.

### **3. 3P10S/Q811 Civil Society Organization's Endowment Fund**

The Member from Tashichhoeling constituency highlighted that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) often cover development areas that the government is not able to reach and positively impacts the communities worldwide. The Member therefore asked the Minister for Home Affairs to clarify on the recent news where the CSOs have to establish an endowment fund of Nu. 4,000,000/- (Nu four million), a significant increase from the previous Nu. 50,000 (fifty thousand).

The Minister for Home Affairs explained that the need for an endowment fund was raised to address the issues faced by the CSOs during the deliberation on the Civil Society Organization Act. The Minister

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clarified that the current limit of Nu. 4,000,000 (Nu four million) was established in consultation with the CSOs to ensure self-sufficiency of the organizations.

The House was informed that the endowment fund for Public Benefit Organizations was set at Nu. 3 million, while new CSO established for only three to four years were required to have an endowment fund of Nu. 1 million. Similarly, the endowment fund requirement for mutual benefit organizations is set at Nu. 1.5 million.

#### **4. 3P10S/Q812 Bhutan's Accession to World Trade Organization**

The Member from Bartsham-Shongphu constituency asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment on the status and benefits of Bhutan's possible accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In response, the Minister for Industry, Commerce, and Employment informed that while there have been some reservations in joining the World Trade Organisation in 2008, the government has made the decision to join the WTO in April this year. Accordingly, applications have been submitted.

Additionally, a Committee led by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and External Trade Secretary has been formed and related works are being carried out. With the submission of the application, the World Trade Organization is providing technical support. Joining the WTO would not only provide opportunities for trade with its 164 member countries

but also strengthen the country's sovereignty. Further, it will benefit in having special rights and preferential provisions for trade with these 164 nations.

**5. 3P10S/Q813 Samdrup Jongkhar-Dewathang highway maintenance fund.**

The Member from Dewathang-Gomdar constituency questioned the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport regarding the insufficient maintenance funds causing the deteriorating condition of the 18km Samdrup Jongkhar-Dewathang highway. The Member inquired about the possibility of securing funds for maintenance.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport reiterated that the poor road condition is a result of the challenging landscape, making maintenance costly. The Minister informed that while it was not feasible to allocate funds now, Nu. 100 million has been allocated for the same in the 13th FYP.

**6. 3P10S/Q814 Lack of Power Connections for Temporary Structures**

The Member from Nanong-Shumar constituency informed the House on the challenges faced by the farmers in securing their crops due to lack of power connection/supply for temporary sheds. The Members therefore asked the Minister for Energy and Natural Resources to inform the House on the strategies and measures taken by the Ministry towards this.

The Minister for Energy and Natural Resources informed that when providing electrical connections it was imperative to use reliable and quality cable. Currently electricity connection is provided only for permanent structures with a coverage of 99.97 %.

While it is essential to provide electrical connections to temporary structures, it has been a challenge due to shortage of electrical cables and the high costs. However, there are plans to provide power to temporary structures using alternative sources of power such as mini hydropower projects and solar powers.

**7. 3P10S/Q815 Construction of Yumchey, Jarey Gewogs to Serpang Thrumshingla road**

The Member from Maenbi-Tsaenkhar constituency informed the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport that during the Lhuentse Dzongkhag visit of His Excellency Prime Minister in July 2022, His Excellency agreed to the submission made by the people of Kuridhuezhi for the construction of the Serpang Thrumzhingla to Yumchey. The member inquired about the current status of the road construction.

In response, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport highlighted that the construction of the road would be beneficial for all the people in the eastern dzongkhags. The road spans approximately 20 to 40 kilometers. To ensure the people are benefitted two strategies have been devised. Firstly, there is an agreement for the immediate construction of

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a 5-kilometer road from Yumchey to Dhuemang, with a budget allocation of approximately Nu. 1,500,000/-. Secondly, land measurement and survey for the stretch from Dhuemang to Thrumshingla, covering around 30 kilometers, will commence shortly.

## **8. 3P10S/Q816 Initiative and Strategies to Increase Employment Opportunities**

The Member from Khatoed-Laya constituency inquired with the Minister for Industry, Commerce, and Employment (MoIC) regarding the 2022 report, which indicated an employment rate of 3.6%. The member asked about the government's initiatives and strategies aimed at enhancing employment opportunities, particularly for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and nursing graduates, in the global job market.

The Minister for MoIC responded, stating that discussions are underway with registered agencies and their representatives under the ministry to facilitate the employment of TVET graduates abroad. Additionally, foreign grant support is secured to enhance skills development in TVET institutions. As part of this initiative, expert professionals from abroad are brought in to teach and contribute to the skill development programs.

Furthermore, opportunities for nursing professionals to gain experience in Japan, along with a three-year nursing education program offering six years of working opportunities in Singapore, have been introduced.

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Additionally, nursing education opportunities in the UK were also announced.

**9. 3P10S/Q817 Increasing Crime Rates is a Cause for National Concern**

The Member from Bomdeling-Jamkhar constituency highlighted the alarming increase in crime rates in the country, which has become a matter of national concern. He pointed out that from the year 2022 until now, crime rates, especially in battery and drug trafficking and abuse, have seen a significant rise. The Member asked the Minister to inform on the plans and strategies formulated by the Ministry to address this issue.

In response, the Minister for Home Affairs stated that according to the five-year report, there were 4,310 reported crimes in 2019, representing one of the highest figures. He said that while the number of crimes has been decreasing annually it was imperative to acknowledge this as an issue of concern.

Between 2021 and 2022, the crime rate saw an increase of 683 cases, with approximately 470 of these relating to drug-related crimes and the rising crime rate in the country is believed to be attributed to this factor. One of the reasons for this increase can be attributed to the additional efforts and initiatives undertaken by the Royal Bhutan Police to curb illicit drug trafficking since 2022.



The Ministry, led by the Chief of Police, has organized awareness and advocacy programs in schools as part of their efforts to curb crimes. Stringent surveillance measures are also being implemented. Moreover, 1821 individuals involved in criminal activities are provided with medical support and rehabilitation services. (19th Day of the 8th Month of the Female Water Rabbit Year corresponding to 3 October 2023.)

Note: The verbatim of the Question Hour is published in a separately

## **7. Question for the Ministry in Group B**

The Speaker informed that 8 Oral Questions and 2 Written Questions were tabled for the Ministry in Group B. He informed the House that the answers to the written questions have been distributed.

### **A. Oral Questions**

#### **1. 3P10S/Q818 Construction of Multipurpose Hall (MPH) for Gasa Primary School**

The Member from Khatoed-Laya constituency asked the Minister for Education and Skills Development about the Skills Development Program and the establishment of a Multipurpose Hall (MPH), emphasizing that the construction of a new MPH would benefit not only the students but also the entire district and its residents. Seeking clarification, he inquired if the construction of a new MPH for Gasa Primary School is proposed in the 13th Plan and requested the information to be shared with the House.

The Minister for Education and Skills Development responded, stating that in addition to the Multipurpose Hall (MPH), other modern amenities such as a football ground are also planned for construction. The Minister confirmed that the establishment of the MPH for Gasa Primary School has been included in the 13<sup>th</sup> FYP.

**2. 3P10S/Q819 Lack of Opportunities for Marketing Agricultural Products**

The Member from Chhumig-Ura constituency submitted that the farmers lack the opportunities to market agricultural produce despite producing ample varieties of fruits and vegetables. He therefore asked the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock on the measures taken to improve import and export of goods.

The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock in response pointed out that the production of agricultural goods from Bhutan frequently aligns with the time of production in the neighboring countries such as India and Bangladesh. As a result, Bhutanese agricultural products encounter market challenges due to the concurrent availability of comparable produce from these neighboring nations.

During this year, ginger fetched good prices in the market, whereas potatoes did not receive the same. To ensure sustainability, farmers are encouraged to cultivate high-yielding and easily marketable crops. The government is also providing support in various dzongkhags by establishing cold storages to store the products.

**3. 3P10S/Q820 Expansion of Trashigang Dzongkhag Hospital**

The Member from Bartsham-Shongphu constituency asked the Health Minister about the government's plans to expand the Trashigang District Hospital, considering its central location for the four eastern districts and the pressing demand from the people.

The Minister for Health explained that due to the scarcity of specialists in the country, a total of 5 specialists have been allocated to two or three combined locations. Specifically, in the districts of Phuntsholing, Bhumthang, Tsirang, Wangdue, Samtse, Dewathang, and Trashigang, the medical services provided previously are being consistently continued to this day.

Additionally, in 2021 and 2022, there were plans to deploy 5 specialists to Trashigang. Currently, Trashigang has achieved 100% coverage of medical services, including specialists in surgery, gynecology, and pediatrics. The Minister informed that the allocation of Nu. 250 million for the hospital in the 13<sup>th</sup> Plan will effectively address the issue.

**4. 3P10S/Q821 Increase in the Power Tiller's Hiring Charges**

The Member from Dewathang-Gomdar constituency asked the Agriculture and Livestock Minister about the steps taken by the government to address the problem of farmers leaving their land fallow due to the increase in power tiller hiring charges.

