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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

**Official Visit to the Kingdom of Bhutan
by H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.)
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

1. H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, paid an official visit to the Kingdom of Bhutan from 19-20 July 2018 at the invitation of H.E. *Dasho* Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The Prime Minister of Thailand was accompanied by his spouse, Associate Professor Naraporn Chan-o-cha, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and senior officials of the Royal Thai Government.
2. The visit took place in the tradition of regular exchange of high-level visits between the two countries. The visit has greatly contributed to further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two Kingdoms bound by deep reverence to the institution of monarchy as well as shared common cultural and spiritual heritage.
3. The Prime Minister of Thailand received an audience with His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, on 19th July 2018
4. The two Prime Ministers met on 19th July 2018 and held wide ranging discussions on bilateral relations as well as cooperation in the regional and international fora, such as the United Nations, Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). Both sides expressed satisfaction over the existing state of relations and cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen relations between the two countries. The two leaders also recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation in science and technology and in combating transnational crimes.
5. The Prime Minister of Bhutan thanked the Royal Thai Government for the courtesies extended to His Majesty the King, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck during Their Majesties' visit to attend the Royal Cremation of His Majesty the Late King



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Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in October 2017. The Prime Minister of Thailand thanked the Royal Government of Bhutan for the successful visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to Bhutan in 2016 for Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's "Agriculture for School Lunch Project."

6. The Prime Minister of Bhutan stated that the Bhutanese people were deeply saddened by the passing of His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who was highly revered and deeply loved by the people of Thailand and respected globally for his tireless commitment and service to his nation. He said that Their Majesties' visit to Thailand to pay respects and attend the Royal Cremation Ceremony reflects the mutual respect and close relations between the two Royal Families.
7. The Prime Minister of Bhutan conveyed the deep appreciation of the Royal Government of Bhutan for the continued support and assistance from the Royal Thai Government in the priority areas of Bhutan's socio-economic development such as engineering, economics, public health, education, management and agriculture. The Prime Minister of Thailand agreed that Thailand will provide more opportunities for human resources and skills development for Bhutanese, including the Friends from Thailand Programme.
8. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the success of the One Gewog One Product (OGOP) Development Project between the Queen's Project Office of Bhutan and Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA). Both leaders acknowledged that the OGOP Project has benefitted 400 families of 80 Gewogs. Furthermore, many products under OGOP Project were exhibited at Thailand's OTOP City Fair from 17 to 25 December 2017 and received a positive response from the Thai public.
9. The two leaders emphasized the importance of working together in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sharing of best practices and experiences based on their respective and complementary development philosophies of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) of His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. The Prime Minister of Thailand is of the view that both sides could discuss a community development model



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based on the application of the GNH and the SEP towards the realization of the SDGs.

10. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged the importance of the Comprehensive Framework Agreement for Cooperation and the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, which provides important frameworks for cooperation between the two countries. Both sides agreed to work together through existing mechanisms such as the Annual Bilateral Consultations, the Joint Trade Committee, and the Joint Agriculture Working Group to explore ways and means to promote trade and economic cooperation.
11. Both leaders acknowledged the importance to explore investment opportunities between the two countries for mutual benefits. They recognized Bhutan's construction and hospitality sectors as potential areas for Thai investment and noted with satisfaction the recent developments regarding the Thai investment in the hotel industry in Bhutan. They were also satisfied with the close cooperation between the Board of Investment of Thailand and the Department of Industry, Ministry of Economic Affairs of Bhutan.
12. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the signing of the MoU on Tourism Cooperation in 2017 to promote tourism in the two countries. They encouraged the authorities concerned to work together on tourism promotion under the theme "Two Kingdoms, One Destination" through joint marketing, package tours, and promotion of Buddhist tourism.
13. The two leaders recognized the potential in enhancing connectivity between the two countries to promote trade, tourism and people-to-people contact. The two sides, therefore, agreed to finalize the pending MoUs on a mutually agreed timeframe.
14. The two Prime Ministers noted that the year 2019 would mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries and agreed to commemorate the occasion in a befitting manner in both Thailand and Bhutan. To celebrate the occasion, the Prime Minister of Thailand proposed to support the implementation of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat (EENT) Care Service Project, including establishment of Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Center in Bhutan in order to treat patients and build the capacity of



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Bhutanese medical personnel. The Prime Minister of Bhutan welcomed and expressed appreciation for the proposal.

15. The Prime Minister of Thailand expressed his appreciation to the Prime Minister and the people of Bhutan for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to him and the members of his delegation during the visit.

16. The official visit of the Prime Minister of Thailand to Bhutan marked a milestone in the close and cordial relations between the two Kingdoms. The visit provided an impetus to strengthen the bonds of friendship, goodwill, and growing cooperation between the two countries and peoples.

21 July 2018

