

**Welcome Address by Ambassador Daw Penjo
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations, New York,**

Speaking at the Keybridge Marriott, Washington D.C. June 24th 2008

**On the occasion of the Reception
In honour of**

**H.R.H. Dasho Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck, Prince of Bhutan
Representing the Kingdom of Bhutan at the 42nd Smithsonian Folklife Festival**

Your Royal Highness,

Secretary Cristian Samper ,

Honorable Members of the US Congress,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, and my dear friends

I am deeply honoured that His Royal Highness, Dasho Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck, Prince of Bhutan has graced this occasion with his royal presence.

The presence of His Royal Highness, accompanied by Venerable Tsenyi Lupon of the Central Monastic Body, the Hon'ble Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, the Hon'ble Minister of Education, and senior officials of the Royal Government is a testimony to the importance Bhutan attaches to our participation in the 42nd Smithsonian Folk life Festival at the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Tonight marks the eve of Bhutan's cultural embarkation at the National Mall that will highlight the living traditions of our ancient nation to the people of America, and celebrate Bhutan's unique approach to life in the 21st century as defined by our national policy of Gross National Happiness [GNH]. For Bhutan, our cultural

heritage has continually been an important background for weaving a network of inter-connections across the world.

Our small nation is today poised on a cultural journey inspired by many dreams. I would like to mention here that the year 2008 marks the historic commemoration of over 100 years of glorious benevolent rule by the Wangchuck Dynasty, the formal coronation of the 5th Druk Gyal-po, the transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy, and the adoption of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

In light of these historic events taking place in Bhutan, the opportunity of being the focus country at the Folklife Festival this year is of special significance . We must build on this opportunity to promote greater understanding and strengthen the ties of friendship between the peoples of America and Bhutan.

I take this opportunity to felicitate the Smithsonian Institute for their most commendable efforts in enabling Bhutan to showcase a little of our unique heritage and culture in America.

I would like to thank all the distinguished guests, friends, and well-wishers of Bhutan for their continued and unwavering support. I would also like to thank you all for joining us this evening to celebrate this great occasion.

I take this moment to request you all to join me in a toast for the success of the festival and to the continued strengthening of friendship between our peoples and our countries.

Tashi Delek.