The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, emphasized the importance of improving agricultural machinery, not only for food security but also considering the decreasing number of people interested in farming. The government supported machinery hiring services from 2019 to 2022 with approximately Nu. 28 million. However, due to budget constraints, these services could not be provided in the fiscal year 2022-2023. Nevertheless, for the fiscal year 2023-2024, the House approved Nu. 250 million for agriculture machinery hiring. This funding will not only cover power tillers but also other essential agricultural machinery.

#### **5. 3P10S/Q822 Basic Health Unit Upgradation**

The Member from Khar-Yurung constituency requested the Health Minister to provide the House with an update on the implementation status of the government approved upgradation of Yurung BHU II to BHU I.

In response, the Minister for Health explained that the prerequisites for upgrading a BHU include factors such as the location, population, birth rate, and the number of children below 5 years of age. This issue is not unique to Yurung; several other gewogs face similar challenges. After consultations with the dzongkhags, approval was received earlier this year. Therefore, the upgradation of Yurung BHU II to BHU I has been included in the 13<sup>th</sup> Plan.

**6. 3P10S/Q823 Challenges faced by Acting Principal**

The Member from Maenbi-Tsaenkhar constituency questioned the Education and Skills Development Minister on the strategies formulated by the government to tackle the significant challenges faced by Acting Principals of schools with less than 100 students.

In response, the Minister for Education and Skills Development informed that discussions with the Royal Civil Service Commission highlighted the challenges of declining population of students, increase in number of schools and insufficient teachers with teachers getting promoted to higher positions with time and the need to address the issue.

The Minister informed that while some schools with only 75 students have principals others with over 100 students do not have principals due to lack of human resources. He also informed that the 13 FYP stipulates that all schools including primary school should have a principal.

**7. 3P10S/Q824 Implementation Status of Chain-Link Fencing**

The Member from the Bardo-Trong constituency asked the Agriculture and Livestock Minister to update the House on the implementation status of chain-link fencing to resolve the Human-wildlife conflict, enhancing the rural livelihood and national food security.

According to the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock to improve food security and rural livelihoods for the people and recognizing the

significance of chain-link fencing, the government allocated Nu. 500 million. The plan was to construct chain-link fencing in 20 districts. As of now, 16 districts have been completed, and work has begun in 3 districts. Unfortunately, the project has not yet commenced in the Haa district.

**8. 3P10S/Q825: Management of Facilities and Structures of Closed Schools.**

The Member from Kengkhar-Weringla constituency questioned the Minister for Education and Skills Development on the government's strategies and initiatives for managing the facilities and structures of numerous schools that have been shut down in recent years.

In response, the Minister for Education and Skills Development informed that following the Prime Minister's advice to keep children in close proximity to their parents, corresponding measures have been implemented by the Ministry. However, decisions to close down some schools were made in consultation with the local government and Dzongkhags. The decision was influenced by factors such as the imbalance of the teacher student ratio where some schools had more teachers than students and availability of better facilities and amenities in the neighboring schools .

Furthermore, the Minister informed that the Ministry has proposed the establishment of Skill Development Centers in the remote areas and schools for the benefit of skilling of students.

**A. Written Questions****1. 3P10S/Q826 Regarding how many power-tillers have been issued till date.**

The Member from Nanong-Shumar constituency asked the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock to update the House on the number of power-tillers issued from 2008 -2013, 2013 - 2018, and from 2018 - 2023 respectively.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock submitted the following:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Pow- er tiller</b>	<b>Mini power tiller</b>	<b>Trac- tor</b>	<b>Har- vester</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Reminder</b>
2008- 2013	453	0	165	0	618	Procured through the KRII grant and hired to Dzongkhags for utilization
2013- 2018	404	67	1	0	472	Procured through the KRII grant and hired to Dzongkhags for utilization
2013- 2018	1060	94	3	0	1158	Distributed to Farm Machinery Corporation Limited for hiring out
2022	388	144	28	19	579	Distributed to Farm Machinery Corporation Limited for hiring out
<b>Total</b>	<b>2350</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2827</b>	

## 2. 3P10S/Q827 Regarding the construction of farm roads

The Member from Kengkhar-Weringla constituency asked questions concerning the construction of farm roads, specifically seeking information on the length of farm roads constructed between the years 2008 and 2023.

In response, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock submitted the following information which was compiled by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport from the information recorded with the Dzongkhags and Engineering Division under the Ministry of Agriculture:

<b>Dzongkhag</b>	<b>2008-2012 (Kms)</b>	<b>2013-2017 (Kms)</b>	<b>2018-2020 (Kms)</b>	<b>Construction year not specified</b>	<b>Total (Kms)</b>
Gasa	3.95	23.8	2.5	7.37	37
Haa	22.1	124.01	36.6	96.62	279.33
Paro	236.9	57.7	9.5	274.86	578.96
Sarpang	81.2	41.422	38.5	455.773	616.95
Zhemgang	124.66	121.025	50.8	118.215	414.7
Samtse	98.2	423.3	321.35	97.48	940.33
Chukha	171.69	174.69	108.2	56.88	511.46
Wangdue	303.6	308.116	112.524	34.82	759.06
Bumthang	31.98	13.38	7.54	128.54	181.44
Trongsa	109.65	78.54	3.75	141.35	333.2
Thimphu	0	102.6	20	16.51	139.11
S/Jongkhar	96.45	286	121.28	0	503.73
Lhuentse	246.14	250.47	40.66	43.13	580.4
Mongar	282.3	608.03	83.28	451.01	1424.57
Pema Gatshel	54.7	314	116	331.47	816.17



T/gang	438	414.8	55.5	0	908.3
Dagana	225.09	299.23	26.15	164.76	715.23
Punakha	None	None	None	522.88	522.88
T/Yangtse	47.6	50.9	28.1	393.3	524.9
Tsirang	55.95	176.598	139.223	274.459	646.23
Total	2630.16	3867.956	1331.407	3614.427	11433.95

**On the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8th Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year, corresponding to the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023.** Note: Detailed deliberations on the questions can be found in the verbatim booklet produced separately

## **8. Questions Hour for Ministries of Group C**

The Speaker informed that ten oral questions were tabled for the Question Hour for Ministries in Group C and no written questions.

### **A. Oral Questions**

#### **1. 3P10S/Q828 Regarding the need to establish Power Projects**

The Member from Khatoed-Laya constituency asked the Prime Minister regarding the establishment of a hydropower project in Gasa Dzongkhag, citing the substantial potential of the river sourced from Laya and Lingshi. Additionally, the Member inquired about the possibility of promptly initiating the Detailed Project Report for the proposed hydro power project.

In response, the Prime Minister conveyed that the establishment of a hydropower project in Gasa Dzongkhag would necessitate feasibility

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assessments, to be conducted subsequent to the completion of Phase I and Phase II of the Punatsangchhu Hydropower Project. Furthermore, he emphasized that the initiation of a hydropower project at the water source in Gasa could have implications for the downstream operations of the Punatsangchhu Hydropower Projects.

## **2. 3P10S/Q829 Regarding the lifting of moratorium on loans**

The Member from Dewathang-Gomdar constituency asked the Minister of Finance on the anticipated timeframe for the lifting of the moratorium on loans issued by Bhutan Development Bank.

In response, the Finance Minister clarified that the moratorium was implemented to evaluate the heightened rates of non-repayment of loans and to formulate regulations aimed at addressing the issue.

Furthermore, he elaborated that, in collaboration with the Royal Monetary Authority, the government successfully decreased the non-repayment rate by implementing regulations to reach out to individuals who had not repaid loans and were previously inaccessible and that loans were now being disbursed. He also informed that additional loans were also being provided. However, for individuals seeking new loans, the government is currently in discussion with the Royal Monetary Authority and the RMA has been requested to make it available as soon as possible.

**3. 3P10S/Q830 Regarding the status of the establishment of an international airport in the eastern region**

The Member from Bartsham-Shongphu constituency asked the Prime Minister for an update on the current status of the preliminary feasibility study concerning the establishment of an international airport in the eastern region.

In response, the Prime Minister conveyed that, despite intentions to foster balanced regional development through the establishment of an international airport, the identification of a suitable site in Tashigang proved challenging due to the requisite minimum runway length of 3.5 kilometers. He highlighted that constructing such a site would potentially impact private lands and residences. Additionally, the Prime Minister noted that the construction process would necessitate the presence of international experts and related machinery on-site for approximately 12 months for in-depth study purposes, a consideration that has been factored into the 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan.

**4. 3P10S/Q831 Regarding the legalization of sale of cannabis**

The Member from Jomotsangkha-Martshala constituency sought clarification from the Prime Minister on the social media reports regarding the Cabinet's decision to permit a private company to cultivate cannabis for research purposes. Additionally, the Member raised the question of the potential legalization of marijuana sales.

In response, the Prime Minister explained that the cannabis plant consists of around 70 different chemicals, with CBD and THC being the primary components. While some countries permit the use of THC, its sale is generally not legalized. Furthermore, if trade involving the plant were to occur, it would have to be with India, with whom there are no existing trade agreements. Additionally, the substance remains entirely illegal in Delhi, except for a few specific locations.

