

Address at Sibsoo, Southern Bhutan, January 1, 1974

It has not been many years since development projects were first started in our country. Even so, in these few years, our nation has advanced a great deal and notable progress has been achieved. Initially, our government envisaged and carried out development of the larger towns and areas around the dzongs in the country. I now feel that we must aim at the development of our villages, since most of the population consists of farmers and cultivators. If the attention of the government is firmly focused on these people and on bringing about the general improvement of agriculture, then we can entertain the highest hopes of becoming self-sufficient in food grains. Therefore, our government is giving the highest priority to agricultural development.

You must never think, however, that every measure of development and every effort will be taken and made by the government alone. The efforts being made by the government most definitely require the support and cooperation of the people. If the government and the people combine their efforts and resources in the field of agriculture, not only will you all benefit, but the nation will also find greater security.

You, the citizens of Southern Bhutan, must never regard yourselves as aliens, because you and your forebears also, were born and raised in Bhutan and as such, all of you are Bhutanese. Regarding yourselves thus, you must look to the betterment and progress of Bhutan. All of us must remain united as one people and as one nation and forge ahead together.

In these times, we hear of strife, wars, disease, floods and famine in other countries, but in the midst of all this turmoil, we here are enjoying peace and prosperity. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, we have kept firm faith in God and He has blessed us with peace and prosperity. Secondly, we have maintained strong unity between the government and the people.

My real purpose in coming to Sibsoo today is to look into the problems and the difficulties of the people here. I wish to meet your village Mandals and elders and discuss these problems with them and try to discover how best we can help you. I am extremely happy to have met you all.

Tashi Delek!

Royal Kasho on the stepping down of the 4th Druk Gyalpo from the Golden Throne, December 9, 2006

As I have announced during the National Day celebrations last year about my abdication, and also briefed the Lhengye Zhungtshog on this decision, the time has now come for me to hand over my responsibilities to Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

While we prepare ourselves for parliamentary democracy in 2008, we must all pledge with our body, speech and mind to be unwavering and steadfast in our efforts to strengthen the sovereignty and security of Bhutan, to ensure the blessings of liberty, ensure justice and peace in our country, and enhance the unity, happiness and well being of our people for all time to come.

In taking note of the progress that our nation has made over the past thirty years, I would like to state that whatever we have achieved so far is due to the merit of the people pf Bhutan. I, therefore, wish to express my gratitude to the Clergy, the officials of the Royal Government, the members of the business community and our security forces, and to all the people of the twenty dzongkhags for their unfailing support and loyalty to me and the country.

I am confident that a very bright and great future lies ahead for Bhutan with leadership of a new king and a democratic system of government that is best suited for our country, as enshrined under the Constitution. I have every confidence that there will be unprecedented progress and prosperity for our nation in the reign of our Fifth King.

As I hand over my responsibilities to my son, I repose my full faith and belief in the people of Bhutan to look after the future of our nation, for it is the Bhutanese people who are true custodians of our tradition and culture and the ultimate guardians of the security, sovereignty and continued well being of our country.

May the blessings of Ugyen Guru Rimpoche, the father of our nation Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and our Guardian Deities continue to guide the destiny of our country and protect the future of the glorious Palden Drukpa!

Given at Tashichhodzong on the Twentieth Day of the Tenth Month of the Fire-Dog Year, corresponding to the Ninth Day of December 2006.

Druk Gyalpo

Message on UN's 40th Founding Anniversary, Thimphu
October 24, 1985

The United Nations was born from the ashes of mankind's most disastrous war. It rose out of a deep human commitment to prevent the occurrence of another war that would threaten again the very survival of the human race. Representing the noble ideals of freedom, equality, justice and peace, the United Nations today stands as a powerful symbol of our continuous search for everlasting peace and shared prosperity.

In the four decades since the establishment of the United Nations, the world has changed at a staggering pace. The number of independent nations has more than tripled, the population has doubled and the global economy has grown faster than ever before. Science and technology have made achievement beyond all expectations to the extent that the survival of mankind is faced with even greater threats. Disparities between the poor and the rich nations continue to grow wider while conflicts and tensions have not ceased to exist. Unique in its hope, aspirations and potential, the United Nations has stood steadfast through these turbulent times.

The 40th Anniversary of the United Nations provides an opportunity to review the performance of the organization. In so doing, an honest retrospection bring to our minds an impressive list of accomplishments towards the cause of human advancement. On the other hand, the acceleration in the nuclear arms race, failure to resolve numerous conflicts, the continuation of apartheid and the retreat from multilateralism bear sad testimony to the diminishing stature and credibility of the United Nations. I believe that the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations are not for us to judge but that they are a true measure of the combined commitment of all the member nations to the ideals of this great world body. Indeed, the strength of the United Nations comes only from the firmness of our conviction in a common future, and its weaknesses arise from the doubt and suspicion among ourselves.

It is most heartening to note that the 40th Anniversary Celebrations have brought together the largest congregation of heads of state or government in the history of the United Nations. Their participation is an affirmation of their recognition of the United Nations as an irreplaceable and only viable means to achieving international unity, peace and progress.

On this occasion, let us, therefore, re-dedicate ourselves to the strengthening of the United Nations and renew our commitment to its noble ideals.

Bhutan became a proud member of the United Nations in 1971. Since then, and in particular, after the opening of the United Nations Development Programme Office in Thimphu in 1979, assistance to Bhutan from the United Nations Organization and agencies has steadily increased over the years. Their assistance has been vital in strengthening our capacity to bring about desired changes and development in this country. We take this opportunity to

express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly in implementing the valued programmes of assistance. We reaffirm our support to multilateral cooperation and look to increased participation of the United Nations system in our future development efforts.

On this auspicious occasion, we pay tribute to the United Nations for its 40 years of dedicated service to mankind. On our part, as a member state, we once again pledge to uphold the noble ideals of the charter and to work together with other nations to build a better and peaceful world.

Tashi Delek

Message on A Day Against Drug Abuse, December 8, 1989

We are happy to learn that the 8th of December 1989, which coincided with the Fourth Anniversary of the promulgation of the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, will be observed as a Day Against Drug Abuse by SAARC member countries. We hope that this will help to create greater public awareness in our region about the serious dangers posed by drug abuse and drug trafficking. This day also marks the culmination of several activities that have been undertaken at national and regional levels during the year in order to observe 1989 as the SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking.

We view with grave concern the adverse effects of the growing problem of drug trafficking throughout the world. The clandestine production and trade in natural and synthetic drugs are often connected with organized criminal activities such as trade in weapons, smuggling, terrorism and subversion. The illicit use and trade in drugs breeds crime and corruption and undermines the moral values and happiness of our people.

There has been an upsurge of interest in recent years to find solutions to the problem of drugs at national, regional and global levels. Many countries have introduced measures to control and, if possible, eliminate this menace. Regional and international efforts, especially under the aegis of the United Nations, have intensified in the recent years with a view to improving the mechanisms for surveillance and coordination. However, individual and collective efforts at a national level are essential if we are to make headway against this social evil.

Our own region of South Asia has become a centre of drug trade and drug abuse inspite of mounting governmental efforts to come to terms with this problem. We have been addressing this issue since the First Summit at Dhaka in 1985. A Technical Committee on Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse was established in 1986 with a view to tackling the problem on a regional basis. We note with satisfaction that this Technical Committee has made commendable progress in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it.

We are fortunate to be a drug-free society at present. Our strong faith in religion and our traditional value system and close family ties have so far acted as a major deterrent against drug abuse in our society. We are, however, fully conscious that the kingdom may not remain totally insulated from the dangers of narcotics for all the time to come. With this in mind, the Royal Government of Bhutan issued a Notification on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988. This Notification provides the legal framework for controlling the evil and punishing the offenders.

We are happy on this day to be able to join the SAARC fraternity in expressing our firm support and commitment to the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking in our region.

Tashi Delek!

Message for the Inaugural Ceremony of Bhutan Carbide and Chemicals Project, December 8, 1988

On the auspicious occasion of the inauguration of the Bhutan Carbide and Chemicals Plant, I wish to congratulate the Board of Directors, Ugyen Dorji, and all the officers and staff of the project for the successful commissioning of a major industrial venture in Bhutan.

This project represents an important step towards industrialization of the country. Not only has it proved that a major industrial venture can be introduced in Bhutan, but also that there is growing managerial capability to deal with complex processes and technologies. The experience gained from establishing this project will certainly go a long way in helping develop other industries. The plant itself will provide necessary raw materials for many other products, thereby laying down firm foundations for further industrial activities.

The Royal Government has declared self-reliance as a primary objective of the development process in Bhutan. A key element of self-reliance is the capacity to mobilize natural resources to generate revenues for meeting development costs. This project is based on minerals and energy from within the country, clearly following the national policy of utilizing our internal resources for industrial development.

The Royal Government cannot take the full responsibility of the development of the country alone. This responsibility must be shared by every individual. In the field of trade, services and industry, the private sector must take initiative and play a leading role. The government on its part will provide necessary assistance and support, including financial participation in larger projects where the private sector does not have sufficient capital for investment. The successful commissioning of this plant clearly demonstrates that the Royal Government and the private sector can work closely together in the industrialization process of the country.

Bhutan today has been fortunate to be the beneficiary of tremendous international goodwill and assistance. We must express our gratitude to the many partners involved in assisting us launch this project.

The Government of India provided the means for the initial survey of mineral resources which has determined the possibility of this industry and has extended assistance for the setting up of the Chhukha Hydro Project which supplies a major input required by the plant. The people and Government of Norway have been especially generous in extending a substantive grant to finance an important component of the project. We also express our deep appreciation to the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for providing the largest portion of the investment on concessional terms and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development who have not only provided technical support and organized the co-financing, but also extended their own financial support on highly concessional terms.

I am aware of the many constraints that the project had to face during the establishment phase. Each one has been overcome with initiative and decisiveness. I am certain that the project will continue meeting the many challenges ahead, to reach and maintain a high level of production, quality and profitability. I wish the management and the staff of the Bhutan Carbide and Chemicals every success in this important task.

Tashi Delek!

Message during the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sherubtse College, 1993

Sherubtse College is one of the most important educational institutes we have in Bhutan. I fondly remember being present when Sherubtse was inaugurated as a Higher Secondary School by my father on May 6, 1968. Since then it has taken great strides to become a premier educational institute. Upgraded to a junior college in 1976, Sherubtse became a full-fledged college in 1983. Many of the students who studied in Sherubtse hold important posts in the government today and participate actively in the nation building process.

The greatness of a country is determined by its people. The productiveness and character of the people is in turn determined by the quality of education they receive. As the only college in the country, and with the brightest students from our high schools and junior colleges joining it every year, it is of utmost importance that Sherubtse imparts the best possible higher education to our students. To this end, the Royal Government is fully committed to making Sherubtse College into one of the best institutes of higher studies in South Asia.

Bhutan, today, is passing through a crucial period in its history. Even as we are faced with a serious problem that threatens the future survival of our country, we are also poised to enter the 21st century. Blessed with rich natural resources, in particular a huge capacity for hydropower generation, we have the potential to become one of the most prosperous countries in South Asia. At the same time, our small size and population make it imperative for us to preserve and promote our cultural heritage and unique national identity as a means to strengthen and safeguard our sovereignty and security.

It is against this backdrop that the students and faculty of Sherubtse College should look ahead to the future as you celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Sherubtse's establishment, initially as a Higher Secondary School. The destiny of our country lies in the hands of our younger generation, and as the cream of our youth, the students of Sherubtse College must play a progressive role and shoulder the responsibility of shaping the destiny of our country. I place my full faith in all of you and have the highest expectations that each and every one of you will serve your country with love, loyalty and dedication.

On the auspicious occasion of celebrating Sherubtse's 25th Anniversary, let us all reaffirm our loyalty and dedication to our country and pledge to ensure its well-being and security. May the future of the Palden Drukpa forever remain secure in your hands, and may the sun of peace and prosperity shine on the Bhutanese people for all time to come.

Tashi Delek!

Kasho to the Speaker of the National Assembly during its 76th Session, June 10, 1998

This is to apprise the Speaker of the Tshogdu Chhenmo that a matter of great importance, for the present as well as the future well-being and security of our country, needs to be discussed and decided by the Tshogdu Chhenmo during its forthcoming 76th Session.

Over the past twenty six years of my reign I have, above everything else in my life, always put the interest and well-being of the country and people first. I have constantly strived, through the full endeavour of body, speech and mind, to bring progress and prosperity to the Bhutanese people and to safeguard the national interest and security of our country, the glorious Pelden Drukpa. We can draw much satisfaction that during this period Bhutan has achieved rapid socio-economic development, which has brought about a better quality of life for our people, and its status as a sovereign, independent country has also been greatly strengthened.

It has also been my endeavour to encourage and prepare our people to participate actively and fully in the decision making process of our country. To this end, a policy of decentralization was launched and Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchungs were established in all our dzongkhags in 1981. This policy was given a further impetus in 1991 with the establishment of Geog Yargay Tshogchungs in all 202 geogs. Today, our country is progressing well on the path of socio-economic development and the people are also playing an increasingly active role, through the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchungs and the Geog Yargay Tshogchungs, in the formulation and implementation of development programmes and in bringing forward issues of national concern for discussion in the Tshogdu Chhenmo.

The time has now come to promote even greater people's participation in the decision making process. Our country must be ensured to always have a system of government which enjoys the mandate of the people, provides clean and efficient governance, and also has an inbuilt mechanism of checks and balance to safeguard our national interest and security.

As an important step towards achieving this goal, the Lhengye Zhungtshog should now be restructured into an elected Council of Ministers that is vested with full executive powers to provide efficient and effective governance of our country.

Therefore, keeping in mind both the present and future interest and well-being of our country, I would like to request the honorable members of the Tshogdu Chhenmo to discuss and take a decision on the following important issues during the 76th Session of the Tshogdu Chhenmo.

1. All Cabinet Ministers should henceforth be elected by the Tshogdu Chhenmo with the first election of Cabinet Ministers to take place during the 76th Session.
2. A decision should be taken on the role and responsibilities of the Lhengye Zhungtshog.
3. The Tshogdu Chhenmo should have a mechanism to move a vote of confidence in His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

Having given considerable thought to these important issues, I would like to share my views on them with the honourable members of the Tshogdu Chhenmo so that this matter of great national importance can be fruitfully discussed and unanimously decided during the 76th Session. The honourable members may wish to consider my thoughts and views, given below, as a guideline for our deliberations on the restructuring of the Lhengye Zhungtshog and the devolution of full executive powers of governance to an elected Council of Ministers.

The Lhengye Zhungtshog should henceforth comprise of elected Ministers and the members of the Royal Advisory Council. At the present juncture, while Bhutan has many qualified and capable officials, most of them are still very young and do not have enough seniority, in keeping with our tradition and culture to stand as candidates for the post of Cabinet Minister. Indeed, it has been due to this fact that Cabinet Ministers have thus far held their posts for very long periods of time. With the passage of time, we can expect a greater availability of qualified candidates for the post of Cabinet Ministership to ensure efficient and effective executive governance of our country.

Cabinet Ministers should be elected by the Tshogdu Chhenmo through a secret ballot. To ensure efficient executive governing of our country, the candidates should be selected from among persons who have held senior government posts at the rank of Secretary to the Royal Government or above. A candidate must secure a majority of the votes cast to be considered elected.

The portfolios for the elected Ministers of the Lhengye Zhungtshog should be awarded by His Majesty the King.

A cabinet minister should serve for a term of five years after which the minister should face a vote of confidence in the Tshogdu Chhenmo.

All decisions adopted by the Lhengye Zhungtshog will be based on consensus. While the Lhengye Zhungtshog shall govern Bhutan with full executive powers, it must also keep His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo fully informed on all matters that concern the security and sovereignty of our country.

A Chathrim for the Lhengye Zhungtshog should be framed by a Committee comprising of members of the government, clergy and people's representatives of the 20 dzongkhags in the Tshogdu Chhenmo, and it should be duly presented for enactment by the Tshogdu Chhenmo during its 77th Session.

Having observed the political systems of other countries, it is important that Bhutan should have a system of government that is best suited for the needs and requirements of a small nation like ours to ensure its continued well-being and security, and safeguard its status as a sovereign, independent country. Accordingly, an inbuilt mechanism of checks and balance is very necessary for us to ensure that the procedures for the election of cabinet ministers cannot be undermined and exploited by vested interests. This is particularly important for a small nation like ours, which is located between two of the largest and most populous countries of the world. In our situation, we cannot afford to have the divisive forces of regionalism and communalism come into play in the election of the Council of Ministers.

To further enhance and strengthen our system of government, it is my wish and

request to the honorable members of the Tshogdu Chhenmo to adopt a practice to register a vote of confidence in the Druk Gyalpo. A two-thirds vote of no confidence by the Tshogdu Chhenmo shall require His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo to abdicate in favour of the Crown Prince or the next-in-line of succession to the Golden Throne.

Having taken into account both the present and future well-being and interest of our country, it is my wish and prayer for the Lhengye Zhungtshog to be restructured and full executive powers to be devolved to an elected Council of Ministers. It is of utmost importance that this matter is tabled for deliberation during the 76th Session of the Tshogdu Chhenmo and that a decision is taken during this session itself. Having always kept the national interest foremost in mind in everything I have undertaken, I wish to remind the honourable members of the Tshogdu Chhenmo that it is your responsibility also to keep the well-being and interest of our country in mind while discussing this matter of great national importance. I would like to request the honourable members to bear in mind that passing a unanimous decision on the restructuring of the Lhengye Zhungtshog and the devolution of full executive powers to an elected Council of Ministers will be very beneficial for the continued progress, security and well-being of our country, the glorious Palden Drukpa.

Issued on the Fifteenth Day of the Fourth Month of the Year of the Male Earth Tiger, corresponding to the Tenth Day of June, 1998, at the Tashichhodzong.

Convocation Address at Nagarjuna Sagen University, India

March 16, 1982

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice-chancellor, Members of the Faculty, Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends.

It gives me great pleasure today to address this distinguished gathering in a region sanctified by one of the greatest philosophers of all times. Some 18 centuries ago Acharya Nagarjuna lived and taught here. This spiritual and intellectual giant developed the philosophical basis of Mahayana Buddhism, and, in doing so, exerted a deep and lasting influence on Buddhism. The Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan owes much to this great son of Andhra Pradesh.

Today, as I address you, I am reminded of the profound spiritual and cultural bonds which have existed between our two countries for well over a thousand years. The first recorded history of the visit of the Indian sage from the plains of India to the high mountains and valleys of Bhutan took place in the eighth century A.D. Guru Padmasambhava, who studied in Nalanda University, visited Bhutan twice and laid the foundation of Vajrayana Buddhism. In the succeeding centuries, many learned Indian scholars visited Tibet and translated precious Buddhist manuscripts from Sanskrit into the classical language used in Bhutan. While most of these manuscripts were destroyed or lost in India over the past several millennia, they have been preserved in our part of the world.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, and friends, it is not often that I come to South India, and I would therefore, like to take this opportunity to say a few words about my country and about Indo-Bhutan relations.

Bhutan is a country which is steeped in tradition and where cultural and spiritual values which have come down through the ages still shape the lives of our people. Although the winds of change are now blowing across Bhutan, and we have embarked on an ambitious programme of modernization, we are still firmly committed to the view that we should not lose our cultural heritage in the name of progress. While hydro-electric projects, highways and factories may constitute the new temples of a resurgent nation, we believe that the roots of a people must be carefully nurtured and traditional values fostered, so that the trauma of material change does not destroy the cultural identity of a people.

Politically, Bhutan has remained an independent country throughout history. When large parts of Asia and Africa were under colonial domination, Bhutan managed to retain its independence by closing its doors to the outside world and following a policy of strict isolationism. Independent India, under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and successive Prime Ministers, has always followed an enlightened policy of friendship, understanding, trust and cooperation towards Bhutan, which we have appreciated and fully reciprocated. When Bhutan decided to enlarge its external contacts and join the international mainstream, India assisted us actively. When Bhutan decided about two decades ago to embark on a programme of rapid socio-economic development, India provided generous financial and technical assistance. The policy on the part of India to befriend a small neighbour like Bhutan has added a new dimension to the traditionally close relationship between our two countries. May the friendship between India and Bhutan flourish and prosper for all time to come!

