

RESOLUTIONS OF 16TH ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

January 3rd to 5th, 2013

Phuentsholing Higher Secondary School

At the 16th Annual Education Conference, we renew our commitment to strengthen the integrity of the education services through:

1. Enhancing effective communication skills of students

- a. Schools to develop action plans to improve reading, listening, speaking and writing skills through various strategies, some of which are suggested in the revised curriculum materials (including The Silken Knot) provided to the schools and the VIPP recommendations attached herewith **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
- b. Dzongkhag level action plans with clearly stated targets and monitoring and follow up mechanisms for improving effective communication skills to be developed at the Dzongkhag Education Conferences and submitted to DCRD by April 2013 **(Action: Dzongkhags, Schools and DCRD)**.
- c. DCRD to initiate discussion with the Royal University of Bhutan and the Colleges of Education by April 2013 to ensure that the programmes offered are aligned with the curriculum reforms and responsive to our requirements **(Action: DCRD)**.
- d. DCRD to put in place a proper mechanism for information sharing on curriculum implementation **(Action: DCRD)**.
- e. DCRD with support from EMSSD to draw up an action plan identifying Professional Development requirements to improve the quality of education, and particularly language skills, based on the findings of the Annual Status of Student Learning (ASSL) by REC, Teacher Needs Assessment (TNA) by REC, National Education Assessment (NEA) by BCSEA and other relevant documents **(Action: DCRD)**.
- f. DCRD to take stock of all the teachers who have undergone Lead Teacher's Course at Samtse College of Education, English Diploma Course at Sherubtse College, ToT in English Curriculum etc, and share the information with all the Dzongkhags so that their services can be used to assist in the provision of professional development at the school, cluster, Dzongkhag and national levels **(Action: DCRD)**.
- g. Follow-up system on curriculum reforms and professional development to be institutionalized at all levels (Action: DCRD and HRD).
- h. Schools to be encouraged to use ICT to improve the teaching-learning process and both teachers and students to be provided support in using social media responsibly **(Action: DSE, Dzongkhags and Schools)**.

2. Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment

- a. The 16th AEC endorsed the School Health and Safety Guidelines and agreed that it would be disseminated and implemented accordingly **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
- b. The DYS and EMSSD to integrate the template for monitoring health and safety in schools with the school self-assessment tools to ensure linkage with the Educating for GNH programme **(Action: DYS and EMSSD, DSE)**.
- c. Towards promoting a safe and secure environment, the Counselling and Peer Helpers programme to be strengthened **(Action: DYS, Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
- d. Recognizing that the school discipline policy has made a positive difference in terms of reducing discipline problems in schools, Dzongkhags and schools to step up the on-going advocacy and awareness efforts targeting parents, school management boards and relevant stakeholders. **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
- e. Furthermore, all schools to maintain a student portfolio, which should be shared with parents and guardians. **(Action: Schools)**.
- f. With the objective of reducing imports and ultimately attaining self sufficiency, the School Agriculture Programme to be strengthened to meet most school-mess vegetable requirements as far as possible **(Action: SAFED/DSE, Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
- g. With a view to ensuring the health of all school children, the mandatory health check for all students by health professionals and provision of vitamin supplements to be further strengthened. **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.

3. Strengthening Support Towards Professional Development of Teachers

- a. With reference to the discussions and recommendations from the VIPP sessions (attached herewith) for strengthening the integrity of the provision of education services, all Dzongkhags to draw up an action plan for professional development during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and share the information with DCRD by April 2013 for presentation to the Ministry **(Action: Dzongkhags, Schools and DCRD)**.
- b. HRD to develop a format for capturing PD programmes availed by teachers and school leaders and share with Dzongkhags and Schools for maintaining a database, by end of January 2013. **(Action: HRD)**.
- c. Schools, Dzongkhags and Departments to maintain a database on all Professional Development programmes availed by teachers and school leaders and submit the information as per the format provided to HRD by June 2013. **(Action: Dzongkhags, Schools and Departments of MoE)**.
- d. To ensure that all teachers and school leaders get equal opportunity for professional development, all nominations for INSET to be done through the HR Committees at the school, Dzongkhag and Ministerial level as per the BCSR 2012. **(Action: Schools, Dzongkhags and Ministry)**

Further to Support the Effective Delivery of Education Services:

4. Ministerial approval to be sought prior to the introduction of any clubs in schools **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
5. DEOs' to note that their primary responsibility is to ensure that the education sector's objectives are met and the plans and programmes implemented successfully. **(Action: Dzongkhags)**.
6. DEOs must ensure that all schools register their properties and maintain a proper record with details of thram and area, which must be maintained at the Dzongkhag level too. The record of registered properties must be submitted to PPD, who will maintain a database on the same at the national level, latest by June 2013 **(Action: Dzongkhags and Schools)**.
7. In view of manpower constraints faced by the Dzongkhag Engineering Sections, the Ministry to explore the possibility of recruiting volunteer engineers from JICA and Australia **(Action: HRD)**.
8. Loans availed for purchase of laptops and desktops under the empowering our teachers scheme to be liquidated by end of January 2013 **(Action: Schools, Dzongkhags and AFD)**.
9. Furniture in schools to be age appropriate and level appropriate **(Action: SPBD, DSE and Dzongkhags)**.
10. Schools to take responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the computers, equipment and ICT facilities and the Dzongkhags and Ministry to provide adequate support in this regard **(Action: Schools, Dzongkhags and DSE)**.
11. Continuation of the Science Olympiad to promote science education to be looked into **(Action: DCRD and Dzongkhags)**.
12. While it may be necessary to support the election process, Dzongkhags must ensure that schools face minimal disruptions to the academic calendar (Action: Dzongkhags and Schools).
13. DAHE must work towards enhancing the efficiency of the NFE programme and providing strong mechanisms for providing monitoring and support to NFE learners **(Action: NFCED/Dzongkhags)**.
14. NFE instructors to be assessed on the following parameters:
 - a. Enrolment, retention and completion rate of learners
 - b. Learning outcome standards of learners that would be assessed at both Basic and Post Literacy levels.
15. The Proposal to Introduce the Teacher Insurance Scheme was endorsed with the condition that the question of whether the premium should be paid from the ESWS (in case of ESWS members), and if so by how much the ESWS contribution should be increased to meet the additional cost, to be further consulted with School Heads during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and the recommendation of the Dzongkhag Education Conference to be submitted to the AFD by April 2013. **(Action: Dzongkhags and AFD)**.
16. The proposal to increase the ESWS Soemso was also endorsed with the condition that the required corresponding proposed increase in ESWS monthly contribution should be further consulted with School Heads during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and decisions submitted to the AFD by April 2013. **(Action: Dzongkhags and AFD)**.



