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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/CEC-04/2018/5257

Dated: 21st of April 2018

Press Release

Declaration of the Results of the *National Council Elections 2018*

The Election Commission of Bhutan is pleased to inform the people of Bhutan that the Polls for the National Council Elections for Third Parliamentary Elections conducted in the 20 Dzongkhags were successfully conducted yesterday, **20th of April 2018**.

Registered Voter Numbers

There were a total of **432,030** of which **220,881 (51.13%)** are female and **211,149 (48.87%)** are male registered voters in the 20 Dzongkhags. Out of this **88,915** registered as Postal Voters.

Dhamngoi Zomdu

A total of **289 Dhamngoi Zomdus** were conducted in the 20 Dzongkhags. A total of **177 (8 female and 169 male)** aspiring candidates stood for selection in the *Dhamngoi Zomdus*. A total of **63,216 (33,045 female and 30,171 male)** voters participated in the *Dhamngoi Zomdus*.

Contesting Candidates

A total of **127 (6 female and 121 male)** Candidates contested in the National Council Elections.

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Common Forum

A total of **313** Common Forums were conducted in the 20 Dzongkhags from 23rd of March 2018 to 16th of April 2018 for the Candidates to address the voters.

A total of **34,010** (**17,945** female and **16,065** male) voters attended the Common Forums.

Overall Voter Turn Out of the Election

A total of **169,623** out of which **89,316** female (**52.65%**) and **80,307** male (**47.34%**) cast their votes in person on the Electronic Voting Machines and a total of **64,912** of which **26,493** female (**40.81%**) and **38,419** male (**59.18%**) voted through Postal Ballot.

The Voter Turnout Percentage is **54.3%**.

Elected Candidates

It is an honour to submit to the Nation that a total of **20** Candidates, **2** female (**10%**) and **18** male (**90%**) have been elected as members of the National Council of the Third Parliament of Bhutan.

The Member-Elects offer the Nation a combination of talents, skills and experience with **11** Member-Elects in their 30's, **6** in 40's and **3** in 50's in terms of age. In terms of academic qualification, **9** Member-Elects have Master's degree while **11** have Bachelor's degree, with work background and experience ranging from **5** being incumbent Members of Parliament

(National Council), **4** with teaching experience, **4** from business background, **3** from the civil service, **1** each with experience in the Media, law, entertainment industry and Parliamentary experience in the National Assembly.

Postal Ballot

A total of **88,915** (**37,464** female and **51,451** male) voters registered for Postal Ballot. The details are as follows:

1. Conventional Postal Ballot

Out of **28,325** registered Postal Voters, **7,463** are female and **20,862** male.

2. Postal Ballot Facilitation and Mobile Booth

Out of **60,590** (**30,001** female and **30,589** male) registered Postal Voters for the Postal Ballot Facilitation and Mobile Booths, a total of **42,441** (**20,637** female and **21,804** male) turned out to cast their vote with **699** (**65** female and **634** male) casting their vote in **9 Mobile Facilitation Booths** and the rest in the **69 Facilitation Booths** in the 20 Dzongkhags.

3. 275 Postal Ballots were reported as rejected during the counting.

Polling Stations

The Polls on 20th of April 2018 were conducted in **866** Polling Stations in the Country where Electronic Voting Machines were used.

Polling Officials

A total of **6,168** Polling Officials were deployed for the National Council Elections, including the Poll Day on 20th of April 2018, as follows:

1. Chief Election Coordinators: **20**
2. Deputy Chief Election Coordinators: **39**
3. Assistant Election Coordinators: **205**
4. Other Dzongkhag Dispute Settlement Bodies Members: **40**
5. National Observers: **20**
6. Micro Observers: **27**
7. Returning Officers: **20**
8. Assistant Returning Officers: **27**
9. Presiding Officers: **866**
10. Polling Officers: **2,598**
11. Polling Assistants: **866**
12. Lady Security: **866**
13. Office of Media Arbitrator: **3**
14. Social Media Monitors: **22**
15. Legal Officers: **3**
16. Booth Officials : **469** (Postal Ballot Facilitation and Mobile Booths)
17. Independent Observers : **77** for Postal Ballot Booths

9 National media agencies were accredited to cover the elections.

A total of 2 International Observers from Election Commission of India observed the Election.

Election Dispute

A total of **8** election disputes were received and decided through the Election Dispute System comprising of the three tiers of the Dzongkhag Election Dispute Settlement Body, Central Election Dispute Settlement Body and the Election Commission of Bhutan. One case was lodged on the eve of the Poll Day from Samtse Dzongkhag which has been dismissed due to inconclusive evidence. However, expenditures would be scrutinized as per procedure.

Budget

Total Estimated cost of the National Council Election is Nu. 250 Million out of which Nu. **19.050** Million was disbursed to the Candidates as Public Election Campaign Fund.

All the sponsored advertising including the Public Debates, Television, Radio and Print advertisement as well as Common Forum in each *Gewogs* were conducted as provided under the Laws.

The general public is advised that the Election Commission Petition period starts from **21st of April 2018** and shall end on **8th of May 2018** at 5.00 p.m.

We would like to report that the elections of the Third National Council went smoothly with active participation of the electorates with no major problems encountered in the Polling Stations except in Sidpa NFE Polling Station under Largyab Gewog of Dagana Dzongkhag where the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) had to be replaced after the control unit showed Press Error. However,

65 votes that were cast in the earlier EVM were counted successfully and Polls could be resumed smoothly.

A total of 11 voters turned up in Pemaling Gewog Centre Polling Station under Samtse Dzongkhag with the old Voter Photo Identity Cards (VPIC) whereby election officials facilitated with timely issuance of New VPIC for them to exercise their franchise.

A total of 26 voters have been included in the supplementary list to the final Electoral Roll since they were wrongly marked as Religious Personalities in the Voter's List.

The Election Commission of Bhutan attributes the success of the Third National Council elections to the voters who turned out to vote, the entire team of dedicated election officials, security personnel and polling officers who worked tirelessly with commitment and enthusiasm. We would also like to acknowledge the support rendered by various Ministries, Departments, Dzongkhag, Corporations, Gewog Administrations and the Media Agencies to the Election Commission in the discharge of its functions.

Above all, the Election Commission of Bhutan offers its deepest gratitude to His Majesty The King, His Majesty the Druk Gyal Zhipa and His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the Monastic Community for their blessings for the successful conduct of the Third National Council Election.

(Chogyal Dago Rigdzin)

Chief Election Commissioner