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, and friends, it is a great honour for me not only to be the Chief Guest at the convocation today, but to visit Nagarjuna University to inaugurate the Chair for Buddhist studies. My friend, the distinguished Foreign Minister of India, His Excellency Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, a man of great vision and wide accomplishments, has been the moving spirit behind this chair. For us, in Bhutan, this is an occasion of great significance. Most of Acharya Nagarjuna's works on Buddhism are lost in the original Sanskrit, but they are preserved in Bhutan in the volumes of our Tenjur. His works on Mahayana Buddhism are accepted as the final source of reference by all the four major sects of Mahayana Buddhism. Many of his works are taught even today in the monasteries of Bhutan. Acharya Nagarjuna and his seat of learning in South India, namely Shri Parvata, are so greatly honoured in Bhutan that in many of our prayers the wish is expressed that in our next life we may be born in Shri Parvata. We, in Bhutan, therefore welcome the setting-up of this chair and we shall participate actively in its work.

Before I conclude, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to all those who have received their degrees today. I wish you a purposeful, productive, and happy life in the service of your people and in the never ending pursuit of learning and excellence. I hope the timeless values and ideals of your rich and ancient culture will inspire and sustain you as you go through life, and enable you to meet its many challenges.

I wish you all Tashi Delek!

Address to the People of Bhutan on the Coronation Day
June 2, 1974

Two years ago when my father passed away, all the Dratshangs (Monk Body), officials and you, my people, placing your trust in me made me King. During the short while that I have been on the throne, I have not been able to render any great service to our country. However, I offer my pledge today that I shall endeavour to serve our beloved country and people with fidelity and to the best of my ability.

From year to year, Bhutan is receiving increasing financial and technical assistance from many countries. Among them, we have received the greatest assistance from our good friend, India. Although the process of socio-economic development was initiated in our country only a few years ago, we have achieved tremendous progress within a short span of time. In spite of this progress, our present internal revenue cannot meet even a fraction of our government expenditure. Therefore, the most important task before us at present is to achieve economic self-reliance to ensure the continued progress of our country in the future. Bhutan has a small population, abundant land and rich natural resources and sound planning on our part will enable us to realize our aim of economic self-reliance in the near future.

As far as you, my people, are concerned, you should not adopt the attitude that whatever is required to be done for your welfare will be done entirely by the government. On the contrary, a little effort on your part will be much more effective than a great deal of effort on the part of the government. If the government and people can join hands and work with determination, our people will achieve prosperity and our nation will become strong and stable.

In earlier times, when our country was passing through a critical period and our people were suffering greatly due to civil wars and internal strife, Ugyen Wangchuck was unanimously elected as the first hereditary king of Bhutan on December 17, 1907, ushering in a period of great peace and happiness for Bhutan. The fact that our country continues to enjoy peace and stability is due to the blessings of our deities and the great loyalty and devotion shown by the Dratshangs, officials and people of our kingdom.

The only message I have to convey to you today, my people, is that if everyone of us consider ourselves Bhutanese, and think and act as one, and if we have faith in the triple gem, our glorious Kingdom of Bhutan will grow from strength to strength and achieve prosperity, peace and happiness.

Today we are extremely happy to have with us representatives of friendly countries and other guests to participate in our celebrations. To you, my people, and to all our guests I offer my Tashi Delek

Address to the Nation, National Day, Gelephu, December 17, 1978

Today is the auspicious day when Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned the First King of Bhutan. Long ago, when our country was plagued by wars, internal strife and poverty, it went through a very critical and difficult period of history. But when Ugyen Wangchuck came to the throne, there was for the first time unity, prosperity and happiness, and a new era of great peace and tranquility began. Hence, we celebrate this day as our National Day. Until this year, we have never celebrated our National Day in Southern Bhutan. It is because of this, that it gives me today a special happiness to celebrate the National Day here in Gelephu with our people.

Our country's national policy is to consolidate our sovereignty to achieve economic self-reliance, prosperity and happiness for our country and people. Today, when our country is passing through a crucial stage of development, the most important thing is for the government and the people to work hand in hand in all our country's developmental efforts in order to achieve economic progress, attain self-reliance and strengthen our national sovereignty. This is very important, because some of our people must be thinking that large external aid and technical assistance are easily available. There is, therefore, the temptation for us to lie idle and rely fully on external assistance to accomplish our objectives and fulfill our national aspirations. It is important for us to understand that too much dependency on outside aid will only defeat our national goals and aspirations.

Although we are a small developing country, from the smallest development task, the people and the government are today working together to accomplish and fulfill our cherished national aspiration of economic self-reliance. In this respect, I am very happy to tell you that even developed nations have praised such a policy as ours. I want you all to know that I am very proud of your deep sense of duty, dedication, loyalty, and the ability to sacrifice and show great determination in fulfilling our hopes and dreams for the future of our beloved country.

I have often heard that some of our Southern Bhutanese people do not consider themselves as true Bhutanese. Those of you, who think this cannot be true Bhutanese because our people of Southern Bhutan are not people of Nepal nor are you Indians from Kalimpong and Darjeeling. But there is a great difference and that difference is because you are all people of the Palden Drukpa. All of us are like one family.

From tomorrow onwards, we will be holding developmental meetings and I will be meeting your representatives and Mandals. I would like you to know that as far as the development of Southern Bhutan is concerned in the field of animal husbandry, agriculture, schools, hospitals, cash crops and overall development, I will myself personally look after them. It is our desire to start such development work which will be useful, beneficial and necessary to the people. As far as your individual problems and difficulties are concerned, I want you to know that they will also be looked into personally by me and I will try to solve them as in one family.

Today, for the future of our country, the most important thing is our people, and the destiny of our country lies in our hands. I have full trust and confidence that, if today the people and the government can work hand in hand with determination, fidelity, and unity, and if we can all together develop our country with our own efforts, then our country will march from strength to strength and enjoy eternal bliss.

I would once again like to say how happy I am to be here to celebrate our National Day in Gelephu and I want you to know that it gives me great happiness to be able to see all the development works in Southern Bhutan and to be with our people. I wish all our brothers and sisters Tashi Delek!

Address to the Nation, National Day, Trashiyangtse

December 17, 2005

As we celebrate our National Day today, we have only one and a half years left before completing the Ninth Five Year Plan which was started in 2002. During this Plan period we faced serious security challenges but successfully strengthened the security of our nation.

The process of bringing about political changes has been progressing well and the development plans and programmes of the Ninth Plan are being implemented successfully for the well being of our people. Next year, the Tala Hydro-electric Project will be completed and it will bring annual revenue of more than Nu 4,000 million. The revenue from this one project alone will greatly benefit the government and people of Bhutan.

The level of economic self-reliance achieved by a nation is one of the important measures of its status in the world as a sovereign, independent country. Achieving economic self-reliance and being able to stand on our own feet is a very important national objective that we have always strived to attain for Bhutan.

I am happy to mention that, by the year 2007, Bhutan will no longer be among the countries categorized by the United Nations as least developed countries. While other countries have taken hundreds of years to reach their present level of development, for us in Bhutan, we have achieved tremendous socio-economic development in every field in the 44 years since we first started implementing development programmes. How much our country has developed and how the lives of our people have changed and improved during this period in our own lifetime is there for all of us to see.

This unprecedented progress has been possible due to the sound policies followed by the government and sustained efforts of our people. The government and people of Bhutan can be truly proud of this great achievement.

While drafting the Constitution of our country we have attached the highest importance to ensuring the security and sovereignty of our nation and the interest and kedu of our people. The highest importance was also given to ensuring that the new political system will be able to serve the national interest of the country and fulfill our people's aspirations. The Constitution has been framed with the sole objective of ensuring the long-term interest of our country and people.

During my consultations on the Constitution in the different dzongkhags, the main concern of our people is that it is too early to introduce parliamentary democracy in Bhutan. As our people know, Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus were established in 1981 when we first started the policy of decentralisation. Thereafter, Gewog Yargay Tshogchungs were introduced 10 years later in 1991. Furthermore, under the policy of greater empowerment of the people, administrative and financial powers were also given to the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus.

During the next two years in 2006 and 2007, the Election Commission will educate our people in the process of parliamentary democracy and electoral practice sessions will be conducted in all the 20 dzongkhags. After 26 years of the process of decentralisation and devolution of powers to the people, I have every confidence

that our people will be able to choose the best political party that can provide good governance and serve the interest of the nation. I would like our people to know that the first national election to elect a government under a system of parliamentary democracy will take place in 2008.

I would also like our people to know that the Chhoetse Penlop will be enthroned as the Fifth Druk Gyalpo in 2008. As it is necessary and important for a King to gain as much experience as possible to serve his country to his fullest capacity, I will be delegating my responsibilities to the Chhoetse Penlop before 2008. It is my wish and prayer that during the reign of Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Palden Drukpa will remain strong and glorious, that our country will achieve greater prosperity with the sun of peace and happiness shining on our people, that all the national objectives of the country and the hopes and aspirations of our people will be fulfilled and the Bhutanese people will enjoy a greater level of contentment and happiness.

Today, on the auspicious occasion of our National Day, I would like to express my Tashi Delek to our people in all the 20 dzongkhags.

Address to the Nation, National Day, Mongar, December 17, 2004

Today, as we celebrate the auspicious occasion of our National Day, there is good reason for all of us to be grateful and happy that we no longer face the serious threat to the security of our country from the presence of the militants over the last many years.

As our people are aware, the National Constitution Committee started the important task of drafting the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2001. I am happy to announce that we have now completed the Draft Constitution and it has been presented to the Lhengye Zhungtshog.

In drafting the Constitution, the greatest importance was attached to safeguarding and strengthening the sovereignty and security of our nation and promoting the interest and well being of the Bhutanese people. The highest importance was also attached to the establishment of parliamentary democracy and a system of government that will provide good governance and fulfill the aspirations of our people.

The Draft Constitution will be distributed to all the 20 dzongkhags next year so that our people can study it and be fully aware of its contents. Following this, I will be personally visiting every dzongkhag to meet with our people and hold discussions and consultations on all issues regarding the Constitution. Only after completing the consultations with our people in all the dzongkhags will the adoption of the Constitution take place.