Day 1: January 3, 2013

1. Welcome Address by Honourable Secretary

Welcoming the Honourable Chief Guest, His Excellency Sherig Lyonpo, Thakur S. Powdyel, the participants from schools and Dzongkhags and officials from the Ministry to the conference, Honourable Education Secretary, Aum Sangay Zam said that the past one year had been a special year for the education family, beginning with the launch of the Sherig Century celebrations on May 2, 2012. She said that all the schools around the country had taken active part and acknowledged the Dzongkhags and schools for their support and contributions towards the commemoration, which highlighted the role of education in nation-building during the last 100 years.

Honourable Secretary said that the year was also special because His Majesty the King conferred the National Order of Merit (Gold) to 123 teachers during the National Day celebration on December 17, 2012 for long years of service in education, excellence in school leadership, excellence in teaching, and service in remote areas. She said that the education family was humbled by the recognition and hoped that our teachers would continue to work with commitment and dedication, regardless of where they teach.

Honourable Secretary said that this year was also special because it was the last year of the 10th FYP and also of the tenure of the present government. Speaking on the 10th Five Year Plan, Honourable Secretary said that a lot had been achieved in spite of the many challenges and constraints faced by the education sector. She said that the achievements had been most commendable in the areas of institution building since the Ministry had to take on greater responsibilities in response to the changing needs and priorities of the country. On the policy front, she mentioned that the National Youth Policy and the HR policy including the INSET Master Plan had been developed, while the National Education Policy was being finalized. She acknowledged the support and cooperation received from all stakeholders and especially from the field in making these policy initiatives possible.

Referring to the theme of the conference, Honourable Secretary said that the past conferences had focused on themes such as "pursuit of excellence", "Green Schools for Green Bhutan", and "consolidating GNH in schools". While all these themes had been

important, there had been a lack of focus in the discussions and no regular follow-up and implementation.

Honourable Secretary said that while a lot of good things were happening in schools, more needed to be done to improve the communication skills in terms of reading, writing, and speaking. She also shared her concern on the emerging youth issues, adding that suicide cases were on the rise amongst our students. She said that this was worrisome and undesirable. Furthermore, she said that teachers played a critical role in determining the quality of education and therefore their professional development was of utmost importance. It was for these reasons, Honourable Secretary informed the house, that the theme chosen for the 16th Annual Education Conference was “enhancing the integrity of our education services through enhancing effective communication skills of students, promoting a safe and secure learning environment and, strengthening support towards professional development of teachers”.

Honourable Secretary said that in order to address the above concerns, it was important to discuss the issues in detail and come up with practical recommendations. She said that a way forward would be to draw up a concrete plan of action and ensure accountability at all levels. Therefore, she urged the participants to participate actively in the discussion and share their views and thoughts in a free and frank manner. Finally, she informed the house that the formal handing over of Thromdey schools to Phuentsholing Thromdey would also be done during the conference.

2. Opening address by Honourable Sherig Lyonpo

In his opening address, Honourable Sherig Lyonpo said that the Annual Education Conference always brought him joy and gratitude as it gave him the opportunity to meet with the DEOs and principals and listen to their problems and issues first-hand. He also said that the 16th AEC was happening at a crucial time when the 10th Plan was coming to an end and the 11th Five Year Plan was being formulated.

Speaking on the initiatives taken in the last 5 years, Honourable Lyonpo began by mentioning that the Ministry now had a vision and a seven point mission, which would



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guide us to a common goal and direction. Honourable Lyonpo also spoke about the Performance Compact, highlighting that most of the aspiration and targets had been fulfilled and acknowledged the unstinted support and cooperation received from all schools and Dzongkhags.

Speaking on the major reforms, Honourable Lyonpo mentioned about the green schools for green Bhutan initiative, which was launched to restore and revitalize the integrity of our education services. He said that while many schools and institutions had exceeded our expectations in their achievements, some schools needed to a lot more to improve their progress.

On the restructuring of the Ministry, Hon'ble Lyonpo informed the house that the Ministry had conducted an organizational development exercise to review its mandate and capacities to improve performance and ensure high quality services. Therefore he said that the exercise had resulted in the restructuring of the Ministry through the creation of a vital Department of Curriculum Research and Development, setting up of several new divisions, upgrading of erstwhile units, separation of the earlier Bhutan Board of Examinations from the Ministry and turning it into the autonomous Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment, including streamlining and strengthening of existing divisions and sections.

Honourable Lyonpo also spoke of the various initiatives taken by the Ministry to improve the scholarship services. He said that some of these initiatives included development of the Student Information Management System on scholarships under the Government to Citizen Service Delivery Project and the revision of stipend rates for scholarship students in India and privately enrolled medical students.

Speaking on the other initiatives, Honourable Lyonpo touched upon the development of the INSET Master Plan, implementation of 'Empowering Our Teachers' project and Chiphen Rigpel project, on-going curriculum review and revision to improve relevance and quality of education, launch of the Performance Management System, various studies carried out by REC and BCSEA to provide regular feedback on the academic health of the system, etc.

With regard to the theme of the conference, Honourable Lyonpo emphasized the importance of building skills and knowledge of teachers, especially the communication skills to teach effectively and fostering a safe and positive environment in which active learning could take place. Therefore, he said that the theme adopted for this conference was: 'Strengthening the integrity of education services', through enhancing effective communication skills; promoting safe and secure learning environment; and supporting professional development of teachers.

