

Message from the President of Bhutan-Switzerland Society to the General Assembly of
Society Switzerland-Bhutan being held on 26 March 2011

Greetings from Bhutan, the land of happiness!

At the outset, I would like to express, on behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Bhutan-Switzerland Society (BSS) and in particular the victims of the unfortunate fire accident of 26 October 2010 of Chamkhar town in Bumthang, our most sincere and deepest gratitude to the President and members of Society Switzerland-Bhutan (SSB) and friends and well-wishers of Bhutan for the very prompt and generous contribution of SCF 50,000 towards the construction of sewerage facility for the reconstructed Chamkhar town. The cheque for Nu 2.40 million was handed over by Mr. Werner Kuelling, former Secretary General and Resident Coordinator of Helvetas and presently an active member of SSB, to Dasho Sangay Thinley, Dzongda of Bumthang, in the presence of the President and members of the Board of Bhutan-Switzerland Society, at a simple ceremony held at the Helvetas office in Thimphu on 14 March 2011.

This spontaneous donation for construction of a sewerage system for the reconstructed Chamkhar town was not only appreciated but also fully justified as Chamkhar town did not have a sewerage system in place although it is a basic civic amenity. The residents were more or less dependent upon pit latrines built by individual houses thereby creating a serious health and hygiene problem besides the very inconvenient arrangement. It can also be surmised that such haphazard and temporary constructions like pit latrines and bath houses with profuse use of blue pine timber also created additional fire hazard to the town. This thoughtful and vital contribution along with the newly constructed houses for the victims under the command of His Majesty the King will go a long way in allaying the pain and loss the fire victims suffered and in rebuilding their lives.

As decided by my Board on 14 March 2011, in the presence of Mr. Werner Kuelling and Dasho Dzongda of Bumthang, I would like to appeal for similar assistance from Society Switzerland-Bhutan for the fire victims of 18 February 2011. Dasho Dzongda and the board members felt that proper sewerage and water supply system was a basic necessity, and it would be fair and justified to make a fresh request to the President and members of Society Switzerland-Bhutan to undertake another fund raising effort in Switzerland. This request is being made in the knowledge that Bumthang was the main district where Swiss assistance was channeled initially. As a result, many Swiss families had lived and worked in Bumthang to which they became quite attached, and consider it as their second home. I am confident that SSB will do everything possible within its capacity to consider our request favorably given the humanitarian and social dimension of the request.

As you are aware, SSB and BSS have been quite active over the last one year or so with many exchanges taking place between the office bearers from both sides exploring areas of cooperation even into uncharted territories. While a number of areas of cooperation and intervention have been identified and agreed, many more are under discussion. In this connection, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President, Board Members

and all the members of SSB for your goodwill, friendship and support. We look forward to a very close, friendly and successful collaboration so as to take understanding, friendship and cooperation between Switzerland and Bhutan to new heights. With the profound political changes taking place in Bhutan, I feel BSS and SSB together can play a very important role in the area of socio-economic development of the Bhutanese people and beyond.

I wish the General Assembly of SSB a big success and members of SSB health, happiness and prosperity.

Tashi Delek!

Kinzang Dorji
President
Bhutan-Switzerland Society