It has now been two and a half years since we started the 9th Five Year Plan. As you are all aware, under the policy of greater decentralization and empowerment of the people, the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu and the Geog Yargye Tshogchung have been given full administrative, policy making and financial powers in their respective dzongkhags. Therefore, the success of development programmes will now be determined by the decisions taken by the people and the quality of their participation in implementing them.

I have every confidence that our people will shoulder their responsibility well and that the administrative, policy making and financial powers given to them by the government will be utilized properly to ensure the progress and development of the dzongkhags, especially in the rural sector.

This year, we have over 155,000 students studying in our schools and educational institutions. One of the greatest concerns for the government today is in providing gainful employment to our youth. At a time when our country is developing very rapidly and our people are becoming more prosperous every year, if Bhutanese citizens are to benefit from the progress taking place and find good jobs, we will have to give priority to the establishment of industries for which the government must strengthen and develop the private sector.

It is necessary for the government and the private sector in Bhutan to work together hand in hand and provide employment to our people. It is an important responsibility of the Royal Government to ensure that a time does not come when Bhutanese people cannot find employment in their own country. Such a situation must never be allowed to arise.

Two of the most important factors for ensuring the development of our rural sector are the establishment of roads and the availability of power in our villages. In this regard, the Kurichhu Hydro-electric Project has greatly benefited the rural people and business community in the six dzongkhags of eastern Bhutan as well as in Zhemgang and Sarpang.

Now that the presence of the militants has been removed from Nganglam, the government will reactivate the establishment of the Dungsam Cement Project which will provide jobs for our people and business opportunities for the private sector. Furthermore, the Tala Hydro-electric Project is expected to be completed by the year 2006. The sale of electricity from this project will go a long way towards enabling us to achieve our national goal of economic self-reliance. In the world today, it is an important measure of a nation's status as a sovereign, independent country to remove the need for aid assistance and achieve economic self-reliance. Therefore, we must all make every effort to fulfill this important national objective.

In December last year, with every effort made to find a peaceful solution to the problem of the three militant organizations who had established camps on our soil having failed to yield any results, we were left with no other choice but to use the security forces of Bhutan, as a last resort, to remove their presence from our country. The successful removal of this serious security threat has greatly strengthened the well being and sovereignty of our country. As citizens of a small landlocked country with a population of just over 500,000, it is vital for the Bhutanese people to be fully conscious of how important it is for them to be always ready to shoulder the sacred responsibility of safeguarding the security and sovereignty of our nation.

When our country was going through a very critical and difficult period, the armed forces served the Tsa-Wa-Sum with dedication and commitment, placing the country above their lives in defending the security of the Palden Drukpa. In recognition of their loyal and outstanding service to the nation, we will be awarding medals to the officers and men of the Royal Bhutan Army, the Royal Body Guards, the Royal Bhutan Police and the Militia Volunteers on this auspicious occasion of our National Day.

Last year, when we were facing a conflict situation and our country was going through a difficult period in its history, His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Zhung Dratshang, the Dratshangs and Gomdeys of the 20 dzongkhags, the Shedras and Drubdras, civil servants, the business community and our people, all united together and came forward with one mind to support our security forces and to perform the sacred Kurims to ensure the success of the military operations and the well being of the country, for which I would like to express deep gratitude and appreciation.

On the auspicious occasion of our National Day, I would like to wish Tashi Delek to all our people in the 20 dzongkhags.

Address to the Nation, National Day, Samtse, December 17, 1981

Today, the 17th of December, I have great pleasure in sharing with you the happiness of celebrating our National Day here at Samtse. It was on this day in 1907 that Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck ascended the throne of our country and brought peace, stability and unity in a country that was torn with internal strife, war, disunity, famine and diseases. It was he who gave this nation the reason to hope for a better future of happiness and prosperity, and the will to strive together for it. It is for these reasons that we celebrate December 17, as our National Day.

Our Fourth Plan ends this year and the Fifth Plan will begin in 1982. A great amount of thinking and efforts have been devoted to the formulation of the country's Fifth Plan. In order to achieve our national goal of economic self-reliance, many new policies and development strategies have been conceived and adopted. If I am to sum up the Fifth Plan policies, the following five points encompass the essential aspects of all policies and development strategies.

The first policy is to bring about dzongkhag self-reliance. Towards this purpose, specific plans have been prepared for each dzongkhag with the objective of making them economically self-sustaining in the shortest possible time, taking into account the local characteristics, potentials and needs. The practice, so far, has been to make only one National Plan that covered all the dzongkhags in the country.

The second policy is the decentralization of administration and implementation of Dzongkhag Plans. This policy is directed at bringing about greater involvement of local officials and people in the formulation and implementation of Dzongkhag Plans. Under this policy the Royal Government has so far appointed 31 competent and senior officers in various dzongkhags. These are in addition to those officers already transferred along with the decentralized programmes.

The third policy is to reduce expenditure on government establishment. The establishment of the government during the Fifth Plan had been initially estimated at Nu 144 crores. However, after extensive discussions and with great difficulties, the total establishment cost has been reduced by Nu 29.14 crores. It is our policy to reduce such costs even further wherever possible, since this is recognized as one of the key factors in our effort to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The fourth policy is to increase the revenue of the government. In order to fulfill this policy objective, we propose to invest Nu 50 crores in revenue generating industries such as wood and mineral based industries and other economically profitable venture. In doing so, we hope to be able to raise our net national revenue from Nu 19 crores in the Fourth Plan to Nu 60 crores during the Fifth Plan.

The fifth and the most important policy is to motivate and mobilize people's participation in all developmental activities. The time has now come when the people must realize and be grateful to the government for what it has done for their welfare and development. We all must now respond positively and participate actively in all the development programmes that will have to be implemented during the Fifth Plan.

If we are to achieve the objectives and aspirations outlined in our policies and programmes, it is important that we do not leave these on paper or in our minds only, but implement them in reality. If we are able to successfully implement the

programmes envisaged for the Fifth Plan, the government will be in a position to meet the maintenance costs of essential services such as Education, Health, P.W.D., Power, Telephone and Wireless and Dzongkhag Administration from our internal revenue.

At present, not one of the 18 dzongkhags is self-sustaining and as such the nation is going through difficult times. For example, during the Fourth Plan period, the government incurred a total expenditure exceeding Nu 200 crores of which Nu 63 crores was spent on establishment alone. Against this vast expenditure, our total net revenue for the five years was Nu 19 crores only. This could not meet more than a small fraction of the total cost of our establishment, let alone meeting any development costs. Therefore, our country is in a very critical financial position. All of us today must be aware of economic self-reliance. To stand on our own feet is vitally important for the sovereignty and independence of our country.

With regard to development activities in your dzongkhag for the Fifth Plan, we have had extensive discussions with your DYT members and village representatives. We have together decided on your Fifth Plan programmes. As the details would be too long, I shall only explain the gist of the plan to you. During the Fourth Plan period, we had spent Nu 6.46 crores on development activities in Samtse dzongkhag. In comparison, we shall be embarking on development programmes involving over Nu 20.46 crores. While the Fourth Plan revenue was only Nu 4.70 crores, in the Fifth Plan, our objective is to generate as much revenue as possible with a minimum target of Nu 12 crores.

The establishment and maintenance costs for various development activities in Samtse will be approximately Nu 12.41 crores. Therefore, Samtse dzongkhag will not become totally self-sustaining.

Nevertheless, we are hopeful that Samtse will be able to meet 90 percent of its establishment costs from its revenue. I realize that this will be very difficult, but it is possible and I hope that by the end of the Fifth Plan, Samtse dzongkhag will be very close to self-sufficiency.

I am convinced that if we are to achieve our goals and objectives of the Fifth Plan, the determining strength which we must all understand and recognize, is ourselves. So long as the people and government work together, hand in hand with one thought and direction, with willingness to make sacrifices, show loyalty and dedication dearer than our own lives, then there is no objective that cannot be achieved. It is such spirit and zeal that will ensure that Palden Drukpa will continue to prosper and grow from strength to strength.

On this auspicious occasion, it is my prayer that our hopes and aspirations in the Fifth Plan to bring success and prosperity to the people of this country will materialize through our dedicated and united efforts.

It gives me special happiness to have been able to discuss development programmes of your dzongkhag and share this National Day celebration with you, together as one family.

I wish you all Tashi Delek!

Address to the Nation, National Day, Mongar, December 17, 1980

On this day in 1907 Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck was unanimously elected as the first king of Bhutan by the people. Prior to his ascension to the throne, the country had undergone a critical and dark period of strife, internal unrest and poverty. From the day Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck ascended the throne, he ushered in peace, happiness and stability. That is the reason why we attach great significance to this occasion and celebrate it as our National Day.

Today, our national policy and aspiration is to remain a sovereign and independent country and to develop and achieve economic self-reliance, prosperity, peace and happiness for our people.

Having started our first development plan in 1961, we are now approaching the end of the Fourth Plan. Although twenty years have lapsed, today not a single dzongkhag out of 18 has become self-sufficient. I would like, as an illustration, to tell you that in 1979 our country's total revenue was Nu 60 million, while the total expenditure on development was over Nu 270 million.

If we are to achieve and fulfill our dreams and aspirations, the most important factor above everything is ourselves. Our greatest strength lies in our people. United as one, there is no goal that cannot be achieved and no problem that cannot be overcome. It is imperative that the people and the government unite and work hand in hand in developing and building a better future for our country.

Now regarding development works in Mongar, I will be meeting your Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung, Gups and peoples' representatives along with the officials of different departments and we will be discussing about your Fifth Plan. Up to now, there has been only one overall plan for all 18 dzongkhags, which, was made in Thimphu. From the Fifth Plan, the government, in close consultation with the people, will make one plan for every dzongkhag specifically geared towards achieving economic self-reliance. By the end of the Fifth Plan, I am confident that at least five dzongkhags can become self-sustaining. For the Fifth Plan, we are tentatively thinking about a total budget of Nu 60 million for development in Mongar. This money will be spent in improving the quality and consolidating the services that we already have, mobilizing our resources and developing manpower so as to become self-sustaining within the next five to six years.

In the world today, there are only a few countries that enjoy the same peace, tranquility and happiness that we in Bhutan do. If we are to enjoy this continued peace and stability, then all of us, the people and the government must be fully prepared to make sacrifices, show determination, loyalty and unite as one to serve our beloved Palden Drukpa.