Finally, Honourable Lyonpo expressed his gratitude to Aum Secretary, Directors, Chiefs, officials, support staff, DEOs, Principals, teachers, parents, Dasho Dzungdas, Thrompons, Dasho Dzongrabs, Gups, Thuemis, development partners, the Royal University of Bhutan, BCSEA, the Royal Education Council and the private sector including the media for making possible the above initiatives and reforms in the education sector. For details on the Honourable Lyonpo's speech, please refer **Annexure 1**.

3. Follow Up on the Implementation of the Resolutions of the 15th AEC

The Chief Planning Officer presented the implementation status of the resolutions of the 15th Annual Education Conference. The details are attached in **Annexure 2**.

4. Handing over of Thromdey Schools to Phuentsholing Thromdey

Chukha Dzongkhag Administration formally handed over the schools and other educational facilities to Phuentsholing Thromdey in the presence of Honourable Sherig Lyonpo, Aum Secretary and participants of the conference. With the handover, the Thromdey assumed the responsibilities for all matters related to the provision and development of education within its jurisdiction. While the handover was to be effective from January 01, 2013, it was agreed that in order to ensure a smooth transition, the Dzongkhag Administration would continue to support the Thromdey and especially in the finalization of the 11th Five Year Plan, till the Thromdey was comfortable with the new responsibilities.

5. 10th Plan achievements and challenges of the Dzongkhags

The Policy and Planning Division (PPD) presented the 10th Plan achievements of the Dzongkhags and the implementation status of ABSD, along with the issues and challenges faced by the Dzongkhags in the implementation of plans and programmes as well as the recommendations to address these issues.

Honourable Secretary emphasized the importance of ABSD and clarified some of the issues related to it. She said that the Dzongkhags-wise disaggregated information was presented mainly to discuss how each Dzongkhag was doing in terms of progress towards the agreed targets. Commending Punakha and Bumthang Dzongkhags for achieving full enrolment in primary education, she urged other Dzongkhags to put extra efforts to accelerate their progress towards the agreed targets.

Honourable Secretary pointed out that of all the indicators, learning outcome was the most critical. However, evidences from the various studies like ASSL and NEA showed that we were not doing well on this critical indicator. Therefore, she said that concerted efforts would be required towards improving our performance on this indicator.

With regard to the physical and financial progress, it was pointed out that some of the Dzongkhags had low achievements. With barely five months left for the plan period to end, she reminded the Dzongkhags to expedite progress through constant monitoring and supervision. Commenting on the high physical achievement but low financial achievement in the Dzongkhags, she said that this was because of non submission of bills on time. Since most of our capital works were funded by development partners, there was a risk that the money could go back. Therefore, the Dzongkhags were asked to ensure that the contractors raised the bills on time and payments were made without delays.

Honourable Sherig Lyonpo also said that the overall achievement was impressive. However, he pointed out that there were disparities across the Dzongkhags, and that there were still many children out of school due to various reasons. This was a cause for concern since the key objective of the 10th FYP was to achieve universal primary education, while ensuring quality education. He said that the DEOs should continue the on-going efforts to locate the out-of-school children and enroll them in school.

Discussing the issues and challenges faced by schools, participants expressed that the schools were kept busy by many programmes during the academic session, thereby affecting the instructional hours. On this, Honourable Secretary clarified that it was not necessary for the Dzongkhags and schools to carry out each and every activity recommended by the Ministry. She said that the list of activities issued by the Ministry was meant to be a suggestive list, which should be discussed and prioritized during the annual head teachers' conference. She also said that **the movement of teachers during the academic session should be discouraged in order to avoid disruption of classes. Furthermore, the Dzongkhags were asked to ensure that all schools begin their classes immediately after re-opening from the winter vacation to avoid loss of instructional hours.**

With regard to the proliferation of various clubs in the schools, it was reported that many clubs such as democracy clubs were introduced in the schools without the prior approval of the Ministry. Honourable Lyonpo said that while the schools were encouraged to take initiatives and be creative, at the same time they should be mindful of the potential implications of such clubs. In the light of this, **the house resolved that ministerial approval be sought prior to the introduction of any new clubs in schools.**

On the role of the DEOs, some of the members felt that the DEOs were overburdened because of the need to do a lot of ad hoc works as may be assigned by Dasho Dzongdags from time to time in addition to their regular functions. The Honourable Secretary said that the Ministry would take up the issue with Dasho Dzongdags and suggested that the DEOs sit with Dasho Dzongdags and draw up their work plan for the year. On the other hand, some members were of the opinion that the DEOs were diverting their time and effort from their primary function. **The house resolved that the primary responsibility of the DEOs was to ensure that the education sector's objectives were met and the plans and programmes implemented successfully. Furthermore, it was decided that while it may be necessary to support the election process, Dzongkhags must ensure that schools face minimal disruptions to the academic calendar.**

Among the many challenges faced by the Dzongkhags while implementing the plans and programs, the most common challenges seemed to be the shortage of engineers. This according to the Dzongkhags hampered the construction works. Honourable Secretary said that the Ministry was aware of the issue and that the matter would be pursued with the relevant agencies. At the same time, it was also resolved that **the Ministry would explore the possibility of recruiting volunteer engineers from JICA and Australia to overcome shortage of engineers.**

Land compensation issues were also discussed. It was reported that many Dzongkhags were still dealing with land compensation issues from the 9th Plan and 10th Plan. Towards this, Honourable Lyonpo said that the Dzongkhags should expedite the process and resolve the issue for once and all based on the agreement signed during the acquisition of the land. **The house resolved that DEOs must ensure that all schools register their properties and maintain a proper record with details of thram and area, which must be maintained at the Dzongkhag level too. Furthermore, the record of registered properties must be submitted to PPD, who will maintain a database on the same at the national level, latest by June 2013.**

6. 10th plan achievements and challenges of the Ministry

The PPD presented the 10th Plan achievements and challenges of the Ministry. Also presented was the various initiatives taken by the Ministry during the Plan period. It was informed that much had been achieved in terms of institution building in the last 5 years in spite of many challenges and shortcomings. This had enabled the Ministry to take on bigger responsibilities and respond to the changing needs and development priorities of the country.