In the context of Bhutan, the Prime Minister emphasized that the sale of cannabis-related products has been prohibited by law since 2018. He pointed out that, according to laws established in 2015, cultivation for research and medicinal purposes does not require authorization and accordingly implemented, however it can not be produced for sale.

**5. 3P10S/Q832 Clarification regarding Rural Life Insurance Scheme**

The Member from Sombaykha constituency requested the Minister of Finance to provide clarification on rumors circulating about the potential increment of rural life insurance. The inquiry was based on a recent notification released by the Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan concerning Drukyul Life Insurance.

In response, the Finance Minister clarified that the recent notification by the Royal Insurance Corporation regarding Drukyul Life Insurance pertained to a commercial scheme. In contrast, rural life insurance was identified as a policy subsidy plan. As a result, the Finance Minister

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emphasized that the two were unrelated, affirming that the rural life insurance remains unchanged.

**6. 3P10S/Q833 Regarding downgrading of Toetsho Lower Secondary School to community school**

The Member from Khamdang-Ramjar constituency sought clarification from the Prime Minister regarding rumors circulating about the potential downgrading of Toetsho Lower Secondary School under Toetsho Gewog in Tashi Yangtse to a Community Primary School.

In response, the Prime Minister clarified that there were no plans to convert Toetsho Lower Secondary School under Toetsho Gewog in Tashi Yangtse to Community Primary School. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of having a sufficient number of students in a school. He highlighted the need to establish schools based on evident demand and considerations such as the number of students in Class PP, the count of children reaching the age of 4, number of expectant mothers visiting the Basic Health Units (BHUs). He said that if the total number of births is expected to be around 15, then establishing a school is deemed necessary. Otherwise, it would be a loss to the government.

**7. 3P10S/Q834 Regarding the need to waive off land taxes for lands used for farm roads**

The Member from Mongar constituency asked the Finance Minister on plans to exempt land taxes for lands used in the construction of farm roads.

In response, the Finance Minister explained that, as per the Roads Act of 2013, if a road does not fall under the category of primary or secondary roads and significantly benefits the community, the government has the authority to acquire the land. In such cases, compensation is provided in the form of either land substitution or monetary compensation, alleviating concerns in this regard. Furthermore, the Minister mentioned that if the road exclusively benefits one household, Section 57 of the Property Tax Act of Bhutan 2022 includes a provision for Remission ensuring that there are no inconveniences.

**8. 3P10S/Q835 Status of Maternity Allowance**

The Member from Drukjeygang-Tseza constituency requested the Prime Minister to provide an update on the Government's commitment to provide maternity allowance to pregnant women.

In response, the Prime Minister mentioned that the Ministry of Health has developed plans for such initiatives, and announcements regarding the provision of maternity allowance to pregnant women will be made in the near future.

**9. 3P10S/Q836 Regarding the number of Bhutanese going abroad**

The Member from Chhumig-Ura constituency asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade to furnish the statistics regarding the number of Bhutanese youth who have relocated abroad from 2018 to 2023, categorized by Dzongkhag. Additionally, the inquiry sought

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information on the overall total of Bhutanese individuals residing abroad.

In response, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade mentioned that while there were no records available prior to the pandemic, two records were maintained, one for the total number of Bhutanese living abroad and the other for the number of passports issued and individuals who have undergone immigration processes.

He went on to provide the statistics, indicating that there were 42,729 Bhutanese people living in 112 countries. The highest numbers were recorded in Australia with 17,000, followed by India with 13,700, and Kuwait with 4,000. Additionally, around 100 individuals were reported to be living in various other countries, such as the United States. The Minister also highlighted that the Ministry had developed an app for those residing abroad, aimed at addressing their concerns and providing necessary services.

**10. 3P10S/Q837 Regarding the bridge between Gyelpozhing and Nganglam**

The Member from Kengkhar-Weringla constituency, while informing the House about the inconveniences caused by the collapse of the bridge between Gyelpozhing and Nganglam on two occasions, requested the Prime Minister to provide an update on the timeline for the construction of the bridge.

In response, the Prime Minister conveyed that, following assessments conducted by experts from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, as well as other road experts, after the bridge collapsed on two occasions, it was determined that constructing a concrete bridge would be feasible. He further explained that approximately 1 kilometer of road towards Gyelpozhing would need to be cleared for the construction.

Additionally, following consultations with His Holiness the Je Khenpo, it was deemed acceptable to construct a cement bridge at the same site. Recognizing that a construction duration of 1 to 2 years would result in significant inconvenience, plans were aligned to expedite the construction of a cement bridge at the same site within 3 to 4 months. **(On the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year, corresponding to the 9 October 2023)**

Note: Verbatim of the Question Hour is published separately.



**9. Resolution on Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) Report on Performance Audit Report on Irrigation System & Preparedness for Cyber security**

**9.1 Royal Kasho on Joint Sitting**

The Royal Assent is hereby granted to convene the Joint Sitting of the Parliament on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023 to present the review report of the Public Accounts Committee on Performance Audit Report on Irrigation System & Preparedness for Cyber security, and presentation of annual report on State of the Nation by the Prime Minister on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2023. Granted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of 8th Month of Water Female Rabbit Year.

By Warrant Under His Hand

**Druk Gyalpo**

Upon reading the Royal Kasho by the Secretary General, the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, Member of the National Assembly for Bardo-Trong constituency presented the committee's report summarized under two chapters.

- 1) Chapter I: Review Report on Performance Audit Report on Irrigation System; and
- 2) Chapter 2: Review Report on Performance Audit Report on Preparedness for Cyber security.

During the general discussion on the review report on Performance Audit Report on Irrigation System, the National Assembly Member for Athang-Thedtsho constituency and few other members submitted that the water distribution is a main problem faced by the public irrespective of the nature of irrigation projects. Therefore, there is a need for a government to hereafter distribute the water according to the area of the land. Moreover, poor management and lack of monitoring by the agencies has resulted in inability to resolve the irrigation water problem so far.

To this, Deputy Chairperson of the PAC, Member of the National Assembly for Chhoekhor- Tang constituency clarified that Bhutan is known for its rich surface water with five major river basins yet only 25% of the total cultivated area is under assured irrigation, while the remaining depends on rain for the water requirement. Therefore, in order to make water sufficient for irrigation and drinking, the management and

monitoring of irrigation works must be taken up by the Government irrespective of whether it is constructed by the Government or a private agency.

The Member of the National Assembly for Khamaed-Lunana constituency submitted that the irrigation projects could be completed quickly at lower costs if the construction works were taken over by the De-suung. Therefore, the government should take over the construction of the irrigation system.

In response, the Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Employment, along with a few other members, argued that the private sector is crucial for the country's development. They emphasized the necessity of adhering to policies aimed at private sector growth and meeting public demand by entrusting the construction of irrigation projects to private entities. They emphasized the importance of government coordination and monitoring to ensure timely completion and adherence to quality standards.

As there were no requests from the members for discussion on Recommendation 1 of Chapter 1, the House passed the recommendation as presented by the Committee.

Similarly, while deliberating on Recommendation 2, the Member of the National Assembly for Gangzur-Minjay constituency, along with a few other members, proposed that to attain the national goal of food

self-sufficiency and security, the government should transfer completed irrigation projects to the beneficiaries. This transfer should be supported by ample technical and human resources, with farmers being held responsible and accountable for enhancing agricultural productivity.

While determining the support of the House on Recommendation 2 through show of hands, it was passed with the full support of the House.

After that, recommendation 3, 4 & 5 was passed by the House as there was no request from the Hon'ble Members for deliberation on the same.

Likewise, during the deliberation on recommendation 6, Hon'ble Member of the National Assembly for Athang Thedtsho Constituency and few other members supported the recommendations of the PAC and further proposed to include provision for water distribution in the recommendation for future benefits. However, the proposal was defeated as the provision of water distribution is already covered in the Water Act of Bhutan.

While ascertaining the support of the House on Recommendation 6 through show of hands, it was passed with unanimous support of the House.

Subsequently, recommendation 7 was passed by the House considering there were no requests from the members for deliberation on the same and adjourned the first day of the deliberations.

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**Continuation of deliberation on Review Report on Performance**

**Audit Report on Preparedness for Cyber security.**

During the second day, the Chairperson of the PAC presented the Review Report on Performance Audit Report on Preparedness for Cyber security for deliberation. Subsequently, a Member of the National Assembly for Gangzur-Minjay Constituency and a few other members submitted that the usage of pirated software is the primary cause of problems in cybersecurity. They therefore emphasized the importance of employing genuine software as a beneficial solution to address cybersecurity concerns.

Moreover, Bhutan currently lacks agreements for cross-border and multi-judicial investigations of cybercrime with countries other than India. Consequently, it is essential for the government to explore the possibility of signing agreements with other nations, as cybersecurity issues may arise beyond India.

To this, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, Member of the National Assembly for Chhoekhor-Tang constituency clarified that during the consultative meeting with the Dzongkhag Administrations and GovTech agency, technical experts affirmed that the current version of computer and software used in the Government agencies are upgraded and the Information Technology (IT) officers across the agencies diligently work on antivirus software to protect against computer virus which can be beneficial to safeguard the digital data.