I am very happy to be here in Mongar and to be able to celebrate our National Day together with you.

I wish you all Tashi Delek.

Address to the Nation, National Day, Dungsam, December 17, 1979

Today is the auspicious day on which King Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned. Prior to his enthronement, our country went through a very critical and difficult period plagued by disease, famine, wars and incessant internal strife. Only after King Ugyen Wangchuck came upon the throne, did our country begin a new era of great peace, happiness and prosperity. It is because of this, we celebrate this great day as the National Day of Bhutan.

The national policy of our country today is to consolidate and strengthen our sovereignty and independence and achieve greater self-reliance by producing within the country what we require for the development and prosperity of our country. For the fulfillment of our national aspirations, the most important factor is the close cooperation and participation of the people and their willingness to work together with the government.

I want you all to know that the strength of our country today is ourselves. We are the wealth and jewel of our country and the destiny and future of our beloved country lies with us all. It is, therefore, important and crucial that we unite and mobilize ourselves, show determination and put greater efforts in developing our country. If this is done, then our country will grow from strength to strength.

The planned economic development of our country was started from 1961. Although great changes have been brought about by the developments during the last 19 years, we should not be satisfied but realize that we are still going through a critical phase of development: leave alone the achievement of national self-reliance, not even a single district today is able to sustain itself.

Therefore, from the beginning of the Fifth Five-Year Plan, which begins in 1981, great importance is going to be given to planning for achieving district self-reliance.

By the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan, we hope that at least five to six districts will be self-sustaining. This task is a difficult one but if we give special priority in developing each district according to its own potential and if we are able to mobilize our manpower and other resources; there is no goal that we cannot achieve.

As far as the development of Dungsam district is concerned, I will personally take up the responsibility of carrying out all the developmental programmes in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, construction of bridges, irrigation channels and small scale industries. Since the government has decided to put greater efforts to develop Dungsam, you, the people must also take this opportunity and contribute your best efforts in developing your own district.

In another two to three years, when the results of the development programmes begin to show, I hope I will be able to think of this day with pride and deep satisfaction. I also hope that you all will remember this day as the happy occasion when you decided to initiate the development programmes of your district.

Today, when all the countries of the world are passing through a difficult and critical period of internal strife, wars and catastrophes, our country is enjoying peace and happiness. This is because we are a Buddhist country and also because all of us live united as one large family with a deep sense of loyalty and dedication.

I want you all to know if the government and the people can unite as one, work together in hand and hand and be willing to sacrifice even ourselves in fulfilling our national aspirations, then our beloved Palden Drukpa will be glorious for all the time to come. If any of you have grievances and serious domestic problems, I will be able to meet you during the next two days after the National Day celebrations and we can discuss the problems together as members of one family.

I am very happy that we celebrate our National Day in Dungsam this year and for having the opportunity to start developmental work, and being able to meet you all.

I wish all of you Tashi Delek on this auspicious occasion.

Address on the Opening Day of the 37th Session of the National Assembly, September 10, 1972

I wish to address this Assembly today briefly on the subject of the passing away of my late father His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who was the parent of our country's welfare and our most beloved and precious ruler. To the great misfortune of the nation His Majesty fell seriously ill sometime ago and departed for Nairobi, the capital of Kenya to receive treatment. Despite the medical attention and religious ceremonies performed for his recovery, His Majesty suddenly passed away there at 10.30 pm on July 21, 1972. Terrible grief has, therefore, come to us all as if night had fallen during the light of day. Speaking for myself also, the personal sorrow on the demise of my own father is indeed very great.

However, just as we having been born will all have to die, it should be remembered that my father has only succumbed to the transient nature of worldly existence. Our grief is also somewhat lessened when we recall that during the period of His Majesty's lifetime, besides serving him well and with full loyalty, none of us acted other than in accordance with his wishes. Now, there is no benefit to be gained by abiding in our grief and I am sure it would be much better if, instead, you all prayed for his departed soul.

During His Late Majesty's reign, all his actions were qualified by his desire to benefit the nation. It is as a result of this that Bhutan, from being a remote and isolated country, has now entered into the mainstream of world affairs. All of you are aware that His Late Majesty not only acted for the present and immediate welfare of the country but also looked to its future security.

With regard to the cremation rites of my late father, the most fitting place for its performance may be seen to be Thimphu as the capital. However, when His Majesty was suffering an illness at Phuentsholing last year, he said that since all his forebears had been cremated at the temple of Kurjey Lhakhang in Bumthang, he himself would be very pleased if the same could be done for him. The preparations we are making for His Late Majesty's cremation ceremonies at Kurjey Lhakhang are, therefore, in accordance with his will.

In respect of the government works which we share and which have to be undertaken from now on, I feel that for some time it would be best to continue in line with the wise policies laid down by my father.

Although I myself do not possess wide experience in government work, I shall be able to consult with the Royal Advisory Council and with the Lhengye Zhuntshog. In addition to this, it will be convenient to refer important matters of state to the bi-annual meetings of the Assembly. Speaking for myself, I have an earnest desire to serve our beloved country and its people as best as I can. I also hope that all of you, the monks of the state monasteries, the government servants and the public will assist me as well as you assisted my late father.

With regard to the question of regency, in Clause No. 7 of an agreement drawn up by this Assembly, there is a provision for the appointment of a Council of Regents by this Assembly until I reach 21 years of age. It will be very useful, therefore, if you can pass a resolution as to who should be appointed to this Council of Regents.

I would also like to say that I hope very much that our relations with the Government of India, which has been so greatly assisting us up to the present, will grow even stronger.

The state of peace and happiness which our country has been able to enjoy up to the present is in general due to the fact that since ours is a Buddhist country everyone is able to give recognition to the Lord Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha and, therefore, believe in the Law of Cause and Effect. In particular, our condition of peace and happiness is due to the strong and undefiled sense of faith and loyalty which has existed between the ruler and the subjects. I believe that if the Monk Body, the government servants and the public give careful consideration to the welfare of the Kingdom and dedicate their full loyalty, the Kingdom will be able to enjoy its state of peace and prosperity for a long time to come

**Address during the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Enthronement
of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Thimphu, June 2, 1999**

The celebration today is not to commemorate my reign as king for the last 25 years. We are here today to celebrate the successful achievement of all our national goals and objectives, the implementation of our development policies and programmes, the fulfillment of the aspirations of our people and the promotion of our collective well-being and happiness. It is for this reason that we celebrate today.

In the world at large, many countries today are still plagued by famine, disease, internal strife and wars with millions of people facing great hardships and sufferings. Here in Bhutan, even though we are a small, land-locked country, we have been very fortunate and the Bhutanese people must cherish the peace and the stability that our nation has enjoyed over the years. In keeping with the times, it is very important for the government and the people to always place the interest of the country above everything else and serve our country with love and dedication.

From the time when I was 16 years of age, you, my people have placed full faith and trust in me and always given me your unstinted support. It is because of our people's active support and participation that we have been able to fulfill our national objectives and achieve rapid economic progress for our country. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to the clergy, the government, our security forces, the business community and to all our people in the 20 dzongkhags of Bhutan.

Ever since Bhutan embarked on the path of planned development, we have received unstinted assistance, goodwill and cooperation from our close friend and neighbour, India. We have also received generous assistance, cooperation and goodwill from many friendly donor countries and the United Nations and its specialized agencies and organizations. Today, on behalf of the government and the people of Bhutan, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to all our friends and donors. It is our hope and prayer that our close friendship and goodwill between Bhutan and all our friends will remain forever harmonious.

Although we started planned development only 38 years ago in 1961, we have achieved greater progress and development than many other countries, which began development much earlier. In the past 38 years, our country has achieved unprecedented development and the well-being and quality of life of our people have been greatly enhanced. At the same time, we have been able to strengthen our unique national identity through the promotion and preservation of our culture and tradition. Another area from which we can draw much satisfaction is our success in the preservation of our natural environment, which has become an outstanding example for the rest of the world. The Bhutanese people have many reasons to be truly happy and proud

of our achievements.

Since the beginning of our recorded history dating back to the 7th century, Bhutan has survived and remained as a sovereign, independent country, which has never been subjugated or colonized by anyone. Today, as you all are aware, a most serious threat to the security of our country is posed by the presence of armed militants from Assam inside our territory. It is of utmost importance for the security of our country to make these militants leave our territory as soon as possible. However difficult it may be, we must do whatever is necessary to achieve this objective. I give my pledge to take full responsibility to safeguard and ensure the security and well-being of our country.

As a king, one of my most important responsibilities is to ensure that our people are able to participate actively in the governance of the country and safeguard our national interests. It was to achieve this objective that we introduced important political changes last year. Strengthening the security of the country, promoting our national interests and ensuring the present and future well-being of the Bhutanese people were kept foremost in mind while bringing about these changes. I wish to remind you all that it is of utmost importance for the government and the people to always place the national interests above everything else, in our thoughts as well as actions, and to work together in perfect harmony in the service of our country.

Many of our students are here today to take part in the celebrations. I would like to remind you all that it is very important for you to study hard and take full advantage of the education that the government is providing to our youth. After completing your studies, each and every one of you must endeavour to serve your government and country with full loyalty and dedication, and aspire to contribute in some way towards the progress and well-being of our country. I have always pointed out that the future of our country, whether it is lifted high or brought down, lies in the hands of our younger generation. Your actions will determine the future of our nation and we place our complete faith and hope in you to fulfill our dreams and aspirations for our country. It is because of this that all of us are inspired to work hard today so that we can prepare our youth of Bhutan to shoulder this great responsibility, which lies ahead of us.

I would like to inform our people that, the Government of India has agreed to a considerable increase in the Chukha power tariff. This revenue increase will have many benefits for our government and country. It will go a long way in fulfilling our national goal of economic self-reliance. I am happy to mention that with this considerable enhancement in our revenue, it will not be necessary to introduce the proposed personal income tax for the time being. Furthermore, the government is now proposing to increase the pay and allowances of our civil servants and security force personnel from the beginning of our financial year in July. I would like to express, on behalf of the government and people of Bhutan, our deep appreciation to our close friend and neighbour, India.

The introduction of television and Internet in Bhutan today is a reflection of the level of progress that we have achieved. I would like to remind our youth that television and Internet provide a whole range of possibilities, which can be both beneficial as well as negative for the individual and the society. I trust that you will exercise your good sense and judgment in using the Internet and television. It is my sincere hope that the introduction of television and Internet in Bhutan will be beneficial to our people and country.

