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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN  
GYALYONG TSHOGKHANG  
THIMPHU

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### PRESS RELEASE

A 15-member delegation from Thailand led by H.E. Mr. Jullapong Nonsrichai, Vice Minister and Representative of His Majesty the King of Thailand is in the country to take part in the Royal Kathina Ceremony to be held at the Simtokha Dzong on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

The Kathina ceremony is an age-old tradition observed in temples throughout Thailand and it provides people the opportunity to earn merit through offering of robes and other essential items to monks who have spent three months in a monastery observing the rain retreat. The season during which a monastery may hold a Kathina festival is one month long, beginning after the full moon of the eleventh month in the Lunar calendar which usually occurs in October.

The Royal Kathina Ceremony is also held in countries such as India, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

The Royal Kathina Ceremony was celebrated for the first time in Bhutan in November 2011 at the Dechenphodrang Monastery. During the ceremony 8 Bhutanese monks were honoured with the Royal Kathina robes sent by His Majesty the King of Thailand. The Monastery also received financial support from His Majesty the King and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand for the development of the monastery including blankets and computer equipments.

The Vice Minister is accompanied by H.E. Ms. Madurapochana Ittarong, Ambassador of Thailand to Bhutan along with 13 other senior officials of the Royal Thai Government to participate in the Royal Kathina Ceremony.