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Even though there is no dedicated Act for cybersecurity, the Information, Communications, and Media Act includes provisions related to cybersecurity. Additionally, GovTech faces challenges in terms of technical expertise and human resources to achieve the three crucial objectives of cybersecurity. This issue, however, can be addressed with the support of the government.

The Member of the National Assembly from Khatoed-Laya constituency raised three queries for clarification. Firstly, he wanted to know if the five recommendations in the Performance Audit Report on Preparedness for Cybersecurity were put forth by the PAC or the Royal Audit Authority (RAA). Secondly, the Member sought clarification on the differences between the National Digital Identity Act of Bhutan and cybersecurity. Lastly, he inquired about the provisions that necessitate amendment.

To this, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, the Member of the National Assembly for Chhoekhor-Tang constituency clarified that the PAC after reviewing the recommendations of RAA, endorsed it and submitted it as a joint recommendation.

Similarly, the Member of the National Assembly for Tashichhoeling constituency expressed reservations about the technical expertise and qualifications of the RAA during the performance audit on cybersecurity. They questioned the effectiveness of a report involving technical matters and sought clarification on how the PAC consulted on this issue.

In response, a member of the Committee, the Member of the National Council for Pemagatshel Dzongkhag, clarified that while the cybersecurity risk in Bhutan is relatively low compared to other countries, it is crucial to safeguard against potential cyber threats. He emphasized that the technical experts and qualified officers of the RAA had conducted the audit, assuring that the resulting report is constructive.

Likewise, the Opposition Leader emphasized that the absence of cybersecurity poses a significant risk to the country's independence, making it an unavoidable concern. He highlighted the potential effectiveness of the five recommendations on cybersecurity preparedness if approved by the House, but also acknowledged that positive results might take time. In assessing the current situation, the Opposition Leader underscored that the country is not adequately prepared for cybersecurity, emphasizing the urgency of addressing this crucial matter.

The Member of the National Assembly for Sombaykha constituency proposed the development of plans and programs for providing cybersecurity training in higher secondary schools to address the shortage of manpower and technical experts in the GovTech agency. In response, the PAC clarified that the recommendations couldn't include provisions for cybersecurity training opportunities because the country is not adequately prepared for cybersecurity, and establishing a training institute at this stage would be futile.

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Following this, the Minister for Industry, Commerce, and Employment, along with a few other members, expressed concern that government agencies use Google Workspace for official tasks, storing information in a foreign country. He highlighted the potential risks to data security and independence and recommended that data be stored within the country. He proposed including this in the recommendations. Additionally, he suggested that the use of free software could be beneficial for the country.

However, the proposal submitted by the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment was not supported while ascertaining the support of the House through show of hands.

In the discussion of the five recommendations in Chapter 2, no requests for deliberation were made by the members. Consequently, when determining the support of the House for these recommendations through a show of hands, they were passed with unanimous support from all members.

A total of 12 recommendations, including 7 from the Review Report on Performance Audit of Irrigation Systems and 5 from the Review Report on Performance Audit of Cybersecurity Preparedness, were proposed by the PAC as follows:

1. Department of Water (DoW) as a lead agency to expedite the operationalization of the National Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Plan.



2. DoA as a lead agency for the irrigation system to review NIP 2012 and mainstream NIMP in successive five year plans to steer the sector to achieve the national goal of food self-sufficiency and security.
3. DoA in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure and Development (DoID) to continue to explore and adopt appropriate technologies for sustainable irrigation infrastructure.
4. DoA to maintain and update comprehensive inventory of irrigation systems in the country.
5. DoA in collaboration with DoID to institute mechanisms to enforce the requirement to carry out multi-disciplinary feasibility studies of irrigation schemes.
6. As per the requirement of the Water Act of Bhutan 2011 and its regulation to form WUAs, DoA in collaboration with Local Governments to facilitate the institutionalization of WUAs for the effective beneficiary participation at all levels of planning, implementation and maintenance with required financial support to ensure sustainability of the irrigation schemes.
7. There is a need to have Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) amongst the DoA, DoID, DoW and LGs in the implementation of irrigation schemes across the country to ensure that the planning

and development of irrigation facilities are in harmony with the strategic focus of the sector, besides ensuring a minimum quality of infrastructure. Therefore, MoAL to have administrative arrangements in planning, budgeting, execution and monitoring of irrigation infrastructure development.

8. The GovTech Agency to review and improve the institutional and regulatory framework for Cybersecurity.

Establish a coordinating leadership to provide strategic direction and empower the nodal agency for cybersecurity. Form institutional linkages amongst the policymakers, regulators, and implementers including SoEs and government agencies.

Further, GovTech as a national authority needs to expand the role of existing regulators. These regulators need to have adequate personnel with cybersecurity know-how and need to enhance enforcement and compliance mechanisms through various means such as rules and regulations, license contract agreements, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and accountability mechanisms.

9. The GovTech Agency to implement the draft National Cybersecurity Strategy with implementation plan, budget, monitoring and evaluation framework.

10. The GovTech Agency to expedite the identification and protection of Critical Information Infrastructures (CIIs) in the country.
11. The GovTech Agency to strengthen the legal framework for cybersecurity by reviewing the existing Acts, Rules and Regulations.
12. The GovTech Agency to strengthen the enforcement mechanism for data privacy and protection against unauthorized disclosure and processing of personal data. In order to ensure data protection and security, the GovTech Agency should develop protocols to classify data to ensure that sensitive and confidential information is protected.

As per the procedure of the House, overall voting was administered on the above mentioned 12 recommendations. All the 12 recommendations were endorsed with full support of the House. Out of 67 members present and voting, all voted in favor of the recommendations.

The Speaker declared the Annual Audit Report 2022 – 2023 as a public document. Subsequently, the PAC was directed to review the report and submit its findings for deliberation during the next session of the Parliament.

**( On the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to the 12 October 2023 ) (Voting records are annexed in Annexure No. 3)**

## **10. Prime Minister's Annual Report on the State of the Nation including legislative plans, annual plans, and priorities of the Government**

In accordance with Article 10, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Prime Minister presented the Annual Report on the State of the Nation including legislative plans, annual and priorities of the Government to the House. Presenting the Report, the Prime Minister attributed the achievements of the government to the leadership of His Majesty the King, guidance from the Members of the Royal Family, blessings from His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the monastic body, support of the cabinet, civil servants, the three branches of the military (police, army, and the Royal Bodyguard), De-sung, and all Bhutanese citizens.

The State of the Nation report was composed of 12 significant contributions made by His Majesty for the benefit of the people and the country mirroring the 12 auspicious deeds of Shakyamuni Buddha.

### **1. De-Ssuung**

The De-sung program, initiated by His Majesty the King in 2011, has been instrumental in offering essential services to the nation, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, they have consistently stepped up to meet the needs of both the government and the people, actively volunteering their services in response to any natural disasters that befall the country. The government therefore expressed heartfelt appreciation to His Majesty for this initiative, which has had a profoundly positive impact on the nation.

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**2. Kidu**

The King has consistently bestowed Kidu upon the populace. Moreover, amid the pandemic, both the King and the Fourth King magnanimously extended Kidu to the people from their personal royal funds. The Prime Minister conveyed gratitude to their Majesties for safeguarding the well-being of the people comprehensively, including aspects such as employment, salary, housing, and medical care.

**3. Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies**

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to His Majesty the King for establishing the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies in 2023 enhancing the leadership skills of the government leaders and empowering them to serve the government effectively.

**4. United Nations Peacekeeping**

Under the leadership of His Majesty the King, Bhutan commenced its involvement in UN Peacekeeping in 2014. The participation of all three armed forces from Bhutan not only garnered the nation recognition and a commendable reputation but also expanded its global influence, while simultaneously safeguarding the sovereignty of the nation. The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to His Majesty the King for this significant contribution.

**5. Gyalsung program**

In pursuit of both current and future benefits for the country, His Majesty the King initiated the Gyalsung program. This endeavor has empowered

Bhutanese youth by imparting diverse knowledge and refining their skills and abilities, thus better equipping them to effectively serve the nation. In acknowledgment of this transformative initiative, the government expresses its deepest gratitude

## **6. Transformation**

In addressing the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, His Majesty initiated crucial reforms for the nation's development. Despite encountering some difficulties and challenges along the way, these transformative changes now stand as the bedrock for the progress of the nation. The government extends its heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty for taking this visionary step.

## **7. Establishment of Pema Center**

Under His Majesty the King's directive, the Pema Center was established to support individuals grappling with alcohol and drug addiction, as well as those dealing with mental health challenges. As part of this initiative, the Royal Palace in Mongar was transformed into a hospital center, proving immensely beneficial for the country. In recognition of these positive developments, the government expresses its sincere gratitude to His Majesty.

## **8. Mega City Development Plans**

His Majesty the King has set in motion plans and activities to create a model urban hub in Gelephu through Foreign Direct Investment. These

initiatives have the potential to substantially enhance the country's economy, and the government expresses its appreciation for His Majesty's royal endeavor

## **9. Prevention of Drugs and substance abuse**

His Majesty, concerned by the substantial threat posed by harmful substances, including tobacco, drugs, and narcotics, to the prosperous and productive future of the nation's youth directed the implementation of stringent measures and strategies to eliminate these substances from the country. In alignment with His Majesty's directive, the government has conscientiously and generously undertaken extensive efforts to achieve this critical goal. The government expresses sincere gratitude to His Majesty for his guidance and leadership in this crucial endeavor.