Bhutan is a Buddhist country that has been enriched by the teachings of Lord Buddha and blessed as a hidden paradise by Guru Rimpoche. Our country has been fortunate to have a wise and beloved father of nation in Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to whom we owe everlasting gratitude and fidelity both as a great statesman and ruler and as a revered religious leader. It is my hope and prayer that the glorious country of the Palden Drukpa will prosper for all time to come. May the sun of happiness shine forever on our country and may the people of Bhutan enjoy everlasting peace, progress and contentment.

I am very happy that we are able to take part together in this celebration today like members of one close family. On this happy and auspicious occasion, I extend my Tashi Delek to all our people throughout our 20 dzongkhags of Bhutan.

**Address during the Presentation of Credentials by the Nepalese
Ambassador to Bhutan, October 31, 1983**

Your Excellency,

We have great pleasure in accepting your Letter of Credence accrediting you as the first Ambassador of the Kingdom of Nepal to the Kingdom of Bhutan. This is a historic occasion. After many centuries of friendship and good neighbourly relations, our mutual desire to have closer relations has found fulfillment in the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between our two kingdoms.

We have much in common. We share many values and ideals because of our common cultural and spiritual roots. Our perception of the outside world has been deeply influenced by our geographic location and the least developed nature of our economies. In order to promote an international environment conducive to the promotion of our national interests and the general welfare of mankind, both our governments adhere firmly to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement. Closer home, we are both determined to make South Asian Regional Cooperation a reality, in order to usher in a new era of trust and fruitful cooperation in our region. Internally, our two governments are striving hard to promote socio-economic development, in order to improve the living standards of our peoples and to add dignity to their lives. The establishment of formal diplomatic relations will undoubtedly enable us to enhance our cooperation in many ways to our mutual benefit.

We have had the pleasure of meeting His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev on several occasions, and we have been deeply impressed by his wisdom and vision, and his spirit of selfless dedication to the welfare of his subjects. Nepal has achieved great progress in the recent years under his wise and enlightened rule. Please convey our warmest greetings to Their Majesties the King and Queen of Nepal and our sincere good wishes for their happiness and personal wellbeing.

We would like to assure you of our fullest support in your efforts to strengthen the traditional relations of friendship and cooperation between our two Kingdoms. May your mission be blessed with every success.

Tashi Delek!

**Address during the Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador-
Designate of Bangladesh to Bhutan, May 18, 1973**

Excellency,

On this auspicious occasion, my government and people share my great happiness in accepting the credentials accrediting Your Excellency as the first Ambassador of Bangladesh to Bhutan. I am confident that we are laying the foundation of friendship between our two countries, which will endure for all time to come.

During your national liberation movement in 1971, our people rose as one under the leadership of my late father to support your just and heroic struggle for freedom. On the 17th of December, our entire nation was thrilled to hear the momentous news of the liberation of Bangladesh. As the 17th December is also the National Day of Bhutan, the two events were celebrated throughout our country with great happiness and rejoicing.

When my father passed away last year, we were deeply moved by your government's kind gesture in sending a delegation to Thimphu to offer your personal condolence to my people and family. As in the past, so in the future I hope that this spirit of good-neighbourliness will continue, and the people of our two countries will continue to share in each other's joys and sorrows.

Your Excellency, of the many links of history, trade and geography that bind us together, may I add that we share a pressing common goal, namely, that of working through a policy of Non-Alignment to achieve a durable peace in our region as a whole, in order to ensure the security of our countries, and thereby enable us to concentrate our efforts and our resources on promoting the welfare of our people. I hope that our two governments will work closely together in the pursuit of this vital goal.

My welcome to Your Excellency today would not be complete if I did not mention the role of our common friend, India, in promoting peace and progress in the region of South and South-East Asia. India, to my mind, has made an invaluable contribution to the development of economic and other cooperation between the countries of the region on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. I would like to express the hope that India will continue to play this constructive and positive role in the future also.

May I wish Your Excellency a happy mission to Bhutan and every other success in your efforts to further strengthen the existing bonds of friendship, understanding and cooperation between our two countries. Your Excellency may rest assured that you will receive full cooperation from my government and myself in your noble endeavour.

On behalf of my government and people, and on my own behalf, I would like to convey through Your Excellency, our warmest greetings and good wishes

to the President and the government and people of Bangladesh.

I would also like to take this opportunity of wishing the Father of Your Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a long and blessed life, for a precious jewel like him does not belong to Bangladesh alone, but to all humanity.

Tashi Delek !

**Address during the Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador
of India to Bhutan, October 10, 1980**

Excellency, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan. I have every confidence that Your Excellency will make very significant contributions in further strengthening the friendship between our two countries. I would like to assure you of the fullest cooperation of my government and myself, in all your efforts.

Bhutan and India, in recent years have developed closer cooperation in social, economic, political and other fields. The friendship and understanding between our two countries continues to grow steadily, and it shall be my firm endeavour to strengthen it further in the years ahead.

I recall with great pleasure and satisfaction my visit to New Delhi last February, and the fruitful discussions I had with the President and Prime Minister of India, and with other senior Indian leaders, on bilateral, regional and international issues. The discussions enabled us to better understand each other's points of view on various issues of mutual interest, and certainly contributed to further strengthening of trust and understanding between our two countries.

It is the cherished goal of the people of Bhutan to build a self-reliant and prosperous nation. We deeply appreciate the generous assistance and cooperation extended to us for our socio-economic development during the past two decades. I am confident that with such assistance and goodwill of the people and Government of India, we will continue making further progress in accomplishing our national aspiration.

On this happy auspicious occasion, I would like to request Your Excellency to convey to the President of India, and to the government and the people of India, the warmest greetings of my government and people, and our sincere hopes that the ties of friendship, understanding, trust, and cooperation between our two countries will grow even stronger with the passage of time. I wish Your Excellency a most pleasant stay and successful mission in Bhutan.

Tashi Delek!

**Address during the Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador
of Bangladesh, January 25, 1984**

Excellency,

We have great pleasure in accepting your Letter of Credence, accrediting you as Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Ever since your war of Independence, which we wholeheartedly supported, Bangladesh and her talented people have occupied a special place in our hearts. The deep-rooted ties of geography, history and culture have been reinforced by our common interests and aspirations. We have similar perceptions on many regional and international issues, which are of concern and importance to us. These ties find expression in our commitment and dedication to principles and objectives of the United Nations, of Non-Aligned Movement and South Asian Regional Cooperation.

Bilateral relations between our two countries have evolved in a highly satisfactory manner. We have maintained a close cooperation in all international and regional fora. We have periodically exchanged high level delegations between our two countries. The visit of Foreign Minister Doha to Thimphu last April was an important step forward. The visit of our Foreign Minister to Dhaka last November was extremely useful. There is a keen desire on the part of both our governments to develop the trade and commercial relations. Given the numerous bonds that unite us and the abundant affection and goodwill, which exist between our two peoples, the potentials for establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between Bangladesh and Bhutan are numerous.

We look forward to our visit to Dhaka early next month and the opportunity this will provide to renew our personal friendship with the distinguished President of Bangladesh His Excellency H. M. Ershad. We would also like to see for ourselves the sweeping social and economic changes, which have taken place in Bangladesh under a dynamic and dedicated leadership.

Your Excellency, we would like to wish you every success in your efforts to strengthen friendship, understanding and cooperation between our two countries. We would like to assure you of the fullest cooperation of our government in the attainment of your noble mission. We would also like to wish you and your family a happy and pleasant stay in Bhutan.

On this auspicious occasion, please convey our warmest greetings and good wishes to the President and the government and people of Bangladesh.

Tashi Delek!

Address during the Dantak Week Celebrations, December 11, 1977

The Dantak Project in Bhutan began in 1961. Since then, they have constructed over 1400 kms of road within the country. These roads have not only played a very important role in Bhutan's development but have immense benefit to every individual in Bhutan. The Dantak personnel faced many great hardships while constructing these roads. Many were injured and some even sacrificed their lives. We are grateful to the Dantak for such selfless dedication and sacrifices for our country. It is because of this, that we have gathered here today to celebrate the Dantak Week as a large family.

We have great hopes that the Dantak and the people of Bhutan will work hand in hand together from now on to accomplish the many important tasks that lie ahead of us. The people and the Government of Bhutan will make every effort to take an active part in sharing with the Dantak the many responsibilities that they have borne so far with sincere dedication for our country.

Bhutan-India friendship is very important for both our countries. Because of this importance, I went to Delhi to meet the leaders of the new government in order to reaffirm and strengthen our friendship. I had great pleasure in meeting your Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai with whom I had very frank and fruitful discussions. Since then the Government of India has sent a very good and sincere man in the person of Mr. Hiremath as India's new Representative to Bhutan. Mr. Hiremath has already played a very important role in further strengthening the friendship and creating confidence between the peoples of the two countries. The recent visit of your Foreign Minister Mr. Vajpayee to Thimphu, has also created further understanding and goodwill between our countries. I was heartened by the assurance of the assistance of the Government of India in achieving our goal of economic self-reliance.

All these recent developments have greatly strengthened the friendship between our two countries. Above all, I want you to know that the Dantak has made the greatest contribution to this friendship through their dedication and hard work. I am confident that the Dantak will not only shoulder the responsibilities of building our roads but will also take equal responsibility in strengthening Bhutan-India friendship with the same dedication and hard work.

I am happy that I have been able to meet you all during my participation in the Dantak Week celebrations.

Finally, on behalf of my people, my government, and all of us who are here today, I would like to express our appreciation for your hard work and dedication. I wish Brigadier Sachdev and all ranks of the Dantak 'Tashi Delek.'

Address at the Second SAARC Summit, Bangalore, India
November 16 -17, 1986

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by congratulating you warmly, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the stewardship of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. We have entrusted you with the responsibility of leading our regional body for the next twelve months. Over the past two years, you have demonstrated great courage and wisdom in resolving many difficult problems both at home and in the international field. We are confident that SAARC will gain strength and vitality under your able and farsighted leadership.

