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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2013/238

Dated: 27th of July 2013

PRESS RELEASE

Completion of the *Second Parliamentary Elections 2013*

The Election Commission of Bhutan has the distinct honour to inform the people of Bhutan that with the conclusion of the Election Petition Period of the General Elections to the National Assembly 2013 on 26th of July 2013, the *Second Parliamentary Elections 2013* have now been successfully concluded.

The *Second Parliamentary Elections 2013* formally started with the Issuance of the Royal Decree by His Majesty The Druk Gyalpo, on 9th of March 2013, calling Elections to the National Council. Twenty, out of the total 67 Candidates were elected, during the Polls conducted on 23rd of April 2013, to represent each of the twenty Dzongkhags in the National Council of the Second Parliament. This was followed by the Issuance of the Royal Decree, on 28th of April 2013, calling Elections to the National Assembly.

In the Primary Round Polls, on 31st of May 2013, the Electorate of Bhutan chose the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) and the People's Democratic Party (DPT) to proceed to the next stage and in the General Election Polls, on 13th of July 2013, the Voters elected the PDP with 32 seats in the National Assembly as the Ruling Party and the DPT with 15 seats as the Opposition Party.

A total of 171,544 voters (45%) exercised their franchise in the National Council Elections while during the Primary Round and General Election Polls a total of 211,018 voters (55%) and 252,485 voters (66%) respectively turned out to cast their votes.

The past 139 days, the Election Period of the *Second Parliamentary Elections 2013*, during which we have had three separate Poll Days with 161 individual Candidates and four Political

Parties and their nation-wide machinery campaigning hard, have indeed been momentous with changes wrought in the membership in Parliament and Government, testing not only the boundaries of our young political and electoral system but also the bounds, intelligence and patience of our Society.

While total acceptance of the outcome of the elections would have been a definitive sign of the maturity of our democracy, the media reports of some post-election misgivings that included allegations of corruption, divisive politics, coalition, biased media, doubts over postal ballots, interference by entities required to be neutral, resorting to Royal Patronage etc. from certain quarters has to be taken as a sign of intense emotional engagement.

Ironically, these were the very charges filed in the 37 complaints lodged with the Election Dispute Settlement System with both Parties involved as the Complainant and the Accused. These were resolved before the Poll Day and the general public was duly intimated through the Press Releases issued from time to time. The few complaints received during the 48 hour period before Polls had also been duly resolved and intimated to all concerned. The general public had been accordingly reminded of their right to recourse and the opportunity to seek to change any decision of the Election Commission through filing an Election Petition.

The Election Commission of Bhutan having confirmed that not a single Election Petition had been found filed during the Petition Period concludes that the *Second Parliamentary Elections 2013* as being conducted in full compliance with the Electoral Laws and the provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.



Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan