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PRESS RELEASE

Fifth Annual Bhutan - Australia Bilateral Consultation

Bhutan hosted the fifth Annual Bhutan - Australia Bilateral Consultation in Thimphu, today. Director General Kesang Wangdi, Department of Bilateral Affairs led the Royal Government delegation comprising senior officials from the various agencies. Ms. Kathy Kay Klugman, First Assistant Secretary for Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade led the four member delegation from Australia.

The annual bilateral consultation is an important forum to hold policy dialogue on issues of mutual interest in keeping with the MoU signed between the two countries on Development Cooperation in 2012.

The consultation reviewed the whole range of ongoing bilateral development cooperation programmes. The two sides noted with satisfaction that the ongoing development cooperation partnership is mutually beneficial. In addition, the two delegations identified water security, gender and tourism as new areas of cooperation. The two sides also agreed to align Australia's development assistance to Bhutan with the priorities of Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan.

The visiting delegation reaffirmed Australia's continued assistance for Bhutan's socio-economic development post 11th Five Year Plan and the imminent LDC graduation.

Bhutan and Australia are celebrating 15 years of establishment of formal diplomatic relations and 55 years of informal relations. The two countries established formal diplomatic relations in September 2002.