It is indeed gratifying that our second summit is taking place in one of the most beautiful cities of a country with which Bhutan enjoys close ties of friendship and cooperation. I have been greatly touched by the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded to me and the members of my delegation since our arrival in Bangalore. I would like to express our deep appreciation to the government and people of India for the excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

May I also express our deep gratitude to His Excellency President Hussain Muhammad Ershad of Bangladesh for his dynamic leadership of SAARC during his tenure as Chairman. His goodwill visits to SAARC countries have fostered a greater degree of understanding among us and strengthened the foundations of our young association. The inspiring guidance that he has provided to SAARC during its initial period will enable us to build on the progress already made.

At the historic Dhaka Summit, we established the framework of our association in a spirit of hope and enthusiasm marked with realism. The solemn commitment we made then to bring about a new era in inter-state relations in South Asia must remain the driving force for the future. We must maintain the momentum of our cooperative endeavour and realize the full potential of our association for promoting peace, progress and unity in our region.

Mr. Chairman, SAARC provides our seven countries with a new dimension in our foreign policy perspectives. We now have a forum for regular dialogue and consultation on matters of common interest. We have the opportunity to expand regional cooperation within this framework without impinging on our bilateral relations. At the same time, our regional interactions can contribute greatly towards enhancing goodwill and friendship among our member states.

It would be unrealistic of us to overlook the influence that would be exerted on the effectiveness of SAARC by the political climate of our region. Keeping this in mind, the potential of our association to create a congenial political

climate in South Asia must be fully utilized. We must, also, inculcate in the minds of our peoples a sense of regional consciousness. We must encourage people-to-people contacts at all levels in order to bring about a greater awareness of each other and to generate a spirit of friendship and understanding in our region. The development of mutual trust and confidence at the people's level will go a long way in strengthening the hands of our governments to overcome past inhibitions and to take positive steps towards achieving peace and development in South Asia.

Mr. Chairman, SAARC must take a firm and united stand on the question of global disarmament which has long been the focal point of numerous conferences and resolutions. We must give our full support to the various international bodies that have attached great importance and devoted unwavering attention to this issue. We must continue to call upon the Super Powers to renew their dialogue at the highest level and to take concrete steps towards gradual and complete disarmament.

In our own region, it has become necessary to take note of the increasing possibility of the development of nuclear weapons. We must make every effort to reverse this ominous trend. To this end, SAARC can and must play a decisive role by fostering better understanding among ourselves and creating an atmosphere conducive to the amicable settlement of differences and the promotion of peace and harmony.

In the current international economic situation, where the calls for North-South negotiations and greater South-South cooperation have yet to produce tangible results, SAARC has a vital role to play in improving the quality of life of our peoples. We must intensify cooperation among member countries and harness the full potential of our region to emerge as a new area of economic growth. The one billion people of South Asia constitute one of the world's largest markets in terms of population. The region's rich endowments of water and minerals resources and fertile land are precious assets that have yet to be fully developed. We also have a vast reservoir of skilled and unskilled manpower and the technological capabilities to manufacture sophisticated products. We must set aside the legacies of the past and fully exploit our inherent capacity for economic growth. It is only through an environment of peace and stability and intensive national and collective efforts that South Asia can become one of the most prosperous regions of the world.

Bhutan is pleased that a consensus has emerged on the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu. This Secretariat will be an important instrument to promote our objectives. It will contribute to the successful execution of various SAARC activities through effective follow-up, monitoring, coordination and evaluation. It will also function as a service and information centre for member states.

Mr. Chairman, the time has come for us to review our past achievements and

to consider the future direction of our regional body. With the experience gained during the past year, we now have a clearer perspective of the future. We should devote less time to workshops and seminars and concentrate more on concrete regional projects. The selection of such projects must be carried out carefully in order to ensure that benefits will accrue to all member states. The goals we set for ourselves must be realistic and time bound. This will impart strength and vigor to our activities and make SAARC a result-oriented body.

In selecting our areas of cooperation, we must give priority to the economic field as it is an area of vital concern to our peoples. We should particularly concentrate on the promotion of trade and joint economic ventures within our region. The establishment of air links and telecommunications among our seven countries would also enhance regional cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, our association is only completing the first year of its establishment and like all fledgling enterprises, we must nurture its development with great care and attention. The shape and scope we give to SAARC during its formative years and the reinforcement of the foundations we laid in Dhaka will determine the future direction and viability of our regional body. In this regard, the political commitment and support of the leaders themselves will be the decisive factor for realizing the full potential of our association. For our part, we pledge our whole-hearted support to you, Mr. Chairman, in furthering the noble principles and objectives of SAARC.

Mr. Chairman, SAARC embodies the hopes and aspirations of a billion people. Let us work with greater determination than ever to improve the quality of their lives. Let us prove to the world that our association is a vigorous, dynamic body which will bring about an era of peace, progress and prosperity to South Asia.

Tashi Delek

**Address at the Royal Banquet held in Honour of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India, September 29, 1985**

Your Excellency,

It is with great happiness that we welcome Your Excellency and your family to Bhutan. Your visit today gives us the opportunity to reaffirm and renew the traditional bonds of friendship and goodwill that exist between our two countries.

Shortly after assuming office, Your Excellency had stated that Bhutan would be the first foreign country you would like to visit. The goodwill implicit in the gesture touched us very deeply. However, this being Your Excellency's first visit to Bhutan, we were very keen that this auspicious occasion should take place during the most pleasant season of the year. As the country takes pride and delight in your visit with us today, we express the hope that Your Excellency, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, your children and the members of your delegation will have an enjoyable and comfortable stay in Bhutan.

The spirit of friendship and understanding that has brought our two nations together in a climate of trust and harmony is not new. It dates back to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's historic visit on horse and yak across the Chumbi Valley to Bhutan in 1958. As a result of this visit, Bhutan opened its doors to the outside world after several centuries of self-imposed isolation and embarked on a programme of rapid socio-economic development with generous financial and technical assistance from India. It was during these years that Pandit Nehru and my late father laid the foundations on which Indo-Bhutan friendship is firmly established.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi made further contributions and gave a new dimension to our strong and enduring friendship. It is rare in the annals of international relations to find a relationship of such affection and trust between the leaders of two neighbouring countries as that which existed between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and my father. This tradition of friendship and trust between the leaders of our two countries has gained strength with each passing generation, and I have every confidence that the goodwill and understanding which so happily exist between Your Excellency and myself will be an important factor in the harmonious conduct of our bilateral relations.

Your Excellency, permit me to express our deep admiration for your remarkable achievements during the short time you have been in office. Internally, some of the problems, which were eroding the fabric of your nation, have been resolved through the exercise of great political wisdom and courage. The introduction of a host of policy changes on a wide range of subjects from education to economy, and the new emphasis on technology, will undoubtedly facilitate India's march to the 21st Century. Externally, Your Excellency's active role as chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement on a number of key issues, and your initiative to convene the six-nation summit on

nuclear disarmament, has been widely acclaimed. Your effort to improve India's relations with its neighbours has brought about a distinct improvement in the political climate of South Asia. India's initiative to resolve the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka has been timely and useful. As a true friend of Your Excellency and your country, I would like to wish Your Excellency every success in your noble endeavours. I am confident that under your wise leadership, the great Indian Republic will flourish and prosper, and the friendship between our two countries will grow ever stronger with the passage of time.

I am most happy to say that at this point of time, Indo-Bhutan relations enjoy a level of complete trust and friendship. There is close understanding on all issues of mutual concern and interest. The close cooperation between our two countries is further expanding in every field and there is mutual respect and goodwill between the peoples of our two countries. I believe we have succeeded in demonstrating to the world that enlightened and far-sighted leadership can make it possible for a large country like India and a small neighbour like Bhutan to coexist in perfect harmony, trust and cooperation. We hope that the happy and mutually beneficial relationship, which we have established so successfully, will serve as a model to other countries.

Excellencies and distinguished guests, I would like to request you to join me in a toast to the good health of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, and the progress and success of the friendly people of India.

Tashi Delek!

Address at the Inauguration of the Office of the UNDP Resident Representative, Thimphu, May 14, 1979

It is now eight years since our country became the 128th member of the United Nations. Having set Bhutan on the path of progress and modernization, my late father was aware of the many benefits available from the various agencies of this noble body for the progress and prosperity of our people and country. He also looked upon the United Nations as an international forum through which our country, as a sovereign Buddhist state, could, in our own way, contribute to global understanding, peace and justice. It was, thus, through his dedicated efforts that Bhutan is today a proud member of the United Nations.

Bhutan began receiving UNDP assistance in 1973. Although we are assisted by many countries, in particular our close friend and neighbour, India, the substantial and meaningful UNDP assistance has made a very significant impact on our overall development programme. During the last six years, we have received over Nu 70 million from the UNDP.

Today, we are celebrating with great joy and happiness the inauguration of the office of the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Thimphu. Our happiness on this occasion does not emanate from our anticipation of receiving further assistance, but from the true appreciation of the many benefits that our people have already received from the UNDP.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bradford Morse, the Administrator, and Mr. Andrew Joseph, the Assistant Administrator of the UNDP. They were both very happy to know that all UNDP aided projects in Bhutan have been highly successful and that they are greatly benefiting our people. Mr. Morse also assured me that his organization will continue to assist us in fulfilling our aspiration of economic self-reliance.

I would like to thank Mr. Morse and Mr. Joseph for the trouble they have taken to come all the way from New York for the inauguration of this office. I am deeply touched by this gesture as it reflects their personal friendship and concern for our country and, without any doubt, the priority that their organization attaches to a country like Bhutan.

Until now, the UNDP office in New Delhi has been administering the UNDP programme in Bhutan. I wish to convey to Mr. Huyser the deep appreciation of our people and government for the genuine interests and attention that he has always shown in implementing UNDP projects in our country.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Mr. Tilak Malhotra, who is our first UNDP Resident Representative. His enthusiasm to assist Bhutan, his understanding of our problems and his long experience with the United Nations have convinced me that a better man could not have been found for this appointment. We are also fully confident that during the Resident

Representative's stay here in Bhutan, he would fulfill the heavy responsibilities of his organization and be of great service and benefit to our people and country.

On behalf of my people and government, and on my own behalf, I invite the distinguished guests from the UNDP to join with me in my hopes and prayers that the close understanding and cooperation between the UNDP and Bhutan would grow ever stronger with the passage of time and that all UNDP projects would be successful and continue to benefit our people. On this very happy and auspicious occasion, I wish you all Tashi Delek!