## **10. National Digital Identity System**

His Majesty underscored the significance of a National Digital Identity System moving forward in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. Under the command of His Majesty the King, with support from international experts the National Digital Identity System was successfully developed and implemented. The government extends its gratitude to His Majesty for this noble initiative.

## **11. Management of Assets of the Monastic Body**

His Majesty the King recognising the need for effective management and upkeep of the monastic body's property and assets established the

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Gerab Nyed-Yon, an autonomous agency to hold and manage the assets and investments of the Zhung Dratshang.

The government is grateful to His Majesty for this initiative and extended its deepest appreciation.

## **12. Wangchuck Dynasty**

To perpetuate the Wangchuck lineage, His Majesty and Her Majesty have been blessed with both sons and daughters. Beyond fulfilling the role of queen, Her Majesty has proactively spearheaded various initiatives that prioritize the well-being of women and young girls in the country. The government extends heartfelt gratitude to both Her Majesty and His Majesty for their dedicated efforts.

### **State of the Nation Report**

#### **Agriculture**

The 12th Plan commenced with an estimated budget of Nu. 310 billion which fell short by Nu, 29 billion. After the commencement of social developmental activities, the total expenditure stands at Nu. 385 billion. Nu. 13 Billion was incurred for the pandemic. About 5000 kms of farm roads was constructed and about 40 % of the farmers were provided with chain link fencing. Further, to fulfill the aspiration of His Majesty the King about 200,000 saplings were planted with the support of the Dessups,



## **Economy**

Hydro power project is one of the foundations for the country's economy. The construction of the Kholongchu hydro power projects was initiated by Druk Green Power Corporation. In the past year, three hydro power projects were initiated in Lhuentse, Haa, and Zhemgang and next year on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of March, there are plans to commence the Dorjilung and Kholongchu mega and mini hydro power projects. Further, the government plans to procure and agreements have been made to take over the Dessung solar project if substantial solar power can be generated.

## **Education**

In 2012, there were a total of 172,000 students and 555 schools. A decade later, the number of students has decreased to 152,000, with 564 schools. This decline is attributed to a low birth rate. To enhance the quality of education, it is crucial to implement effective policies ensuring a conducive learning environment, diverse subjects and qualified teachers. In the 13th plan, establishing a dedicated institute is imperative to focus on enhancing these educational aspects.

## **Health**

The government has provided health services to the door steps of the people and has completed the screening for stomach, breast and cervical cancer for the country. The government further reported on the plans to initiate kidney transplants and organ donation programs.

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## **National Programs**

Under the Royal Command of His Majesty the King, more than 200,000 tree saplings were planted in the country and the government plans to organize the same actively annually. Further the government successfully carried out the dog sterilization program and about 61000 dogs have been sterilized.

Concluding the presentation on the report, the Prime Minister said that as per the executive order under his leadership about 192 Gyedrungs had to be retrenched and Drayangs had to be closed and expressed his apologies for the inconvenience caused to those affected. He expressed his gratitude to the civil servants for the support and to the donor countries for the technical and financial support during his tenure under the guidance and leadership of His Majesty the King. He further expressed his gratitude to the Government of India for providing financial support as and when required concluding his presentation on the Annual Report on the State of the Nation including legislative plans, annual plans, and priorities of the Government to the Parliament.

**( On the 29<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to the 13 October 2023 )**

Note: The copy of the Prime Minister's Annual Report on the State of the Nation can be accessed from the Prime Ministers' Office.

## **11. Re-deliberation on the Ninth Biological Corridor Bill, 2023**

The Finance Minister, on behalf of the Member incharge of the Bill moved the motion to redeliberate on the 15 recommendations received on the Bill from the National Council.

The Chairperson of the Environment and Climate Change Committee then presented the review report of the Committee in which the Committee expressed support for all the 15 recommendations made by the National Council.

The House deliberated and endorsed all of the 15 recommendations made by the National Council.

Subsequently, in accordance with the Rules of the Procedure, the Bill was adopted with all 41 members present and voting, voting in favour of the Bill. ( **On the 5<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to the 19 October 2023** ). The voting records are attached in Annexure 4.

## **12. The Closing Ceremony**

### **12.1. Expression of Appreciation :**

The Prime Minister stated that His Majesty the King has always prioritized the welfare of the people and the nation. Further, during the pandemic when the people were unsure of what to do, His Majesty the King had unique plans in place and granted numerous Kidu to ensure that no one was affected by the pandemic. The Prime Minister on behalf

Resolution of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

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of the government expressed their appreciation to His Majesty the King for the exemplary leadership.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to His Majesty the King for inviting foreign experts and initiating transformative measures to strengthen the economy after the pandemic. The unprecedented and successful result of the initiative are all attributable to His Majesty the King's dynamic leadership.

Similarly, the Prime Minister also extended thanks to His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Central Monastic Body for conducting rituals, seeking divine intervention for the well-being of the people to overcome the COVID pandemic.

The Chairperson of the National Council emphasized that His Majesty the King has conscientiously managed both the internal and external affairs of the country, overseeing economic development and transformative initiatives. Furthermore, the Chairperson conveyed gratitude to His Majesty for the recognition of Bhutan's Peacekeeping military at the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), where they received the UN Peacekeeping Medal. The Chairperson attributed this achievement to His Majesty's visionary leadership.

The Chairperson also highlighted that the success of the National Council and its effectiveness in the law-making process were achieved under the guidance and support of His Majesty the King.

The National Council members pledged their unwavering commitment to work under His Majesty's benevolent rule and in accordance with the constitution. They also affirmed their dedication to undertake the necessary revisions of laws and policies. The members of the National Council pledged their steadfast commitment to operate under His Majesty's benevolent leadership and in accordance with the constitution. Additionally, they affirmed their dedication to undertaking the necessary revisions of laws and policies.

Expressing his appreciation on behalf of the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, submitted that amid the pandemic, His Majesty emerged as a guiding light for the people, skillfully managing the crisis. He also expressed gratitude to His Majesty for initiation of substantial and historic transformation efforts, focusing on advancing the nation's economy and development including the Gyalsung Program.

His Majesty the King also generously granted pay revision for the civil servants and land, census and medical Kidu for the welfare people. His Majesty also initiated many industrial and power projects and the National Digital Identity project and provided an opportunity for the Bhutanese Army to participate in the UN Peacekeeping program. He expressed gratitude to His Majesty for further straightening ties with other countries and with India.

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Further he extended gratitude to His Majesty the Fourth King, Her Majesty the Queen, and the Royal Family for the selfless efforts undertaken for the nation's well-being. The opposition party expressed their deep appreciation for their invaluable advice and wise guidance in the service of the country.

## **12.2. Concluding Speech of the Speaker**

The Speaker of the National Assembly expressed profound gratitude to the King for strengthening the security and sovereignty of the country and for building a strong foundation for the country's economy. He expressed gratitude to His Majesty for strengthening foreign relations and for personally meeting with the people in the country and granting census, land and medical Kidu, support to the students and for initiating the Dessung programs.

The Speaker also offered his prayer for the success of His Majesty's Gyalsung Program and the Gelephu Mega City Project.

He also expressed his gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Zhung Dratshang for conducting rituals and prayers for the well being of the world and for the country especially during the pandemic.

In conclusion, the Speaker highlighted the legislative achievement of the Third Parliament and expressed gratitude to His Majesty for the trust and Dakyen conferred upon the Speaker.

The Session concluded with offering of Tashi Moenlam and prayers for the long and prosperous life of His Majesty the King.

( On the 6<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to the 20 October 2023 )



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wangchuk Namgyel'.

Wangchuk Namgyel

**Speaker**

**Opening Speech by the Hon’ble Speaker during the Opening Session  
of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Third Parliament on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

Graced by His Majesty the King the Opening Ceremony of the Tenth Session commences on this auspicious day today.

On behalf of the Members of the Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to humbly welcome and express my deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King for gracing the Opening Ceremony amidst His Majesty’s numerous Royal commitments.

I also welcome Members of the Royal Family, senior government officials, former government officials, diplomats and students to the Opening Ceremony.

I would like to remind the people that we Bhutanese have been the most fortunate to have been gifted a princess on 9th September by His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and Her Majesty the Gyaltshen. I, on behalf of the Parliament, express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Gyaltshen and offer prayers for the long life and well-being of Her Royal Highness the Gyaltshen.

Under the command of His Majesty the King, to commemorate the birth of Her Royal Highness the Gyaltshen, the Zhung Dratshang declared the day as Dratshang Yojay Gi Nyim, or the day to make offerings to the



**Annexure 1**

central monastic body. Yojay is a traditional practice where rich and affluent individuals make voluntary offerings of land and other assets to the Monastic Body with the belief that it would accumulate merit. The revival of this practice of Yojay would greatly benefit in understanding and promoting our culture and tradition among the youth. Towards this, the Parliament would like to express deep appreciation to His Majesty the King and His Holiness the Je Khenpo.