With regard to the issues regarding science education, Honourable Secretary said that while many things were happening in schools as part of the on-going initiatives to enhance teaching of science in the schools, more needed to be done. Therefore, she urged the floor to come up with practical suggestions and recommendations. On this, some of the members suggested that it would be a good idea to continue with the

Science Olympiad to generate interest amongst students in science and promote science education. **The house resolved that the DCRD and Dzongkhags should look into the possibility of continuing the Science Olympiad to promote science education.**

Concern was raised on the shortage of Maths and Physics teachers especially for Classes XI and XII. It was informed that to overcome the shortage, we currently depend on the expatriate teachers, and when they leave after completing their contract, the schools suffer. On this, the Honourable Secretary said that the Ministry now had in place a teacher projection tool, which was supposed to project the teacher requirement over the next five years. She hoped that this would help the Ministry to resolve the problem to a large extent.

With regard to the lack of willingness amongst teachers to serve in remote areas, some of the members felt that that one of the main reasons could be lack of proper housing and difficult working conditions. On this, the HRD explained that the Ministry was aware of the issue and that teacher housing in rural and remote areas would be included in the 11th Five Year Plan. At the same time, it was cautioned that the selection of schools for placement of teachers should be done carefully since many schools were going to be downgraded in the 11th Five Year Plan. On the suggestion from the floor to redefine remote and difficult areas, the HRD clarified that the definition would be based on the categorization defined in the BCRS 2012.

To improve communication between the Ministry and the Dzongkhags, it was recommended that PPD provide the contact numbers and addresses of the Department Heads and Division Chiefs to the participants before the end of the conference.

7. Overview of the 11th Plan

Presenting a brief overview of the draft 11th Plan, the PPD informed the house that the overall goal of the Plan is to achieve self-reliance through inclusive green socio-economic development. To achieve this goal, 16 National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) have been identified under the four pillars of GNH. It was also presented that the NKRAs are

further supported by the Sectoral Key Result Areas (SKRAs) of the different sectors. For the education sector, it was mentioned that the key objective are to ensure quality of service delivery and facilitate development of Bhutan as knowledge based society, ensure education sustainability and achieve MDG plus.

The presentation also touched upon the Dzongkhag Key Result Areas (DKRAs), physical development plans and the draft financial outlay of the Ministry. The house was informed that PPD would be meeting with the DEOs for three days after the conference to reprioritize the Dzongkhag plans and make it more realistic, keeping in mind resource availability and implementation capacity, before submitting it to the GNH Commission.

8. Presentation of the Findings of the NEA and ASSL

The major findings and the recommendations of the National Education Assessment in Class VI Literacy (2011) were presented by the BCSEA. This was followed by a presentation on the findings of Annual Status of Student Learning (ASSL) 2011 for English by the DCRD. Both the presentations highlighted that the performance of students in English was not up to the mark and that concerted efforts were required to improve the standards of English through the various strategies.

During the VIPP session, the participants were asked to split into small groups to discuss the issues in detail and come up with strategies to overcome these issues. The group works were then presented to a larger group in the plenary session. The following issues were highlighted:

- Poor Reading Habit / Culture
- Lack of appropriate reading materials at home and at school
- Distraction factors like TV and others
- Lack of teacher competency in teaching English
- Lack of opportunities to speak English outside the school, particularly in rural communities
- English curriculum is not implemented as intended (four strands)
- Lack of sufficient orientation of the new English Curriculum

- Refresher Courses on the implementation of English Curriculum needed
- Limited literary programs – debates, extempore, etc
- Teaching of English by non – subject teacher
- Lack of parental support (rural / urban)
- Lack of monitoring and support in the teaching of English
- Using Dzongkha to teach the English subject where there are teacher shortages

In order to address the above issues, the following strategies were presented:

- Inculcate continuous reading habits through various activities (paired / peer reading, DEAR program,
- Institute reading and speaking culture in the school
- Introduce model reading in the school
- Motivate students by providing interesting reading materials
- Encourage peer reading and teaching
- Recruit competent English teacher
- Provide PD programme to teachers
- Learn from the experience of good readers
- Conduct regular literary activities
- English subject groupings for professional discussions
- Teach grammar effectively
- Teach Phonics – Sounds to enhance decoding of new words
- Take Home Reading Programme (Lower Primary)
- Strengthen teacher competency in English of all teachers

Some of the members pointed out that providing professional development (PD) alone is not enough. What is more important is that PD should be linked to classroom teaching in order to produce visible impact on the learners. Additionally there should be greater professional support and monitoring from the Dzongkhags and various agencies in the Ministry especially for those schools where the standard of English is low.

Sharing the best practices on the learning of English, some of the DEOs mentioned that they initiated programmes like “learn to read and read to learn” including book reviews

in their Dzongkhags. Others shared that they took initiatives like linking library room, classrooms and morning assembly at the same time making it livelier.

Honourable Secretary commended the schools for doing many good things to enhance teaching of English. At the same time, she shared her concern that many of our students including the university graduates could not even speak correctly and confidently implying that somewhere something was not going right. Therefore, she said it was important to identify areas where things were not going well and discuss what could be done to correct the situation.

In view of the foregoing discussion and also in addition to the recommendations presented by the different groups in the plenary session, the house made the following resolutions:

- **With reference to the discussions and recommendations from the VIPP sessions for strengthening the integrity of the provision of education services, all Dzongkhags to draw up an action plan for professional development during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and share the information with DCRD by April 2013 for presentation to the Ministry.**
- **DCRD to take stock of all the teachers who have undergone Lead Teacher's Course at Samtse College of Education, English Diploma Course at Sherubtse College, ToT in English Curriculum etc, and share the information with all the Dzongkhags so that their services can be used to assist in the provision of professional development at the school, cluster, Dzongkhag and national levels.**

Day 2: January 4, 2013

9. Enhancing Effective Communication Skills of Students

The participants were divided into four groups and asked to discuss following issues and come up with an action plan to address the issues:

1. Instituting reading culture
2. Developing writing skills
3. Institution listening and speaking culture
4. Improving grammar/language

The first group, which examined the reading culture, presented that the following needed to be done on a priority basis:

- Observe reading week
- Institute 15 minutes reading daily
- Institute model reading to class/assembly
- Encourage self-reading on the weekends

Similarly, to improve the writing skills of the students, the second group recommended that more efforts needed to be put in a host of literary activities such as book review, school level essay competition, spelling test, report writing, story writing, creative writing, wall magazine, class magazine, process writing, etc.