Address at the First SAARC Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh
December 7-8, 1985

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by congratulating you warmly on your unanimous election as Chairman of the first Summit Meeting of South Asian countries. This meeting is an occasion of historic significance for our region, manifesting our united commitment to regional peace, cooperation, and advancement. Mr. Chairman, along with the high distinction conferred upon you, the nations gathered here today have placed upon your shoulders the heavy responsibility of guiding our regional body for the next two years. For our part, we pledge our whole-hearted support to you in furthering the noble objectives of SAARC.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say how happy I am that this meeting is taking place in the capital of a country with which we have extremely close ties of friendship and cooperation. The fact that this meeting is taking place in Dhaka is a recognition of the vital role that Bangladesh has played in the formative stage of SAARC and an indication of the confidence we have in your wisdom and ability to lead our regional organization. I would also like to express our deep gratitude to you and your people for the excellent arrangements made for this meeting, and for the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded to me and the members of my delegation.

As we embark on our voyage of regional integration and unity, we wish to pay tribute to two distinguished leaders who made a lasting contribution to SAARC and who are no more with us. The late President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh pioneered the concept of SAARC, and the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India lent her firm and unwavering support to this endeavour in its crucial period.

After five years of gradual and painstaking labour, our efforts to build regional cooperation in South Asia have culminated in this Summit. As we meet here over the next two days, we will initiate the process of creating a climate of peace and cooperation in our region, based on mutual understanding, goodwill, and trust. This process will not be easy, given our political and strategic divergences and asymmetries in our sizes, resources, and levels of development. On the other hand, we must bear in mind that inspite of all our heterogeneity, we are geographically one homogeneous unit, that our peoples have lived together in peace and friendship for countless centuries, and that they share many values rooted in our common past.

Mr. Chairman, it may neither be possible nor desirable to limit discussions in our meetings to issues of a non-political nature, for the political climate of our region will undoubtedly cast a long shadow over our deliberations. In the geopolitical realities of our region, it would be unrealistic to ignore the primacy of the political factor, as, in the final analysis, it will be the political

environment of the region which will determine the shape and scope of regional cooperation in South Asia.

The main obstacle is not only to overcome the psychological and emotional barriers of the past, but the fears, anxieties, and apprehensions of the present. If regional cooperation is to be enhanced, we have to move away from an attitude of suspicion to one of understanding and trust despite major differences in political and security perceptions. We must transcend the narrow nationalism that prevails in our region due largely to historical reasons and create good neighbourly relationships in which the magnanimity of the larger states would be matched by the genuine friendship of the smaller states.

Mr. Chairman, in our deep concern over global military expenditure and the escalating arms race, we are heartened and encouraged by the recent summit in Geneva between the leaders of the two Super Powers. We would like to express the hope that this initiative will gain momentum and substance through a continued process towards gradual nuclear disarmament.

In our own region, it is regrettable to note that the arms race has intensified and assumed new dimensions with the increasing possibility of the development of nuclear weapons. While we stand united in our call for general and complete disarmament in the global context, it is a political reality that this ominous development in our region can be effectively resolved only through a meaningful dialogue between the countries concerned. At the same time, we are firm in our belief that SAARC can and must play a determining role in furthering better and closer understanding within the region in order to create an atmosphere conducive to amicable settlement of differences.

South Asia is the cradle of one of the earliest human civilizations. We are all heirs to glorious spiritual and cultural traditions. Yet, today, in terms of social and economic well-being, the situation in our region could not be more dismal. The region's one billion people, representing one-fifth of mankind, live on 3.3 percent of the global land area with a per capita income of less than one-tenth of the world's average. While the rate of economic growth is low as against a high rate of population increase, nearly half of our peoples live in absolute poverty. In this unhappy situation, regional cooperation, with its stress on self-reliance, offers a viable alternative development strategy. In our view, collective self-reliance and independence through interdependence within the framework of regional cooperation is not only desirable but imperative in the face of the present global realities.

The current international economic environment which has placed severe strains on our national economies favors the regional option and greater South-South cooperation. At the same time, we must persist in our efforts to establish the new international economic order. A congruity of views regarding international economics and North-South relations already exists among our countries. What is now required is coordination and harmonization

of our policies on the internal economic front through our regional organization. Once regional cooperation succeeds in producing visible economic gains and a climate of trust is developed, the scope for mutually beneficial economic cooperation would expand. In this respect, the establishment of an Integrated Programme of Action in nine areas of direct benefit to all our peoples is a noteworthy achievement. However, progress in establishing cooperative linkages in some areas has been rather slow. I am confident that this Summit meeting will provide the necessary impetus to cooperation in these areas.

The Kingdom of Bhutan has been a firm and consistent supporter of the concept of regional cooperation from the very beginning. It is our conviction that a vital factor in this endeavour is the determined commitment and support of all our seven nations to the principles and objectives of SAARC which are based on sovereign equality, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit. The common hopes and aspirations of our peoples which have brought us together on this occasion can best be fulfilled through the exercise of wisdom, vision, and political will at the summit level. We believe that it will be the personal and unwavering commitment of the leaders themselves that will determine the outcome of this Summit and the future course of regional cooperation. It is in this context that we welcome the proposal to establish the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and we pledge our full support to this body.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I would like to express my fervent hope that future generations will find reasons to look back on this historic Summit as the beginning of a new era in inter-state relations in South Asia, and heralding the dawn of regional peace, meaningful cooperation, genuine friendship and mutual prosperity.

I wish you all Tashi Delek!

**Address at the Banquet in Honour of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of
the Palestine Liberation Organization, April 21, 1985**

Excellencies and distinguished friends,

We have the honour today to welcome in our midst a man who symbolizes the hopes and aspirations of an entire people. He is a statesman and leader of great courage and determination who has dedicated his entire life to the cause of his people's justice and freedom. We salute our Arab friend and brother, His Excellency Chairman Yasser Arafat, the dynamic leader of the great Palestinian people. We are very happy to have Chairman Yasser Arafat and his distinguished colleagues with us in Thimphu today. We are confident their visit will further strengthen the existing friendship and understanding between the Palestinian and Bhutanese peoples.

We are all aware that the peace-loving Palestinian people, with a rich culture and ancient history, were driven from their homeland by the forces of imperialism and colonialism. We know that the majority of them are scattered in the neighbouring Arab countries and are leading a life of great hardship and humiliation. Their hopes and aspirations for an independent Palestinian state are kept alive and championed in the international arena by the Palestine Liberation Organization under the able and dedicated leadership of His Excellency Chairman Yasser Arafat. Despite the wide recognition of the aspirations of the Palestinian people by the international community and countless resolutions passed by world bodies, the persecution and the loss of human lives still carry on.

The situation in the Middle East continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. We have always held the view that the question of Palestine lies at the heart of the problem. In all international forums, we have consistently advocated the view that there can be no just and durable peace in the Middle East without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including Jerusalem. Any solution to the problem of Palestine must be based on the exercise by the Palestinian people of all their inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination in their homeland. Another essential prerequisite for any comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East is the full and equal participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in any discussion relating to the future of Palestine. We are also of the view that the early convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, would be a positive step forward in resolving the Middle East crisis.

Your Excellency, our firm and unwavering support for the Palestinian people is not only due to the just nature of your cause, but also because of the genuine admiration we have developed for you and the wise and mature leadership

you have provided to the Liberation Movement in the face of great adversity and overwhelming odds. We consider the struggle of the Palestinian people for justice and freedom, not a cause only dear and sacred to the Palestinian people, but to the entire human race, for all human beings value and treasure these ideals which give meaning and dignity to our lives.

On the happy occasion of Your Excellency's visit to our country, I would like to take this opportunity to assure Your Excellency of our continued and whole-hearted support for the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Excellencies and distinguished friends, I would like to request you to join me in a toast to the health, happiness and well being of Chairman Yasser Arafat and the distinguished members of the delegation, to the success of the Palestinian cause, and to everlasting friendship between the Palestinian and the Bhutanese peoples.

Tashi Delek

Royal Proclamation to the People of Bhutan, July 26, 1972

A great misfortune has befallen upon our Kingdom.

Despite medical treatment and religious ceremonies performed for his recovery, His Majesty the King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the source of all our present and future hopes, the parent of our welfare, our heart and our eye, expired in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, at half past ten at night on the additional tenth day of the sixth month in this Year of the Water Rat.

It is as if the sun of this country's happiness has set at noon and night fallen during the day. A great cloak of grief has fallen over the nation.

Despite the small size of our country, the great kindness, wisdom and forethought of the Late King have protected us from the dangers of foreign enemies, internal dissension, epidemics and famine, whereas other countries in the world today have little peace and happiness. As if warmed by a sun shining between the clouds, we have been established firmly in a state of security and tranquility. Forsaken now by our loving Ruler, we are all at a loss as to what to do, like a blind man abandoned in the middle of a field.

In particular, speaking for myself, my sorrow in having lost my own father is indeed very great. What is more, the country has lost a King the like of whose kind has, till now, never been known. The parent of this country's welfare having now forsaken us all and departed in peace, the grievous suffering of the whole kingdom at having been left without a protector is almost unbearable. However, the feeling of sorrow increases the sadness itself and we should remember that my late father the King has only succumbed to the transient nature of all existence.

It now falls upon me to join the line of dynastic succession to the throne, although I feel quite unworthy of undertaking this task. However, since all of you have strong loyalty for me and have placed great hopes in me, for my part, I hope to serve my kingdom and its people to the best of my ability and with all my heart and soul, for as long as possible.

Although it is quite certain that someone like myself would be quite unable to perform the kind of service to our country such as my father rendered, yet I still desire to emulate his deeds as far as possible. Ours is a religious Kingdom and because of the compassion of the Lord Buddha and the guardian deities of our country, the strong and unbroken faith existing between the ruler and subjects, and because the fact that the servants of the government are doing their utmost to serve the country, I feel that the Kingdom will not fall into serious decline. For my part, therefore, I am now trying to forget this sorrow that has befallen us and at present I am having the last rites for my father performed as well as I can. All of you must also abandon your grief. With strong endeavours in each of our own tasks, we must unite our minds for the sake of the strength and progress of our country.