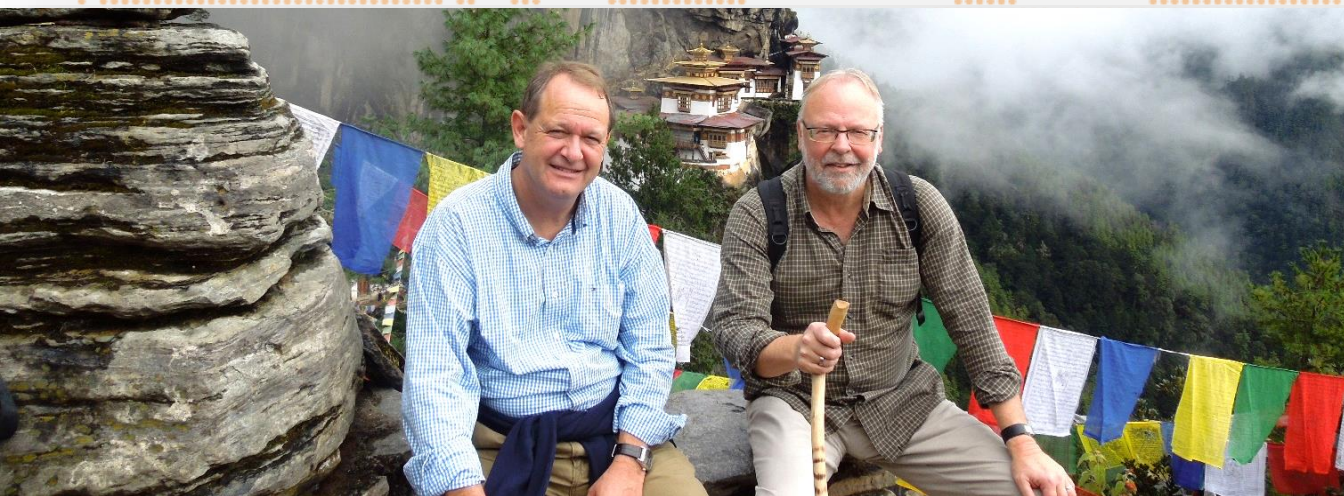


BHUTAN

A JOURNEY TOWARDS DEMOCRACY



PRESENTATION BY BJØRN FØRDE
DANISH-BHUTANESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING, 25 MARCH 2017

START OF MY OWN JOURNEY



- Board of Danida mission in 2000.
- Highest per capita Danida investment.
- Should Denmark continue as a partner?
- Denmark needed Bhutan as much as they needed us.
- Role of the Chief Justice.

FROM POVERTY TO MIDDLE-INCOME



- First dealing with social-economic development.
- Then starting the road towards democracy.

OFFICIAL DENMARK LEAVING



- Successful official cooperation.
- Close personal relationships.
- Taking the time needed.
- Understanding the sensitivities involved.
- Accepting the Bhutanese priorities.

THE ROLE OF THE KING



- The King handing democracy back to people.
- The King continuing to play a key role.
- The bond between the People and their King.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION



- Spiritual matters matter.
- But exactly how does it matter?

THE ROLE OF TRADITION



- Traditions matter.
- But how much and how long do they matter?

SOME CHALLENGES



Scoping mission in November 2011:

1. Weakness of party structure.
2. Funding of parties and the party system.
3. Establishing new political parties.
4. Political parties at local level.
5. Parties and the electoral system.
6. Citizen acceptance of the new system.
7. Media as educators and monitors.
8. GNH and party manifestos.
9. Role of women at local level.

FINAL PRIORITIES



1. Strengthening women at local level.
2. Needs assessment for political parties.
3. Media contributing to a democratic culture.
4. Capacity input to Parliament.

SUPPORTING BNEW



- First national meeting in Paro 2012.
- Next national meeting in Mongar.
- Working closely with NCWC and DLG.
- Trying to get others involved – including UNWomen.
- Mobilisation, training and mentoring.

WOMEN IN LOCAL ELECTIONS



- 2011 elections resulted in around 7% women.
- Ambitious target set for 2016: 20%.
- Final result ended with a doubling.
- More than 2.000 women were mobilised.

NATIONAL CONFERENCES



- First Terma Linca Conference in 2013.
- Second Terma Linca Conference in 2017.
- Drude Dahlerup visiting two times.
- Organised with all relevant stakeholders.
- Last conference part of regional effort.

SUPPORTING BCMD



- First real civil society organisation.
- Focus on schools and youth.
- Producing basic information about democracy.
- Trying to reach outside of Thimphu.

BREAKTHROUGH ON PARTIES



- Study tour to DK in June 2014.
- Representatives from all five parties.
- Both academic and practical.
- Advantages of getting out of Bhutan.

CREATION OF BDD



- BDD established end of 2014.
- Election Commission is the secretariat.
- Cannot operate as a platform like elsewhere.
- Training for all parties with Danish trainers.

DIALOGUE WITH PARLIAMENT



- Denmark has historically supported Parliament.
- Meetings with Speaker since 2011.
- The UN/UNDP is normally the strategic partner.
- DIPD too small to make a difference.
- But the dialogue has been important.

DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT



- Met with the PM first when he was in opposition.
- Debriefed to PM after every mission.
- Visited with Chairman and Danish MPs.
- Always frank exchanges.

MEASURING PROGRESS 2016

Country	Rank	Score	1	2	3	4	5
Denmark	5	9,20	9,58	9,29	8,33	9,38	9,41
United States	21	7,98	9,17	7,14	7,22	8,13	8,24
Kenya	92	5,33	4,33	5,00	6,67	5,63	5,00
Bhutan	98	4,93	8,33	5,36	2,78	4,38	3,82
Nepal	102	4,86	4,33	4,29	4,44	5,63	5,59
Myanmar	113	4,20	3,17	3,57	4,44	6,88	2,94

The Economist Democracy Index:

1. Electoral process and pluralism.
2. Functioning of government.
3. Political participation.
4. Democratic political culture.
5. Civil liberties.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS?



- DIPD funded the first analysis of 2008-13 period.
- “Democracy in Bhutan” offers an critical analysis.
- PM was happy with the analysis.
- Seems to have had a function.
- Druk Magazine taking over?

BHUTAN = 'BHUTAN FIRST'



- Different than “America First”.
- Balancing between countervailing forces.
- Formality versus informality.

WHERE ARE THE CRANES GOING?



- Towards a de facto two-party system?
- Changes possible in the Constitution?
- Will civil society find its role?
- Will the ills of the neighbours stay away?

MORE INFORMATION



[HTTP://DIPD.DK/RESOURCES/DIPDPUBLICATIONS/](http://dipd.dk/resources/dipdpublications/)