On the listening and speaking culture, the third group made the following recommendations:

- Teachers can create an environment where students are trained to use the language that is supposed to be used. Example: a teacher models which language is to be developed; the teacher should speak either in pure Dzongkha or English. In case if a teacher uses mixture of words, teachers should clarify why it is done.
- Respecting the speaker and listening intently is very important.

- SBIP on skills of Active Listening (From Instructional leadership module), to be conducted one – two times a year.
- Theatre culture (one act play), audio-listening, and other activities provided in the textbooks need to be implemented properly or revived, i.e. it is observed that teachers spend less time on listening-speaking strand than on other two strands of reading and writing.

With regard to need for improving grammar/language, the fourth group presented the following actions for discussion:

- Grammar should be taught as a priority
- Grammar should be made an integral component in the CoEs for all teacher trainees
- Orient teachers on the teaching of grammar at the school level (SBIP)
- Orient teachers on the teaching of grammar at the Dzongkhag level by identifying human resource within Dzongkhag (DBIP)
- Correct usage of grammar on the notice board
- At school level, develop strategies to enhance grammar based on the framework
- General Teachers to speak in English

With regard to the communication skills, Honourable Lyonpo said that there was no dearth of the guidelines and resource materials. He added that a lot of these materials had been developed and circulated to the schools. However, only few people seemed to be aware of these materials and this was a major shortcoming. Therefore, he said that we should find and make use of these materials.

Regarding the curriculum reforms, Honourable Secretary mentioned that the Ministry had spent huge amount of resources in revising the English curriculum and training the teachers in the revised curriculum. But the main issue had been a lack of proper support and monitoring mechanism for implementation. Honourable Secretary also mentioned that some of the DEOs were not aware of the curriculum reforms and therefore, what had been envisaged in the curriculum was not implemented in the classrooms.

In light of the above issues, the house made the following resolutions:

- **Dzongkhag level action plans with clearly stated targets and monitoring and follow up mechanisms for improving effective communication skills to be developed at the Dzongkhag Education Conferences and submitted to DCRD by April 2013.**
- **DCRD to initiate discussion with the Royal University of Bhutan and the Colleges of Education by April 2013 to ensure that the programmes offered are aligned with the curriculum reforms and responsive to our requirements**
- **DCRD to put in place a proper mechanism for information sharing on curriculum implementation.**
- **DCRD with support from EMSSD to draw up an action plan identifying Professional Development requirements to improve the quality of education, and particularly language skills, based on the findings of the Annual Status of Student Learning (ASSL) by REC, Teacher Needs Assessment (TNA) by REC, National Education Assessment (NEA) by BCSEA and other relevant documents**
- **Follow-up system on curriculum reforms and professional development to be institutionalized at all levels.**

The house also discussed the role of ICT in education. There was a consensus that we should make increasing use of ICT to improve the teaching-learning process in schools. Some members also said that given many challenges in our country in terms of rugged terrain, scattered population, shortage of teachers, etc, ICT could also help us in improving access to education. On the other hand, concern was also raised on plagiarism and students lifting statements directly from the internet. Besides limiting the creative thinking of students, it would also promote dishonesty and fraudulent practices. **Therefore, the house resolved that while encouraging schools to use ICT to improve the teaching-learning processes, both teachers and students be also provided support in using social media responsibly.**

10. Strengthening support to teacher professional development: -Effectiveness of INSET programmes

On strengthening support for the professional development (PD) of teachers, Honourable Secretary said that the quality of education was determined by the quality of teachers, which in turn depended on the provision of quality PD. In view of this, she said that the Ministry always gave priority to the professional development of teachers. This, she said, was evident from the huge amount of resources being allocated to PD every year.

Presenting the issues related to INSET, the Chief HRO gave a brief overview of the different types of INSET programme and the rationale behind provision of PD. In particular, he highlighted that when the teachers' effectiveness improved through PD, low achieving students were the first to benefit. He also presented the budget allocation for INSET in 2012 and the number of teachers who had availed the INSET programme. Following the presentation by the Chief HRO, the participants were divided into four groups and asked to discuss issues related to INSET and suggest strategies to effectively address those issues.

From the group presentations, the following emerged as the key issues related to INSET:

- Relevancy/Planning –analysis, budget, duration
- Nominations – relevancy and opportunity
- Follow up – no serious monitoring and support system
- No proper data base

To address the above concerns, the following recommendations were presented:

- Set clear expectations from participants and the head of the school
- Develop data base – school, Dzongkhag & Ministry
- Plan and schedule the activities and share with participants.
- Give credits to all in-service programs attended (PE).

Honourable Secretary informed the house that the Ministry had completed the development of the INSET Master Plan. With the Master Plan in place, she said that the Ministry would be able to improve planning, management and resource allocation for provision of quality professional development programmes. She also emphasized that decisions on nominations for the NBIP programmes should be taken by the HR committees in a fair and transparent manner so that all teachers and principals receive equal opportunity for PD. Honourable Secretary also shared her concern that some of our teachers refused to attend the NBIPs for which they were nominated. She said that such cases would be viewed seriously by the Ministry as it led to wastage of resources and deprived opportunities for others who were interested to attend.

Overall, the conference endorsed the following resolutions:

- **HRD to develop a format for capturing PD programmes availed by teachers and school leaders and share with Dzongkhags and Schools for maintaining a database, by end of January 2013.**
- **Schools, Dzongkhags and Departments to maintain a database on all Professional Development programmes availed by teachers and school leaders and submit the information as per the format provided to HRD by June 2013.**
- **To ensure that all teachers and school leaders get equal opportunity for professional development, all nominations for INSET to be done through the HR Committees at the school, Dzongkhag and Ministerial level as per the BCSR 2012.**

11. Promoting a safe and secure learning environment

a. Implementation and impact of school discipline policy

On the Guidelines for School Discipline Policy, Honourable Secretary said that the guidelines were intended to provide a broad framework for the schools to develop and implement their own discipline policy and to empower the schools to create a safe, secure and conducive environment for the teaching-learning process. However, based

on the reports received from the Dzongkhags, it was evident that some of the Dzongkhags faced a number of challenges while implementing the school discipline policy. Furthermore, it had been almost a year since the discipline policy had been implemented and it would be important to know whether the policy had been effective and what modifications were required. It is for these reasons, Honourable Secretary, said that a session was allocated for the school discipline policy to get suggestions and feedback from the DEOs.

With regard to the issues faced, the participants reported that the most common ones were: inconsistent implementation of the policy, lack of awareness and parents' support, interference from the stakeholders, lengthy procedures, etc. On this, Honourable Secretary said that the issues presented were not major issues and could be addressed at the school and Dzongkhag level. Furthermore, she reiterated the importance of having clear and comprehensive written rules in place, and sensitizing all stakeholders, especially students and parents.

In spite of the above challenges, many Dzongkhags reported that things had improved in the schools after the implementation of the policy. There was a consensus that the schools and Dzongkhags should strengthen the advocacy and awareness programmes so that the stakeholders were aware of the policy. **In view of this, and also recognizing that the school discipline policy has made a positive difference in terms of reducing discipline problems in schools, Dzongkhags and schools to step up the on-going advocacy and awareness efforts targeting parents, school management boards and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, all schools to maintain a student portfolio, which should be shared with parents and guardians.**

b. Pastoral care and related issues

On the pastoral care and related issues, Honourable Lyonpo mentioned that the environment of the school can have a profound effect on the students. He said that as part of pastoral care responsibilities, every school should seek to create and promote an environment where our students feel secure, welcome and valued. He further explained

that evidence from many studies showed that schools with a positive environment made a big difference to the education process and young people's lives.

Honourable Secretary also mentioned that there was a need to enhance pastoral care in the schools and maintain a safe and positive environment especially in view of the emerging youth related problems. She said that the existing youth issues had been an off-shoot of rapid development, rural-urban migration, exposure to western influences and disintegration of traditional family values. She also agreed with the house that while most parents took their responsibilities seriously and were concerned to be good parents, there were, however, some parents who, for whatever reasons, were unable to give time and attention to their children and continued to expect the schools to take care of their children. Therefore, she mentioned that while our schools should continue to provide necessary support and guidance and take pride in caring for the children, at the same time, all parents should also be concerned about their children and assume equal if not greater responsibilities in the education of their children.

The presentations by the different groups highlighted a number of issues faced by our youths. These included drowning, teen-age pregnancy, substance abuse, sexual abuse, use of foul language, bunking, eve teasing, gang fights, lack of emotional support, etc. To overcome these challenges, the following strategies were recommended:

- Conduct awareness campaign on pastoral care for stakeholders
- Strengthen guidance and counseling programme in schools
- Sustain School based Parenting Education and Awareness Programme
- Strengthen Parent Teacher Association
- Involve students in planning and decision-making
- Train care-givers
- Involve law enforcers

12. Presentation on Empowering Teachers Project and Tendering Procedures

The Administration and Finance Division (AFD) made a short presentation on the project "Empowering our Teachers" highlighting that the project was initiated in 2009 to enhance IT knowledge and skills of our teachers. The house was informed that the

Ministry had supplied a total of 2204 desktops and 429 laptops with a concessional loan availed from the Bank of Bhutan. The floor was also informed that the loan was to be recovered from those teachers who received desktops/laptops under the scheme by deducting some amount from their salary on a monthly basis. However, due to lack of regular monitoring and follow-up, there had been irregularities in the deductions. Therefore, the loan still remained un-liquidated. In view of this, the house resolved that **loans availed for purchase of laptops and desktops under the empowering our teachers scheme to be liquidated by end of January 2013.**

The AFD also presented the tender invitation for 2103 for textbooks and various teaching learning materials, science equipment, IT equipment, fuel efficient stoves, scout items, etc. The presentation also highlighted the following issues:

- Payment delay from some Dzongkhags.
- Acknowledgement & delivery report for text books from Dzongkhags.
- Payments to be made to the suppliers after verifying the challans& bills by the concerned Dzongkhags as per the quotation rates of MoE.
- Failure to deliver the goods as per the delivery schedule shall result in levying penalty as per the procurement norms and should inform MoE by the DEOs.
- All the goods should reach to the schools as per the agreed terms & conditions.
- Supply order to be placed at a time and to be verified properly by DEOs.
- Delay of CRCs from DCRD to the Suppliers.
- Lists of the books to be sorted out properly by DCRD before floating tender (Publisher wise/ Category wise).

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13. Presentation and endorsement of School Health & Safety Guidelines and School Health Handbook

The Chief Programme Officer of the Youth Centre Division informed the house that the Department of Youth and Sports had developed the School Health and Safety Guidelines through a consultative process involving all key stakeholders. With the guidelines in place, she hoped that the school authorities would be able to plan and implement health and safety in schools in a uniform manner. She further informed the floor that the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in providing health and safety services in the school were clearly spelt out in the guidelines. Therefore, this would address the concerns regarding duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

Presenting the School Health and Safety Guidelines, she also highlighted that the guidelines were meant for all institutions including DEOs/TEOs, principals, teachers, counsellors, health workers, cooks, etc. who deal with children. She said that as per the guidelines, all schools would be required to institute school health committees and clubs with representation from relevant agencies/sectors, parents and communities. With the support and guidance of the committees, schools would be responsible for:

- Preparing and implementing disaster preparedness and response plans
- Ensuring a healthy diet for children
- Strengthening school agriculture programme
- Fostering safe and healthy environment for learning
- Provision of school health services
- Monitoring and reporting, etc.

She also presented the indicators for monitoring for health and safety standards in schools.

The house resolved that:

- **School Health and Safety Guidelines would be disseminated and implemented accordingly.**
- **The DYS and EMSSD to integrate the template for monitoring health and safety in schools with the school self-assessment tools to ensure linkage with the Educating for GNH programme.**
- **Towards promoting a safe and secure environment, the Counselling and Peer Helpers programme to be strengthened.**
- **With the objective of reducing imports and ultimately attaining self sufficiency, the School Agriculture Programme to be strengthened to meet most school-mess vegetable requirements as far as possible.**
- **With a view to ensuring the health of all school children, the mandatory health check for all students by health professionals and provision of vitamin supplements to be further strengthened.**
- **Furniture in schools to be age appropriate and level appropriate.**

14. Presentation of SUPW Guidelines

DCRD presented the guidelines for the implementation of SUPW from Classes IX to XII. Amongst others, the presentation touched upon the rationale of SUPW, amendments made in the guidelines, processes involved in planning and implementation, and assessment of SUPW. Due to time constraints, participants did not have the opportunity to share their thoughts and comments. However, schools and Dzongkhags were asked to contact DCRD for any clarification. The presentation is attached as **Annexure 3**.

15. Enhancing the efficiency of the NFE programme

The Officiating Chief of Non-formal and Continuing Education Division gave an overview of the NFE programme. He began his presentation by highlighting the importance of the programme. He said that the NFE programme continued to receive high priority because of its role in increasing literacy rate of our population and facilitating development of Bhutan as a knowledge-based society. He further informed the house that Bhutan was awarded Confucius Literacy Award in 2012 in recognition of the

commendable achievements we have made in the non-formal education programme. Amongst others, the following issues were covered in his presentation:

- Basic statistics on NFE programme
- Completion rate by Dzongkhags
- Reasons for inefficiency of the programme
- Strategies to improve efficiency of the programme

The presentation is attached as **Annexure 4**.

The house made the following comments:

- Inadequate monitoring and support for the NFE programme
- Need to focus more on the outcomes of the programme in terms of learning outcomes of learners and the difference it has made in the lives of the learners and the community at large
- Need to come up with a strategic plan to improve literacy rate

Based on the presentation and comments received from the participants, the house endorsed the following resolutions:

- **DAHE must work towards enhancing the efficiency of the NFE programme and providing strong mechanisms for providing monitoring and support to NFE learners**
- **NFE instructors to be assessed on the following parameters:**
 - **Enrolment, retention and completion rate of learners**
 - **Learning outcome standards of learners that would be assessed at both Basic and Post Literacy levels.**

16. Update on ICT

The School IT Unit of the Department of School Education presented an update on ICT. Amongst others, the presentation highlighted the ICT survey, which was conducted to collect data on existing ICT infrastructure in school and their condition. Also presented

was an update on the status of Chiphen Rigpel Project. It was reported that a total of 3382 teachers had been trained till summer 2012 and a budget of Nu 26.18 million had been spent for the same. The training would also be continued during the winter vacation in 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively.

Presenting the impact assessment of the Chiphen Rigpel project, the house was informed that the training had been found relevant and useful by teachers, with most teachers reporting that they had become more confident in using the computers after attending the training. The area in which the teachers used their newly acquired ICT knowledge and skills included preparing question papers, compiling results, time tabling, developing lesson plans, using internet to look for information, communication with the DEOs and the Ministry, etc.

The presentations on the above are attached as **Annexure 5**.

The house was also briefed on the ICT plans and proposals in the 11th Plan and the development of the ICT in education master plan. With regard to ICT infrastructure, **the house resolved that schools should take responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the computers, equipment and ICT facilities and the Dzongkhags and Ministry to provide adequate support in this regard.**

17. Presentation on RICB Insurance Scheme and ESWS Update

The Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan presented the special health education scheme for the Ministry of Education. It was informed that the scheme covered the medical expenses and other related expenses incurred by members. The presentation also covered the procedures in place for processing claims and the premium amount to be paid by members depending on the benefits they would like to avail.

The presentation is attached as **Annexure 6**.

On this, the house decided that while endorsing the proposal to introduce the Teacher Insurance Scheme, the question of whether the premium should be paid

from the ESWS (in case of ESWS members), and if so by how much the ESWS contribution should be increased to meet the additional cost, should be further consulted with School Heads during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and the recommendation of the Dzongkhag Education Conference to be submitted to the AFD by April 2013.

The ESWS Manager presented an update on the ESWS. He informed the house that ESWS was established with the objective of helping the members with monetary issues because most education staff cannot access financial support in times of distress and emergencies. Keeping this in view, the scheme was established in September 1996.

The presentation on ESWS covered the following:

- Receipt and payment a/c for the calendar year 2011 & 2012
- Status on ESWS Fund
- Status on the Welfare Loan
- Investment
- Proposal on Revision of semso

The presentation is attached as **Annexure 7**.

With regard to the revision of semso, he presented the following proposal:

	Existing Semso (Nu.)	Proposed Semso (Nu.)
Parents	15,000	25,000
Spouse	20,000	30,000
Member	30,000	40,000
Children	10,000	15,000

Some of the participants commented that while it was a good idea to revise semso to address financial difficulties in times of distress and emergencies, at the same time, they also felt that there should be an increase in the monthly contribution, and by what

extent the monthly contribution should be increased, needed to be further discussed. **Therefore the house resolved that while the proposal to increase the ESWS Semso was endorsed, the required corresponding proposed increase in ESWS monthly contribution should be further consulted with School Heads during the Dzongkhag Education Conference and decisions submitted to the AFD by April 2013.**

18. Presentation on GNH Survey Findings

Dasho Karma Ura, President for Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research presented the findings of the GNH survey, covering a number of topics such as assessment of assessment, GNH and educational goals, and teacher needs assessment and the head. The presentation is attached as **Annexure 8**.

19. Endorsement of the Resolutions

The Resolutions of the 16th AEC were discussed and adopted by the house. For details, please see **Annexure 9**.

20. Closing session

20.1 Welcome by Director DCRD

On behalf of the education fraternity, the Director, DCRD welcomed the Honourable Sherig Lyonpo, Aum Secretary and all the distinguished guests including to the closing session of the 16th AEC. She reported that the conference had been successful, adding that we had good discussion and had come up with many resolutions to fulfill the theme of the conference.