His Majesty the King in July visited Japan and the United States, and met with global business and economic leaders in preparation for Bhutan's forthcoming economic development endeavors. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and reverence to His Majesty the King for this noble endeavor.

Additionally, His Majesty the King undertook personal visits to various regions of the nation to gain insight into the challenges and difficulties faced by the people and provided Kidu to the people. His Majesty the King also personally visited and met with the flash flood victims of the Ungar flash flood that occurred on July 20. The Parliament wishes to convey its profound gratitude for His Majesty's compassion and noble actions.

The Parliament would also like to express deep appreciation to the Zhung Dratshang led by His Holiness the Je Khenpo for continuously conducting prayers for the well being of the world and in particular the

country and the people. Further, His Holiness also led prayer for those who lost their lives in the Ungar flash flood. The Parliament expresses our deep gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Zhung Dratshang for administering the most sacred public empowerment of Buddha Amitabha (Yoepamay Wang) to honor the birth of Her Royal Highness the Princess.

Further, His Holiness the Je Khenpo proffered a sum of Nu. 10 million for old aged monks living in old age care homes. His Holiness also entrusted the management of the Medicinal and Recreational Park in Sarpang to the Gelephu Thromde which is expected to benefit all Bhutanese in the future. For these compassionate and magnanimous gestures, the Parliament expresses our deepest gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo.

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With the reinstatement of the traditional practice of Yojay by the Zhung Dratshang, the government with deep reverence made the inaugural

**Annexure 1**

Yojay offering. The Parliament would also like to express gratitude to the government.

If I may now present the agenda for the Tenth Session, the tenth session will deliberate on.

1. Agreement on Movement of Traffic-in-Transit between the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Protocol thereto
  2. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Charter
  3. Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities and
  4. Biological Corridor Nine Bill of Bhutan
12. Similarly in accordance with the legislative procedures the House will conduct the Question Hour and deliberate on Motions and deliberate on two follow-up implementation reports.

In addition, the Parliament will also deliberate on the review report of the Anti-Corruption Commission's Annual Report 2022-2023, Public Accounts Committee's review report on the Performance Audit Reports and Prime Minister's Annual Report on the state of the nation, including legislative plans and the annual plans and priorities of the Government.

In conclusion under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty the the Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal Family, prayers

**Annexure 1**

of His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Zhung Dratshang, the goodwill and fortune of the Bhutanese people, wisdom and cooperation of the Members of Parliament and support from all concerned Agencies, I offer my prayers and hope for the successful conclusion of the Tenth Session of the Third Parliament.

KADRINCHE!

**The vote count record for the adoption of the Good Governance Committee’s review report on Anti-Corruption Commission’s annual report 2022-2023.**

All the 39 members present in the house voted “Yes”

- |     |                                                                     |     |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.  | The member of Monggar Constituency, Karma Lhamo,                    | Yes |
| 2.  | Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Yeshey Penjor,               | Yes |
| 3.  | Minister of Energy and Natural Resources,<br>Lok Nath Sharma,       | Yes |
| 4.  | Finance Minister, Namgay Tshering,                                  | Yes |
| 5.  | Home Minister, Ugyen Dorji,                                         | Yes |
| 6.  | Education and Skill Development Minister, Jai Bir Rai,              | Yes |
| 7.  | Infrastructure and Transport Minister, Dorji Tsheing,               | Yes |
| 8.  | The member from Chhoekhor-Tang Constituency, Dawa,                  | Yes |
| 9.  | Deputy Speaker, Tshencho Wangdi,                                    | Yes |
| 10. | The member of Chhunig-Ura constituency,<br>Dungtsho Karma Wangchuk, | Yes |
| 11. | The member of Bongo-Chapchha Constituency,<br>Tshewang Lhamo,       | Yes |
| 12. | The member of Drujeygang-Tseza constituency,<br>Jurmey Wangchul,    | Yes |
| 13. | The member of LhamoiZingkha-Tashiding Constituency,                 | Yes |
| 14. | The member of Khatoed-Laya Constituency, Tenzin,                    | Yes |

**Annexure 2**

- |     |                                                                       |     |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 15. | The member of BjiKartshog-Uesu Constituency,<br>Ugyen Tenzin,         | Yes |
| 16. | The member of Sangbaykha Constituency, Dorji Wangmo,                  | Yes |
| 17. | The member of Gangzur-Minjei Constituency,                            | Yes |
| 18. | The member of Maenbi-Tsenkhar Constituency,                           | Yes |
| 19. | The member of Drametse-Ngatshang Constituency,                        | Yes |
| 20. | The member of Kengkhar-Weringla Constituency,<br>Rigzin Jamtsho,      | Yes |
| 21. | The member of Lamgong-Wangchang Constituency,<br>Ugyen Tshering,      | Yes |
| 22. | The member of Khar-Urung Constituency, Tshering Choden,               | Yes |
| 23. | Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Employment,<br>Karma Dorji,       | Yes |
| 24. | The member of Dewathang-Gomdar Constituency,<br>Ugyen Dorji,          | Yes |
| 25. | The member of Jomotsangkhar-Martshala Constituency,<br>Norbu Wangzom, | Yes |
| 26. | The member of PhuentshoPelri-Samtse Constituency,<br>Ganesh Ghimiri,  | Yes |
| 27. | The member of Tashi-Chhoeling Constituency,<br>Dil Maya Rai,          | Yes |
| 28. | 30. The member of Shompangkhar Constituency,<br>Tek Ddr Rai,          | Yes |

**Annexure 2**

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|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 29. | The member of Bartsham-Shongphu Constituency,<br>Passang Dorji,                   | Yes |
| 30. | The member of Kanglung Samkhar-Udzorong<br>Constituency, Dr. Samdrup R. Wangchuk, | Yes |
| 31. | The member of Wamrong Constituency, Karma Thinley,                                | Yes |
| 32. | The member of Bumdeling-Jamkhar Constituency, Dupthob,                            | Yes |
| 33. | The member of Khamdang Ranjar Constituency,<br>Karma Gyeltshen,                   | Yes |
| 34. | The member of Dragteng-Langthil Constituency,<br>Gyem Dorji,                      | Yes |
| 35. | The member of Kilkhorthang-Mendrelgang Constituency,<br>Bimal Thapa,              | Yes |
| 36. | The member of Sergithang-TsirangToed Constituency,<br>Garja Man Rai,              | Yes |
| 37. | The member of Athang-Thoedtsho Constituency,<br>Kinley Wangchuk,                  | Yes |
| 38. | The member of Bardo-Trong Constituency,<br>Gyambo Tshering,                       | Yes |
| 39. | Opposition Leader, Dorji Wangdi,                                                  | Yes |

**The vote record for the adoption of Public Account Committee’s audit report after the deliberation on the preparation of irrigation system and cyber security output on 12.10.2023.**

All the 67 members present in the house votes “Yes”

1. The Minister of Foreign Affair and External Trade,  
Dasho Doctorate, Tandin Dorji, Yes
2. The member of Monggar Constituency, Karma Lhamo, Yes
3. The minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Yeshey Penjor, Yes
4. The minister of Health, Dasho Dechen Wangmo, Yes
5. The minister of Energy and Natural Resources,  
Lak Nath Sharma, Yes
6. The Minister of Finance, Namgay Tshering, Yes
7. The minister of Home Affair, Ugyen Dorji, Yes
8. The minister of Education and Skill Development,  
Jay Bir Rai, Yes
9. The minister of Infrastructure and Transport, Dorji Tshering, Yes
10. The minister of Choekhor Tang, Dawa. Yes
11. The Deputy Speaker, Tshencho Wangdi, Yes
12. The member of Chhunig-Ura constituency,  
Dungtsho Karma Wangchuk, Yes
13. The member of Bongo-Chapchha Constituency,  
Tshewang Lhamo, Yes



**Annexure 3**

- |     |                                                                  |     |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 14. | The member of Drujeygang-Tseza constituency,<br>Jurmey Wangchul, | Yes |
| 15. | The member of LhamoiZingkha-Tashiding Constituency,              | Yes |
| 16. | The member of Khamoed Laya Constituency, Yeshey Dem,             | Yes |
| 17. | The member of Khatoed-Laya Constituency, Tenzin,                 | Yes |
| 18. | The member of BjiKartshog-Uesu Constituency,<br>Ugyen Tenzin,    | Yes |
| 19. | The member of Sangbaykha Constituency, Dorji Wangmo,             | Yes |
| 20. | The member of Gangzur-Minje Constituency,                        | Yes |
| 21. | The member of Maenbi-Tsenkhar Constituency,                      | Yes |
| 22. | The member of Drametse-Ngatshang Constituency,                   | Yes |
| 23. | The member of Kengkhar-Weringla Constituency,<br>Rigzin Jamtsho, | Yes |
| 24. | The member of Lamgong-Wangchang Constituency,<br>Ugyen Tshering, | Yes |
| 25. | The member of Khar-Urung Constituency, Tshering Choden,          | Yes |
| 26. | The member of Nanong Shumar Constituency,<br>Lungten Namgyel,    | Yes |
| 27. | Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Employment,<br>Karma Dorji,  | Yes |
| 28. | The member of Dewathang-Gomdar Constituency,<br>Ugyen Dorji,     | Yes |

