

Keynote Speech on the Silver Jubilee of Druk Air Corporation
1 September, 2008
Royal Institute of Management, Simtokha, Thimphu

(English part of speech)

Delivered by

His Royal Highness Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck

My friends at Druk Air and Druk Holding and Investments; Distinguished guests,

We are all gathered here today to celebrate the silver jubilee of our Royal Bhutan Airlines. For a quarter century, Druk Air has played a pivotal role in our nation's development. It opened land-locked Bhutan's doors to air transportation, which has not only benefited our economy, but also strengthened our sovereignty. Thus, it is a great honor for me to be here today to pay tribute to Druk Air, and to all the people who have been associated with the airline's journey from its inception to this day.

The journey began when His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo issued a Royal decree establishing Druk Air Corporation in 1981. His Majesty's vision of connecting Bhutan to the rest of the world was realized on 11 February 1983, when Druk Air's first airplane – a Dornier 228 – began operation between Paro and Kolkata.

From its modest beginnings, Druk Air has seen tremendous progress and has evolved into a modern international airline that has proven indispensable to the people of Bhutan. The benefits of air service have cascaded to all sections of our society, and Druk Air's contribution has not only enabled economic opportunities for our people, it has enhanced our ability to fly beyond the horizon. From a citizen boarding Druk Air at Paro to seek emergency medical treatment outside the country, to an executive rushing to a business appointment, to the student on his first trip to an overseas college, Druk Air is our gateway to the world.

The benefits of urgent travel will continue to matter tremendously to a land-locked population for whom washed-out roads, mule trails and walking for hours to school remain a reality. For land-locked Bhutan, the air transportation link is a vital necessity that cannot be compromised for economic considerations alone.

To every member of the Druk Air family, I offer you our congratulations and gratitude for two and a half decades of excellent service to the people of Bhutan. I commend the Royal Bhutan Airlines for this most outstanding accomplishment.

Above and beyond the technology that Druk Air relies on, is the quality of services and professionalism of each and every member of the company. We must

perform in a manner that befits the highest standards of hospitality that we are known for globally. Every contribution made by any employee will have the highest cumulative effect on the quality of your service.

We must explore avenues for financial sustainability and innovative ideas for further development and progress. Today you operate in a monopoly environment, but with globalization taking place around us, you may face competition. Now is the time to strengthen your operations, to ensure that you have all the necessary skills and competence to meet any challenges and obstacles that may come your way.

In these efforts, I know that under sound, realistic policies of the Royal Government, and the wise corporate stewardship of your parent body, Druk Holding and Investments Limited, you will achieve your full potential.

On this note, let me take the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity and consistent support of our closest friend and neighbor, India. Through her generous assistance, the government of India helped us to launch our own air service, and made it possible for Druk Air to operate under one of the most challenging physical terrains at the Paro International Airport.

It is a pleasant coincidence that we are observing Druk Air's silver jubilee during the Centenary of the Monarchy. As such, I trust that the Druk Air family will continue to serve your company, and through it, your customers, community and fellow-Bhutanese at large, with utmost dedication and effort.

Thank you. Tashi Delek.