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## ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

*(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)*



ECB/NOTIF-01/2013/3940

Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2013

### PRESS RELEASE

*Subject:*     **Declaration of the Results of the Primary Round of election**  
                  **to**  
                  **the National Assembly 2013**

The Election Commission of Bhutan has the honour to report to the people of Bhutan that the Polls for the Primary Round of elections to the National Assembly 2013 in the 47 *National Assembly Demkhongs* of the twenty Dzongkhags were successfully conducted yesterday, the **31<sup>st</sup> of May 2013**.

Four registered Political Parties contested in the Primary Round of elections and have received the support and approval of the electorate as follows:

1. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa (DCT)	-	5.9%
2. Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT)	-	17.0%
3. Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT)-		44.52%
4. People's Democratic Party (PDP)-		32.53%

The **Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT)**, having secured the Highest number of valid votes cast and the **People's Democratic Party (PDP)** receiving the Second Highest number of valid votes cast shall contest the General Election and take the place of honour in Second Parliament of the Kingdom of Bhutan as the Ruling Party and Opposition Party.

We applaud the **211,018** voters, **55.27.%** of the total registered voters in the country, who turned out and cast their votes for the Party of their choice and added their individual signatures to determine the outcome of yesterday's Polls which will be recorded in history of the Nation as the first-ever Primary Round Polls held under the *Drugi Tsathrim Chhenmo*.

The participating Political Parties campaigned keenly to inform, communicate and interact with the public. The State support to election campaign, as provided under the Constitution and the Electoral Laws, ensured that the electorate had access to information on each Party's ideology and campaign manifesto, leadership and Candidate-designates.

Apart from the meetings called by individual Parties in the Dzongkhags, a total of 323 Common Forums for campaign by all Political Parties were organised through the length and breadth of the country with one in each of the 47 *Demkhongs* broadcast by BBS TV for the benefit of the general public, besides the two rounds of Public Debate of the Party Presidents and Representatives.

Of the total votes cast, **82%** were cast on the EVM and **18%** through Postal Ballot. Concerted efforts were made in every Dzongkhag to educate and support the Postal Voters through practical Postal Ballot Clinics; instructional communications disseminated through the mass media at critical stages; provision in the postal ballot applications for the applicants to give their telephone numbers where the Returning Officers could contact and get them to rectify the mistakes to validate the applications; the appointment of an additional ARO in Head Office as well as revisiting the procedures to cut down delivery time in country and abroad.

As the timely adjudication of disputes and addressing of the complaints and allegations as per the laws and the transparency of that process is vital for free and fair elections as well as for public trust in the integrity of the election system, all the fourteen cases received by the Commission were resolved before Poll Day and the general public duly intimated on the cases and the decisions.

On the Poll Day itself, the adverse weather conditions were of great concern to all of us even as we got reports of continuing rains causing landslides and road blocks in different parts of the country. However, the prompt responses of the resourceful local authorities including trans-shipping arrangements for 50 voters in Gasa, deployment of a bulldozer to clear the blocks on the Khoma farmroad, response by the appropriate authorities to clear the roads in Lhuentse, Zhemgang etc. facilitated the voters in getting to the Polling Stations to exercise their franchise.

No major problems were encountered in the conduct of the Polls yesterday. There were a few cases of those who turned up to vote without their VPIC who were facilitated with the printing and distribution of the VPICs wherever possible. There were three cases of religious personalities voting and a total of eight voters erroneously marked as religious personalities indicating the need for concerted actions from all concerned including the *Choedhey Lhentshog*, Dzongkhag and Gewog Administrations as well as the persons concerned who are expected to declare themselves as being a religious personality. Eighteen voters in Haa and five in Lhuentse who could not go to their assigned Polling Stations due to bridges being washed away or road blocked were allowed to vote in the other Polling Station where they were willing to travel and cast their vote. Similarly, six cases of voters being wrongly marked as “deceased” in the Electoral Roll were facilitated to cast their votes and two transfer cases in

Tsirang were also facilitated. The Election Commission renders due apology for this error.

The Budget and Expenditure Report will be prepared and made available for Public viewing in due course of time but not later than three months.

The details of the Final Results are available on the Election Commission's Website: [www.election-bhutan.org.bt/NAResults2013](http://www.election-bhutan.org.bt/NAResults2013).

With the formal declaration of the Results of the Primary Round Polls, the Election Commission shall invite the two Political Parties securing the Highest and Second Highest total number of votes polled in the 20 Dzongkhags to formally ***nominate*** one Candidate each to contest the General Elections in the 47 *National Assembly Demkhongs* from the accepted Tentative List submitted in the Letter of Intent.

The Nomination Papers shall be submitted by a Candidate nominated to contest the General Elections starting from today with the last date for filing nominations on **11<sup>th</sup> of June 2013** to the respective Returning Officer, as notified earlier vide our Notification ECB/NOTIF-01/2013/3403 dated 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2013, calling elections to the National Assembly.

The Political Parties who contested the Primary Round are reminded that they must file the Returns of Election Expenses to the concerned Dzongkhag Electoral Office or directly to the Public Election Fund Division within thirty days of declaration of the Primary Round of Election Results in the prescribed Form (**Public Election Fund Form No. 7D**).

The success of the Primary Round of Elections has to be attributed to the voters who turned out to vote; the Political Parties who worked hard and participated whole-heartedly and their officials and representatives who generally conducted themselves in cohesion to offer a meaningful choice to the electorate; and the entire team of dedicated and fearless election officials, security personnel and polling officers who worked tirelessly with commitment and enthusiasm.

We would like to put on record the hard work put in by those on election duty who have worked round the clock and often at great risk to their person to ensure that each and every Voter would be able to cast his/her Sacred Ballot as granted by the Constitution. Also the spouses and families of these officials for ungrudging moral support given to each one of them.

The reports of those working in the paddy fields using their lunch break to go and vote, the cordyceps collectors of Bumthang returning to their villages to vote and renew their permits, the elderly braving the elements to exercise their franchise and the thousands travelling to their ancestral homes to cast their votes in person stand testimony of our collective commitment to the King, Country and Nation.

Further, we would like to acknowledge the support of the Interim Government, Ministries, Departments, Dzongkhag and Gewog Administrations, Media and other Agencies such as the Telecom, Bhutan Post, Banks, Power etc. which provided support in the conduct of the elections. A special mention must be made of the prolific social media users who responded positively to the ECB's earnest request to all to respect the 48 hour no-campaign as provided by the Laws. We can't thank the social media users enough for the special gesture demonstrated in solidarity to our efforts to ensuring good democratic electoral

practices and we look forward to their continued goodwill and support for the rest of this journey.

The Election Commission of Bhutan looks forward to working together in the conduct of the General Election to the National Assembly, with the Poll Day on **13<sup>th</sup> of July 2013**.

Above all, we would like to offer our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo for being our source of inspiration and motivation and His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Monastic Community for their prayers and blessings and the goodwill of the public of Bhutan for the successful conduct of the first-ever Primary Round of election to the National Assembly in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

**Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**