**Annexure 3**

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|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 29. | The member of Jomotsangkhar-Martshala Constituency,<br>Norbu Wangzom,             | Yes |
| 30. | The member of PhuentshoPelri-Samtse Constituency,<br>Ganesh Ghimiri,              | Yes |
| 31. | The member of Tashi-Chhoeling Constituency,<br>Dil Maya Rai,                      | Yes |
| 32. | 30. The member of Shompangkhar Constituency,<br>Tek Ddr Rai,                      | Yes |
| 33. | The member of Ugyentse-Yoelseltse Constituency,                                   | Yes |
| 34. | The member of Shompangkha Constituency, Tek Bdr. Rai,                             | Yes |
| 35. | The member of Bartsham-Shongphu Constituency,<br>Passang Dorji,                   | Yes |
| 36. | The member of Kanglung Samkhar-Udzorong Constituency,<br>Dr. Samdrup R. Wangchuk, | yes |
| 37. | The member of Wamrong Constituency, Karma Thinley,                                | Yes |
| 38. | The member of Bumdeling-Jamkhar Constituency, Dupthob,                            | Yes |
| 39. | The member of Khamdang Ranjar Constituency,<br>Karma Gyeltshen,                   | Yes |
| 40. | The member of Dragteng-Langthil Constituency,<br>Gyem Dorji,                      | Yes |
| 41. | The member of Kilkhorthang-Mendrelgang Constituency,<br>Bimal Thapa,              | Yes |

**Annexure 3**

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|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 42. | The member of Sergithang-TsirangToed Constituency,<br>Garja Man Rai,          | Yes |
| 43. | The member of Athang-Thoedtsho Constituency,<br>Kinley Wangchuk,              | Yes |
| 44. | The member of Bardo-Trong Constituency,<br>Gyambo Tshering,                   | Yes |
| 45. | Opposition Leader, Dorji Wangdi,                                              | Yes |
| 46. | The member of National Council, Wangduephodrang,<br>Phub Dorji,               | Yes |
| 47. | The member of National Council, SamdrupJongkhar,<br>Tshewang Rinzin,          | Yes |
| 48. | The Eminent member, Ugyen Tshering,                                           | Yes |
| 49. | The Eminent member, Kesang Chuki Dorjee,                                      | Yes |
| 50. | The Eminent member, Phuntsho Rabten,                                          | Yes |
| 51. | The member of National Council, Bumthang,<br>Kencho Tshering,                 | Yes |
| 52. | The member of National Council, Chhukha (Chairperson),<br>Sangay Dorji,       | Yes |
| 53. | The member of National Council, Dagana,<br>Berindra Chimoria,                 | Yes |
| 54. | The member of national Council, Gasa, Tshering,                               | Yes |
| 55. | The member of National Council, Haa,<br>Dago Tsheringla (Duputy Chairperson), | Yes |

**Annexure 3**

- |     |                                                                  |     |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 56. | The member of National Council, Lhuntse,<br>Kelzang Lhundup,     | Yes |
| 57. | The member of National Council,<br>Monggar, Tshering Wangchen,   | Yes |
| 58. | The member of National Council, Paro, Ugyen Tshering,            | Yes |
| 59. | The member of National Council, Pemagatshel,<br>Jamyang Namgyal, | Yes |
| 60. | The member of National Council, Punakha, Namgyal Dorji,          | Yes |
| 61. | The member of National Council, Samtse, Tashi Dendup,            | Yes |
| 62. | The member of National Council, Sarpang, Pema Tashi,             | Yes |
| 63. | The member of National Council, Thimphu, Leki Tshering,          | Yes |
| 64. | The member of National Council, Trashigang,<br>Sonam Tobgay,     | Yes |
| 65. | The member of National Council, Trashiyangtse,<br>Sonam Tenzin,  | Yes |
| 66. | The member of National Council, Trongsa, Rinzin Namgyal,         | Yes |
| 67. | The member of National Council, Tsirang, Nima Wangdi,            | Yes |
| 68. | The member of National Council, Zhemgang,<br>Tshering Tshomo,    | Yes |

**The vote recorded “for and against” the adoption of Biological Corridor  
Nine bill 2023 during re-deliberation on 19.10.2023.**

From a total of 41 members present in the house, all 14 members voted in favor of the adoption of the bill.

- |     |                                                                     |     |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.  | Prime Minister Lotey Tshering,                                      | Yes |
| 2.  | The member of Monggar Constituency, Karma Lhamo,                    | Yes |
| 3.  | Finance Minister, Namgay Tshering,                                  | Yes |
| 4.  | Home Minister, Ugyen Dorji,                                         | Yes |
| 5.  | Education and Skill Development Minister, Jai Bir Rai,              | Yes |
| 6.  | Infrastructure and Transport Minister, Dorji Tsheing,               | Yes |
| 7.  | The member from Chhoekhor-Tang Constituency, Dawa,                  | Yes |
| 8.  | Deputy Speaker, Tshencho Wangdi,                                    | Yes |
| 9.  | The member of Chhunig-Ura constituency,<br>Dungtsho Karma Wangchuk, | Yes |
| 10. | The member of Bongo-Chapchha Constituency,<br>Tshewang Lhamo,       | Yes |
| 11. | The member of Drujeygang-Tseza constituency,<br>Jurmey Wangchul,    | Yes |
| 12. | The member of LhamoiZingkha-Tashiding Constituency,                 | Yes |
| 13. | The member of Khamoed-Lunana Constituency,<br>Yeshey Dem,           | Yes |
| 14. | The member of Khatoed-Laya Constituency, Tenzin,                    | Yes |

**Annexure 4**

15. The member of BjiKartshog-Uesu Constituency,  
Ugyen Tenzin, Yes
16. The member of Sangbaykha Constituency, Dorji Wangmo, Yes
17. The member of Gangzur-Minje Constituency, Yes
18. The member of Maenbi-Tsenkhar Constituency, Yes
19. The member of Drametse-Ngatshang Constituency, Yes
20. The member of Kengkhar-Weringla Constituency,  
Rigzin Jamtsho, Yes
21. The member of Lamgong-Wangchang Constituency,  
Ugyen Tshering, Yes
22. The member of Khar-Urung Constituency,  
Tshering Choden, Yes
23. The member of Nanong-Shumar Constituency,  
Tshering Choden, Yes
24. Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Employment,  
Karma Dorji, Yes
25. The member of Dewathang-Gomdar Constituency,  
Ugyen Dorji, Yes
26. The member of Jomotsangkhar-Martshala Constituency,  
Norbu Wangzom, Yes
27. The member of PhuentshoPelri-Samtse Constituency,  
Ganesh Ghimiri, Yes

**Annexure 4**

28. The member of Tashi-Chhoeling Constituency, Dil Maya Rai, Yes
29. The member of Ugyentse-Yoelseltse Constituency,  
Dhinesh Kumar Pradhan, Yes
30. The member of Shompangkhar Constituency, Tek Ddr Rai, Yes
31. The member of Bartsham-Shongphu Constituency,  
Passang Dorji, Yes
32. The member of Kanglung Samkhar-Udzorong Constituency,  
Dr. Samdrup R. Wangchuk, Yes
33. The member of Wamrong Constituency, Karma Thinley, Yes
35. The member of Bumdeling-Jamkhar Constituency, Dupthob, Yes
35. The member of Khamdang Ranjar Constituency,  
Karma Gyeltshen, Yes
36. The member of Dragteng-Langthil Constituency,  
Gyem Dorji, Yes
37. The member of Kilkhorthang-Mendrelgang Constituency,  
Bimal Thapa, Yes
38. The member of Sergithang-TsirangToed Constituency,  
Garja Man Rai, Yes
39. The member of Athang-Thoedtsho Constituency,  
Kinley Wangchuk, Yes
40. The member of Bardo-Trong Constituency,  
Gyambo Tshering, Yes
41. Opposition Leader, Dorji Wangdi, Yes

**Address by the Speaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Tenth Session of the Third Parliament.**

On behalf of the Members of Parliament, I humbly extend our sincere welcome and express our profound gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for gracing the closing ceremony of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Third Parliament.

I would further like to extend our warmest welcome to Her Majesty the Gyaltshen, esteemed Members of the Royal Family, distinguished government officials, former executives, foreign dignitaries and students attending the closing ceremony.

On behalf of the Parliament, I wish to express our deepest appreciation to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for gracing the Opening and Closing ceremonies of all the parliamentary sessions. This kind gesture underscores the considerable regard His Majesty holds for the functioning of the Parliament, prioritizing it above other regal responsibilities. His Majesty's continued bestowal of wisdom and guidance has been an instrumental source of inspiration for us.

The citizens of the nation are keenly cognizant and eternally grateful to His Majesty's unwavering and extensive undertakings in safeguarding the country, the advancement of its economic landscape, and the augmentation of bilateral relationships with other nations through diplomatic endeavors abroad.

