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Royal Government of Bhutan

PRIME MINISTER

C-2/2022/1195

January 7, 2022

Executive order

After series of reviews and consultations for over a year, the government has decided to cease operations of all the *drayangs* in the country with immediate effect.

The decision comes after the researches, meetings and intense consultations with multiple stakeholders validate that the business is hinged on compromising norms and values.

It is also time we acknowledge that our women working in *drayangs* are most vulnerable. They are sexually objectified, subjected to stereotypes and disparaged in communities due to the nature of their jobs.

While we understand the closure will lead to loss of income and employment for those in the business, the decision comes for the greater good. Many in the industry may not realise now because of the substantial earnings so far.

I hope everyone in the business will understand that the intention is not to rob you all of the livelihood but to consider it as an opportunity for a sustainable and meaningful income generating engagement.

Although delayed, the decision to discourage the business now would channel our friends to fruitful areas and opportunities before they lose out on the prime, productive years in their lives. I hope everyone agrees that doing away with *drayangs* and *drayang*-like businesses now will be a positive contribution to nation building process.

During the COVID-19 and post pandemic transformation we seek, a lot of opportunities are also coming up. There are many skilling and entrepreneurship programs being offered to benefit our people. Globally, the pandemic has also rendered most of the existing jobs redundant. It is important we skill, reskill and upskill our people appropriately to become the 21st Century citizens. Easy trades that do not require skills and talents will be forced to fade anyway.



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We urge *drayang* owners and employees to seize those opportunities. I will be keen to sit with you all to explore alternatives. Though the shift will pose some challenges, I have no doubt that down the years, it would have added immense values and enriched experiences in a person's life and also in the communities.

In this context, **the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources** are directed to collaborate and render necessary support to *drayang* operators and workers as they explore new avenues.

I would also like to urge the **Royal Bhutan Police and Local Government** leaders to support us in the swift implementation of this decision on the ground.

In this sincere effort to bring about reform, I have no doubt that the *drayang* owners and employees will render necessary understanding and cooperation. Since the decision comes after multiple consultations, we will not entertain grievances related to re-opening *drayangs* hereafter.

But let us work together in all spheres, so that we accomplish our personal dreams and in our own small ways, become a part of the nation building process at this important juncture.

(Dr Lotay Tshering)

Copy to:

1. DASHO ZIMPON, Office of the Gyalpoi Zimpon
2. All ministries, for kind information and necessary action
3. *Drayang* Association for kind information