20.2 Report on Sherig Century Celebrations

The Director General, Department of Adult and Higher Education, and Chairperson of the Sherig Century Celebrations Task Force, updated the house on the status of the

Sherig Century Celebrations. He presented that amongst others, the following activities were organized by our schools and Dzongkhags as part of the Sherig Century Celebrations:

- Launch at Thimphu: 2nd May 2012
- Carpentry, painting, art and embroidery (Paro)
- History (Bumthang)
- Offering of butter lamps and eminent alumni as guest speakers (Bumthang)
- Food exhibition, offering khadars -retired teachers to present teachers + Younger teachers offer gifts to Sr. Teachers andOrchid garden (Zhemgang)
- Dorjipuen and Tashi Delek Tea Party (Sonamthang MSS)
- Student Health fund (Bjokha PS)
- Sherig Walk (S/Jongkhar, T/gang)
- Clock Tower, Mani Dungkhorand reading competition (S/Jongkhar)
- Children's park and MTV (Dagana)
- Certificate of recognition for Sr. teachers (T/Yangtsi)
- Lopen Khamzang (Thimthrom)
- 3 day festival (Punakha)
- Website launched (Lhuentse)

He informed the house that the Sherig Century Celebrations would officially culminate in Ugyen Dorji HSS on 21st February 2013 coinciding with the birthday of His Majesty the King, which is also observed as the National Education Day. He said that many activities had been planned during the next two months leading up to the culmination event. Presenting the upcoming events, the Director General said that the following activities were in the pipeline:

- Kuensel Inserts (History of education, dzongkhag achievements, Sherig Century events, GNH best practices)
- Publications:
 - Sherig Journey Documentary(BBS)
 - Glimpses of Sherig Century Celebrations (ICD, MoE)
- Sherig century culmination events at (Gongzim) Ugyen Dorji HSS

- Poster exhibition
- Dzongkhag exhibition (DEO and a Sr. teacher-report to attend)
- Haa on 19th Feb.- artifacts,photos,history, best practices etc- materials donated to Eduseum)
- inauguration of Sherig Chorten and Children's park
- inauguration of Sherig museum- EDUSEUM
- speeches
- inaugurations
- screening of glimpses of sherig century(ICD)
- cultural programmes by Haa

20.3 Report on Consolidating GNH in our Schools and Screening of Video on Educating for GNH

Presenting the implementation status of Educating for GNH initiatives, the Chief Education Monitoring Officer reported that many things were happening in schools as part of Educating for GNH initiatives. Among others, these included development of action plan for implementing GNH in every school, alignment of lesson plans towards GNH ethos, and promoting whole school approach through deliberate and conscious efforts. She also reported that schools have initiated many programmes such as promoting home cooked food for lunch and clean plate policy, observing green day (vegetarian food), involving parents in school activities, gardening and campus beautification, introducing choeshed programme, etc.

With regard to the capacity building on Educating for GNH initiative, she said that the focus had been on 8 areas comprising generic skills, ecological literacy, culture and tradition, contemplative learning, holistic understanding of world, care for nature and humans, preparation for right livelihood, and informed civic engagement. So far the training had been completed for teachers in Bumthang, Haa, Thimphu, Thimphu Thromdey, Dagana, Chukha, Phuentsholing Thromdey, Wangdue and Tsirang Dzongkhags were trained on Educating for GNH initiatives. The rest of the Dzongkhags would be covered in 2013 and 2014.

After the presentation, the Information and Communication Division screened a short video on Educating for GNH.

20.4 Participants' Reflection

Two participants shared their reflection on the Conference on behalf of the other participants from schools and Dzongkhags. Both the speakers acknowledged the Conference as being useful in educating the participants on the policies and plans of the Ministry and the issues faced by the education sector. They assured the Ministry that the participants would share whatever they had learnt with their colleagues back in schools and Dzongkhags. Also acknowledging that the Conference provided a platform for the participants to strengthen networking and cooperation, they suggested that the Ministry should consider organizing such a forum on a regular basis in the future.

20.5 Closing address by Hon'ble Sherig Lyonpo

Addressing the closing session, Honourable Lyonpo said that during the past three days, educationists from around the country, policy-makers and planners came together in the name of the children and youth of Bhutan and in honour of the dreams and hopes of our dear country. He said that we had surveyed the distance we had travelled and cast our eyes at the miles that remained to be covered.

Honourable Lyonpo reminded the participants that although we had many limitations and shortcoming, with more efforts, we could still do a lot and make a difference in the lives of our young people. He further said that as the sector noble, it is our duty to convince the society that it makes sense to set up schools and seats of learning, and show that good and useful things happen there; that it is worthwhile for parents to send their children to schools, colleges and universities and keep them there for extended periods of time - they will learn to be useful and graceful as educated individuals ought to be.



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Honourable Lyonpo concluded his address by reiterating that at the heart of our deliberations and reflections had been the fundamental issues and concerns without which our conference would have lost its meaning. It is for these reasons that he said that this conference would be remembered by the education family as an event with singular importance. The Hon'ble Lyonpo' speech is attached as **Annexure 10**.



20.6 Vote of Thanks

The Director of the Department of School Education, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, expressed deep and heartfelt gratitude to Helvetas for making the Conference possible with their generous financial support. He also thanked Honourable Lyonpo and Honourable Secretary for the overall guidance and support.

The Director also expressed his sincere thanks to Phuentsholing HSS for hosting the Conference and for all the logistic support. He went on to mention that an event like this cannot happen overnight. Therefore, he expressed his sincere gratitude to all the individuals and agencies involved in planning and arrangement of the Conference. In particular, he thanked ADEO, Phuentsholing for his support and cooperation and PPD for working hard to ensure that the Conference was a success. He also acknowledged the support and cooperation received from AFD and HRD, and other agencies in Phuentsholing. Finally he thanked all the participants for participating actively in the Conference and all the honoured guests for their kind presence in the closing session of the Conference.