Moreover, the Parliament holds profound gratitude towards His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo for personally undertaking visits to Dzongkhags, Gewogs,



Chiwogs, and Villages, and for compassionately addressing the myriad challenges faced by the populace in efforts to elevate their standard of living and prosperity, concurrently bolstering their self-sufficiency and independence through benevolent initiatives such as granting of land and citizenships. Furthermore, even in times of natural calamities, His Majesty has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to safeguarding the welfare of the people, ensuring that their well-being is not unduly compromised. For this and more, the Parliament is indebted beyond our words.

I would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to His Majesty for the benevolent provision of free healthcare, and educational support to our youth. Additionally, His Majesty's establishment of the Integrated Desuung Programme, complementing the three-armed forces for the promotion of security and sovereignty, is profoundly appreciated. Similarly, we offer our humble prayers for the success of the "Gyalsung - National Service" which will not only strengthen the nation but also equip our youth with invaluable life skills and technical expertise, ensuring a wholesome and prosperous future for them.

The Bhutanese people will forever be indebted to His Majesty for his tireless efforts during the time of the pandemic. While the rest of the world suffered significant loss of lives, our His Majesty, without concern for personal well-being and well-being of His family, visited every nook and corner of the

country including the borders. His Majesty undertook measures to prevent the spread of the virus and provided invaluable healthcare measures. Additionally, His Majesty initiated numerous rituals for which the Parliament would like to express our heartfelt gratitude.

The Parliament would also like to express our profound gratitude to His Majesty for setting a vision for the civil service reform and, in line with that, significantly raising the pay of the civil servants and the armed force personnel. This has notably enhanced their livelihoods and renewed their perseverance in service.

The Parliament extends its heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty for overseeing not only spiritual matters, including the preservation of Dzongs, Lhakhangs, and Goendheys, which are the cornerstones of culture and dharma preservation—but also for the recent consecration of the Druk Mi-gyur Dechen Dzong in Pemagatshel.

Moreover, the Parliament would like to not only offer our heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty for consistently granting audience to former government executives, civil servants, public servants, and the private sector to apprise them about the country's developmental endeavors, but also express our sincere prayers for the successful execution of the highly anticipated Gelephu Mega City Project.

The Parliament also wishes to extend our deepest gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo and all members of the Zhung Dratshang for their unwavering commitment to performing rituals for the well-being of the world, with particular emphasis on the welfare of our nation and its people. Additionally, during the pandemic, their efforts in conducting various sacred rituals to appease deities and mitigate the spread of the disease are profoundly appreciated.

Likewise, the Parliament would like to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet of Ministers, civil servants, the three armed forces, Desuups, local government leaders, the private sector, institutes, and media houses for their unwavering dedication in serving the people during the pandemic.

The Parliament also wishes to extend our gratitude to all our friendliest neighboring countries and international organizations for their invaluable budgetary support, which has been instrumental in the successful execution of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan.

I, on behalf of the Parliament, would like to congratulate our Bhutanese peacekeeping military contingent serving in the Central African Republic for receiving the UN Peace Medal for their unflinching service and significant role to peace and stabilization efforts in the country and for contributing to peace and harmony in the world.

With the gracious permission of the Golden Throne, I would like to present a concise summary of the outcomes achieved by the legislative body:

- a. Under the sagacious leadership of His Majesty, the Third Parliament of Bhutan, in strict adherence to the Constitution of Bhutan, has convened for a total of ten sessions, culminating with the most recent session which concludes today;
- b. During the 10 sessions, a total of 38 legislations has either been drafted, arbitrated or amended and a total of 13 International Instruments have been adopted by the National Assembly and the Parliament. Apart from that, usual agenda such as motions and questions hours have been scheduled in line with the Rule of Procedure of the House.

If I may be permitted to add, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the constituents of Nyishog-Saephu constituency under Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag for bestowing their trust in me as their representative. I am also deeply appreciative of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa for recognizing me as a candidate for the position of Speaker, and subsequently, I am grateful to all the members of the National Assembly for electing me to the office of the Speaker.

As a presiding officer of the legislative body, while discharging my duties in overseeing the affairs of the Parliament, I believe I have acted in accordance with the provisions laid out in the Constitution, the National Assembly Act and the Rules of Procedures. However, if I have inadvertently erred, I humbly request forbearance and understanding.

To consistently fulfill my responsibilities as the Speaker in this revered Hall at the foot of the Golden Throne is entirely attributable to His Majesty's benevolent guidance and counsel. For this, I convey my deepest and heartfelt gratitude.

Furthermore, I wish to extend my gratitude to His Excellency the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition Party, the Members of the National Assembly, the Chairperson(s) and Members of the National Council, of both immediate past and the current, for their steadfast support and cooperation in the successful conduct of the ten sessions of the Third Parliament.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Maintenance Unit of the Department of Procurement and Properties for their diligent preparations carried out during the term of the Third Parliament, the Royal Bhutan Police for their dedicated efforts in ensuring security and additionally, the Media fraternity for their effective coverage of the deliberations of the House to the people, and express my gratitude to the National Assembly Secretariat for their fullest unwavering support.

Finally, we would like to conclude with Tashi Moenlam and Zhabten, offering our heartfelt prayers for the long life and peaceful reign of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, for good health of the esteemed Royal Family, His Holiness the Je Khenpo, and the entire monastic community.

Tashi Delek!

**List of Member participants for the 10th Session of the Third Parliament**

1. The Speaker, Wangchuk Namgyel from Nyishog-Saephu constituency.
2. The Prime Minister, Dasho Dr. Lotay Tshering from South Thimphu constituency.
3. The Minister for Health, Dasho Dechen Wangmo from North Thimphu constituency.
4. The Minister for Foreign and External Trade, Dasho Dr. Tandin Dorji from Lingmukha-Toedwang constituency.
5. The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Yeshey Penjor from Nubi-Tangsibji constituency.
6. The Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, Loknath Sharma from Dophuchen Tading constituency.
7. The Minister for Finance, Namgay Tshering from Dokar Sharpa constituency.
8. The Minister for Home Affairs, Ugyen Dorji from Thrimshing-Kangpar constituency.
9. The Minister for Education and Skills Development, Jai Bir Rai from Phuentshogling constituency.
10. The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Dorji Tshewang from Radhi-Sakteng constituency.
11. The Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment, Karma Dorji from Nganglam constituency.
12. The Opposition Leader, Dorji Wangdi from Panbang constituency.

13. The Deputy Speaker, Tshencho Wangdi from Kabisa-Talog constituency.
14. Hon. Dawa from Chhoekhor-Tang constituency.
15. Hon. Karma Wangchuk from Chhumig-Ura constituency.
16. Hon. Tshewang Lhamo from Bongo-Chhapcha constituency.
17. Hon. Jurmi Wangchuk from Drukjeygang-Tseza constituency.
18. Hon. Hemant Gurung from Lhamoi Dzingkha-Tashiding constituency.
19. Hon. Yeshey Dem from Khamoed-Lunana Constituency.
20. Hon. Tenzin from Khatoed-Laya constituency.
21. Hon. Ugen Tenzin from Bji Kar Tsog-Uesu constituency.
22. Hon. Dorji Wangmo from Sombaykha constituency.
23. Hon. Kinga Penjor from Gangzur-Minjay constituency.
24. Hon. Choki Gyeltshen from Maenbi-Tsaenkhar constituency.
25. Hon. Ugyen Wangdi from Dramedtse-Ngatshang constituency.
26. Hon. Rinzin Jamtsho from Khengkhar-Weringla constituency.
27. Hon. Karma Lhamo from Monggar constituency.
28. Hon. Ugyen Tshering from Lamgong-Wangchang constituency.
29. Hon. Ugyen Dorji from Dewathang-Gomdar constituency.
30. Hon. Norbu Wangzom from Jomotshangkha-Martshala constituency.
31. Hon. Ganesh Ghimiray from Phuentshogpelri-Samtse constituency.
32. Hon. Dil Maya Rai from Tashichhoeling constituency.
33. Hon. Dinesh Kumar Pradhan from Ugyentse-Yoeseltse constituency.
34. Hon. Tek Bdr. Rai from Shompangkha constituency.
35. Hon. Passang Dorji (Ph.D) from Bartsham-Shongphu constituency.

36. Hon. Dr. Samdrup R. Wangchuk from Kanglung-Samkhar-Udzorong constituency.
37. Hon. Tshering Chhoden from Khar-Yurung constituency.
38. Hon. Lungten Namgyel from Nanong-Shumar constituency.
39. Hon. Karma Thinley from Wamrong constituency.
40. Hon. Dupthob from Bumdeling-Jamkar constituency.
41. Hon. Karma Gyeltshen from Khamdhang-Ramjar constituency.
42. Hon. Gyem Dorji from Draagteng-Lingkar constituency.
43. Hon. Bimal Thapa from Kikhorthang-Mendrelgang constituency.
44. Hon. Garja Man Rai from Sergithang Tsirang Toed constituency.
45. Hon. Kinley Wangchuk from Athang-Thedtsho constituency.
46. Hon. Gyambo Tshering from Bardo-Trong constituency.

**List of Members unable to participate.**

1. Karma Donnen Wangdi from Gelegphu constituency.