

## **Opening Address of the Hon'ble Chairperson during the 21<sup>st</sup> Session commenced from 20/05/2018 – 27/06/2018**

The Hon'ble Chairperson said that the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the third National Council commenced on an auspicious day and on behalf of the all the members of the third term of the National Council and also on his own behalf, welcomed the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Speaker of the National Assembly, Zimpon Wom from His Majesty's Secretariat, Secretary General of the National Assembly and the Dzongkha Development Commission and all other guests for gracing the opening ceremony.

He also extended his greetings to all the people around the country who are watching it on television and listening to it on radio. The Chairperson thanked His Majesty the King for conferring of Dakyen to all the members of the third term of the National Council and also to the Chairperson on the auspicious occasion of Lord Buddha's Parinirvana. He said that along with the Dakyen, there is an added responsibility to all of them. Further, he thanked the people of Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag for re-electing him and the members for electing him as the Chairperson. Moreover, he stated that Bhutan is a country blessed by Guru Rinpoche and Zhabdrung Rinpoche.

He said that the country is enjoying peace and security mainly due to the gratefulness of our successive monarchs and in particular, he said that it is the result of the great deeds of His Majesty the Fourth King and His Majesty the King. Further, he stated that democracy in Bhutan is a responsibility bestowed to the people from the Golden Throne. Therefore, he said that the members of the first and second term of the National Council had served as a role model and in the similar manner; he hoped that the third term of the National Council, which is

composed of a mixture of members, is able to efficiently carry out the responsibilities of the National Council.

While serving for the next five years in the National Council, the Chairperson said that the members will be mindful of the direct advice granted to them by His Majesty the King and will also reflect upon the key messages conveyed by His Majesty through Royal Addresses granted on various national occasions. He said that they will serve in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of Bhutan, the National Council Act and the Rules of Procedure. In addition, the members will also focus and carry out policy review on issues such as narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor, strengthening the economy of the country, resolving youth unemployment problems, reducing corruption and addressing the problems related to unoccupied village households (gungtongs).

He also said that after the conclusion of the 21st session of the National Council, the members will focus on developing a strategic roadmap for the next five years. The Chairperson said that the agenda for the 21st session of the National Council will include follow-up on the resolutions of the 20th session, ratification of Agreement Between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes of Income, deliberation on the Annual Anti-Corruption Report 2017, deliberation on the Budget and Appropriation Bill for the Financial Year 2018-2019 and conduct of one Question Time proceeding. He also informed that the agenda for the Joint Sitting of the Parliament will include deliberation on disputed clauses of the Audit Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2017, deliberation on Public Accounts Committee report and presentation of Annual Report by the Prime Minister of Bhutan.

Lastly, the Chairperson hoped and prayed for the successful completion of the five year term of the National Council with the blessings of the Triple Gem and the Guardian deities, the prayers from the Central Monastic Body, the profound advice and guidance of Their Majesties, the diligence and co-operation of the civil servants and those working in the local governments and with the support from all the people of twenty Dzongkhags. He offered his prayers for the long life and prosperity of deeds of His Majesty the King, Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen, His Royal Highness the Gyalsey, His Majesty the Fourth King, Their Majesties the Queen Mothers, Members of the Royal family, His Holiness the Je Khenpo and all the Accomplished Masters and upholders of the precious teachings of the Buddha. He also prayed for everlasting peace and prosperity for all the people in the country under the benevolence and guidance of our leaders.