

## **Introduction**

Papers published in this book are the selection from papers presented at the 6th international conference on Gross National Happiness held from 1 to 6 July 2016 in Paro, Bhutan, or more precisely, those revised papers submitted by the participants.

Bhutan celebrated the year 2015 as the 60th Anniversary of the Fourth Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, and the 5th GNH conference was organised as a part of series of national events and activities to celebrate the architect of GNH. After reigning for 34 years the Fourth Majesty abdicated the throne in 2006 and left a legacy of Gross National Happiness and the institution of democracy respectively as development and governance structures for Bhutan. For the Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness (CBS & GNH), a social research institute that has been assigned the task of studying and measuring GNH in December 2005, it was a great honour to organize this conference. The interests from both home and abroad are overwhelming: 330 foreign participants from 48 countries took part in the conference.

His Excellency Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, opened the conference with a keynote address over a reception dinner organized to welcome the participants. The conference began with addresses from Tsuglag Lopen Rinpoche, one of the highest-ranking lamas of Bhutan's Central Monastic Body. A total 116 experts from academia, politics, business and civil society from 48 countries shared their insights and experiences and engaged in discussions with the audience. The speakers are innovative leaders in their own rights of creative, determined, and thoughtful interventions to advance GNH in their own contexts. The Conference closed with a

closing presentation by Robert F Kennedy Jr, entitled ‘A contract with our future’.

To allow the participants to experience GNH, alongside intellectual interchange, the conference was held in specially designed tents on the lawn of Ugyen Pelri Palace with backdrops of the striking palace architecture and the Paro valley. The participants were made to savour Bhutan’s native red rice with organic vegetables prepared by local hands. Traditional dances, including a very sacred masked dance, and the screening of Khyentse Norbu’s film *Travellers and Magicians* added to their Bhutan experience. Besides allowing the participants to discover intellectual community and to exercise and strengthen commonality of purpose the conference provided an opportunity for policy representatives, policy makers, practitioners and academicians to share experiences on translating wellbeing and happiness frameworks into practice. This interchange had enriched their own endeavours, which have sympathetic resonance with His Majesty’s original vision of GNH, and extend GNH across many contexts within and outside Bhutan

The Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness would like to thank the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bhutan His Excellency Dasho Tshering Tobgay for unstinted support extended to the conference. We owe our thank for all the participants who had participated in the conference.