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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2011/026

Dated: 8th July 2011

PRESS RELEASE

Subject: Local Government Elections 2011

The Election Commission is pleased to release the details on the recent *Local Government Elections 2011* which could not be apprised to the public during the declaration of the Election Results which was done immediately after the counting of results.

1. The overall voter turn-out for the *Local Government Elections 2011* remains the same at 56%, but the total number of voters who voted in the elections is 194,952 and not 194,357 as reported earlier. This was due to data entry error.
2. A total of 62,046 voters registered as Postal Voters, out of which 27,423 had applied for the Postal Ballot. The Returning Officers had to reject 8,415 applications and were able to issue Postal Ballot only to 19,008 postal voters. Of the Postal Ballots received, 16,474 Postal Ballots were valid and could be counted for the post of *Gup* and 16,003 for *Mangmi*.
3. A total of 2,185 candidates (165 female and 2,020 male) contested in the *Local Government Elections 2011*, out of which a total of 1,102 candidates (76 female and 1,026 male) were successfully elected.

Post-wise, the number of women who were successful in the recent *Local Government Elections 2011* are:

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- (1) 1 out of 202 *Gup*-elects;
- (2) 12 out of 204 *Mangmi*-elects;
- (3) 61 out of 684 *Gewog Tshogpa*-elects;
- (4) Nil out of 8 *Thromde Thuemi*-elects; and
- (5) 2 out of 4 *Thromde Tshogpa*-elects.

4. Out of the total 202 *Gup*-elects, 71 had formerly served as *Gups*.
5. While the minimum requirement of functional literacy and possession of skills required under Section 178(d) are met by all candidates, 4 have university degrees, 30 Higher Secondary School (Class XII) and 128 Middle Secondary School (Class X) Certificates. Fifteen of them had served as Non-Formal Education instructors in various parts of the country.
6. A total of 145 former Political Party members, the candidatures of 103 of them having been accepted after the revision of the Election Schedule, have been elected with 25 to the post of *Gup*; 33 as *Mangmi*, 82 as *Gewog Tshogpa*, 4 as *Thromde Thuemi*, and 1 as *Thromde Tshogpa*.
7. A total 76 candidates were affected by the revocation of the *mitsi* waiver. Out of the 76 Candidates, 12 candidates were successful in the nomination process after the revocation of the *mitsi* waiver of which 6 have been elected.
8. There are now a total of 373 vacancies including 3 for the post of *Gup*, 1 for *Mangmi*, 360 for *Gewog Tshogpa*; 8 for *Dzongkhag Thromde Thuemi* and 1 for *Thromde Tshogpa*. The details of the vacant *Demkhongs* are available on the Election Commission's website: <http://www.election-bhutan.org.bt/LGVacantDemkhongs>.

9. The elections in the vacant *Demkhongs* shall be conducted in due course of time while the re-election for the post of *Gup* in Goenshari Gewog of Punakha Dzongkhag and *Tshogpa* in *Sherabling Chiwog* of Chhudzom Gewog of Sarpang Dzongkhag where the Polls resulted in equal votes shall be called in the near future after consultation with the Gewog and Dzongkhag authorities.

The Election Commission of Bhutan regrets to inform the general public that upon detailed review of the **2,185** Nomination Papers lodged with the Returning Officers in the recent *Local Government Elections 2011*, it is found that the candidature of **seven** successful candidates had been erroneously accepted as they do not meet the legal age requirement.

Therefore, the election results for the post of *Gup* of Bjagchhog Gewog (Chhukha Dzongkhag) and the post of *Tshogpa* of Nyechhu_Shar-ri *Chiwog* (Tsento Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag), Gyalgong *Chiwog* (Silambi Gewog, Monggar Dzongkhag), Langchhenphug *Chiwog* (Langchhenphug Gewog, Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag), Ramtogtog_Tsangrina *Chiwog* (Chang Gewog, Thimphu Dzongkhag), Lemphang *Chiwog* (Bidoong Gewog, Trashigang Dzongkhag) and Chaling *Chiwog* (Shongphoog Gewog, Trashigang Dzongkhag) have to be vitiated.

It has also become necessary to publicly reprimand the Returning Officers who were responsible for the scrutiny of the nomination papers in the concerned Gewogs for these serious lapses in the discharge of their duties. They will not be eligible to be on election duty hereafter.

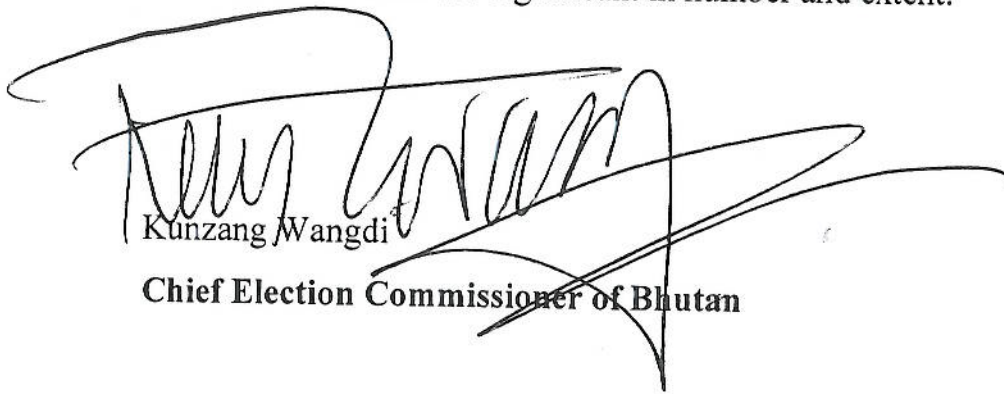
In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer, Election Commission and the Dzongkhag Electoral Officers of Chhukha, Paro, Samdrup Jongkhar, Monggar, Trashigang, Thimphu, Gasa, Samtse and Sarpang Dzongkhags shall be denied **one year annual increment** starting 1st of July 2011 for their failure to advise and backstop properly the Returning Officers which has resulted in this very serious lapse in the conduct of elections.

During the Election Period, Election Petitions have been filed against 26 elected candidates, out of which 17 are *Gup-Elects*, 1 *Mangmi* and 2 *Tshogpa-Elects*, 1 election authorities and the rest against other voters with the Royal Court of Justice in Dagana, Gasa, Haa, Lhuentse, Pema Gatshel, Punakha, Samtse, Samdrup Jongkhar, Sarpang, Trongsa, Trashigang, Tsirang and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhags. However, until the Election Commission receives directives from a Court of Law they will be considered as elected.

All the *Certificate of Election* have been sent to the respective Dzongkhags to be awarded to the successful candidates. It is also to be anticipated that the decision of the Royal Court of Justice on the Election Petitions may change the vacancy situation.

Charges have been filed at the Punakha Royal Court of Justice, on behalf of the Election Commission, by the Dzongkhag Administration as the Dzongdag is the Chief Election Coordinator during the Election Period, in the case of Voter Photo Identity Cards (VPIC) having been withheld, even on Poll Day. As the right to vote and the exercise of franchise by an eligible citizen is at the heart of every democracy and the VPIC is the sacred document which allows the exercise of franchise, this action had to be taken.

With the experience and feedback from these elections, the Election Commission envisages a better conduct of the next round of Local Government Elections for the vacancies which are significant in number and extent.



Kunzang Wangdi
Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan