

Mr. Choekyong Wangchuk, Kalon, Dept. of Health, CTA:

On this very special occasion of Sowa-Rigpa day and the opening of 6th General Body Meeting of Central Council of Tibetan Medicine allow me to extend my deep respect and reverence to His Holiness The Dalai Lama as well as my respect to Sangha's presents in this auspicious gathering for the program. Chief guest Hon. Shri Pramod Kumar Patak ji Additional Secretary Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, Hon. Shri Pema Jungney ji (Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile), Mr. Padma Gurmet (Member Sowa-Rigpa, Central Council of Indian Medicine) and the President of the Central Council of Tibetan Medicine. On behalf of Central Tibetan Administration, On behalf of Dr. Sangay who is the head of the Central Tibetan Administration and as well as on behalf of my own Department, Department of Health, I extend my warm appreciation and warm greetings to all the members gathered here.

Well, I will not dwell on much about the History and the very tenets and the principles and the functioning of Sowa-Rigpa, because that is beyond my reach, because I see lot of senior doctors, Sowa-Rigpa practitioners and I can see from other Non-Tibetan experts present in this auspicious gathering. So my talking about dwelling on the things that I am not really good in, will not make any meaning. So I will just simply express my feeling that I feel very pride, I take pride in being a part of this program and it is actually a day when the Sowa-Rigpa was actually being given a direction by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India in its completion of exact 58 years of Sowa-Rigpa initiation of practice in India. As mentioned earlier, many experts particularly in Tibetan Medicine and also in Astrology were summoned by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on this very day in Dharamsala and given a direction to further it, to work for the preservation and promotion of this very noble tradition, owing to which now today we see there is a very as our former speaker mentioned a massive Institute, which is known as Tibetan Medicine & Astro. Institute Head quarter based in Dharamsala is there, we have a Sowa-Rigpa Institute in Saranath, in Leh, in Darjeeling as well as in Solan and by virtue of these Institute, we have seen in the PP (Power point presentation were more than 500 doctors have earned their degrees from these very auspicious Institutes throughout India, Internationally serving the humanities through this noble tradition, particularly Tibetan medicine and Astro. Institute were more than 300 plus doctors have completed their education on this tradition. And this very Institute have a units, if I am not wrong more than 56 plus units functioning allover India and I have recently seen the doctors of Tibetan Medicine & Astro. Institutes taking tour of European countries as well as American western countries. And I have just come back from United States during my interaction with the public, there is a huge demand and huge request from the public that they need a branch of TMAI in east coast and as well as in west coast of united states of America. There was also a demand of Institute and Clinic in Taipei. So what I am trying to refer here or what I am trying to make a point is this is the tradition, this is the practice which is wildly respected and known throughout the world. Irrespective of the country which political party or which political ideology they follow, but this noble tradition, this noble practice is revered throughout the world and credit goes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his initiations, for his guidance as well as

credit also goes to the Govt. of India, successive government that has headed the government of India, for assisting in preserving and promoting this noble tradition. It is also a matter of pride for us when we learn that our one of the revered doctor, Dr. Yeshe Dhonden is going to be conferred with Padma Shri and which happened in the March 2018. So these are the you know, a very proven kind of evidence where this very noble tradition, where this very practice is serving the humanity irrespective of cast, color, creed and sex. Attempts are also meet by the Institutes and also by the Department of Health Central Tibetan Administration to furtherance of this very noble tradition, be it in terms of research, be it in terms of research with the reputed Institute in India as well as internationally acclaimed Institute, so that there could be a proven fact evidence for the general public or to the Science community to be acquainted with it. There is a very specific program going on in Dharamsala in Tibetan Medicine & Astro. Institute i.e Body, Mind and Life, which itself is a huge kind of area of focus it is emerging in the International arena. So I am of the belief that Tibetan Sowa-Rigpa tradition is really serving the community in a very meaningful way. Appreciation as I mentioned goes to the Govt. of India Ministry of AYUSH, Ministry of Home external in the preservation and promotion of this tradition. After the legal propagation of Sowa-Rigpa in 2010 and recent survey on a minimum standard of education of Sowa-Rigpa which is enshrine in the law and the minimum standard required for the Sowa-Rigpa College with attached hospital which is also there in the guidance and recently the survey has been done. We are of the opinion particularly The Department of Health, the Central Tibetan Administration is of the opinion and belief that soon the Institutes and Colleges will be given a due recognition. CCIM, Central council of Indian Medicine has started the registration of Sowa-Rigpa practitioners and I would like to emphasize from this very platform that we need to follow it in a best possible manner. I also wish to request since Shri Patak ji is here with us, I wish to request that Sowa-Rigpa advisor in the Ministry of AYUSH need to be appointed and we request you to kindly take this very matter personally to the concern authority and also we request to increase the Sowa-Rigpa member in Central Council of Indian Medicine. So these are the two areas that we wish to make through you to Ministry of AYUSH to take into consideration. There is also one area where we request you to that the Central Council for research in Sowa-Rigpa needs to be initiated, where as Sowa Rigpa Lhentsok we have, which can be also called as a association of Sowa Rigpa Practitioner or the Central Council of Tibetan Medicine which was formed through the charter of Tibetan Parliament in exile and role it had played has been a remarkable in our community, particularly those who have been practicing the Sowa-Rigpa. With the formation of Sorig Lhentsok (CCTM), the association has able to bring a check on the mal practitioner of this very tradition. It has also come down heavily on the adulteration part particularly in the making of medicines and it also takes the initiatives visiting the colleges, as well as laborites where the medicines are made. So that it reaches the minimum standard required as per the norms set. It has also played an important role particularly when it comes to the Sowa-Rigpa. Recently there is an intangible cultural heritage thing has come up and if I am not wrong in the month of early August or late July, they made a delegation to Delhi and met with the Hon. Minister and also updated him about the area of concern the Sowa-Rigpa things about and which are very positively taken by the Minister himself, which we feel as a matter of

pride for us. As mentioned earlier by former speaker, that tradition and approach of Sowa-Rigpa need to be kept pure, shouldn't be diluted and shouldn't be affected through the external pressures, particularly from the allopathic side. So in that regard I think Sowa-Rigpa Lhentsok can play a major role in reaching out, in bridging the issue. As well as since Sowa-Rigpa as mentioned earlier, is now legally proclaimed, legally accepted. More and more be it a Tibetan practitioner or Indian or Himalayan or from wherever side, there will be inclusion or the taking of admission or taking into this very tradition. I am of the opinion that there will be an increase in the number of practitioners. But then what I request is that after completion we must make sure that the practitioners remain in the community in India to first serve the community and then go for individual benefits. So this is what we believe and what we aspire from the upcoming practitioners. As mentioned earlier by former speaker is also going along with what I am saying right now. Dr. Tamdin la is here and I can also see other doctors here as they have been practicing and they have been serving the Tibetan community I think for more than 20, 30 years and which is the matter of pride at least for people like me because of this rich and noble tradition is not only sustaining but also flourishing. So in order to keep this tradition flourishing one must have to have a notion of serving the people and not serving yourself or oneself, but serving the community. If we serve the community diligently and purely, the tradition itself will not only sustain and flourish for time being, but also for the eons to come. So that is what I feel and many of the senior members also present here agree with that. I take a pleasure in informing you all that the Department of Health has at least some role in having this program realized in realization. So we are very happy to be a part of this program and with the congregation of this gathering and following to the congregation of this morning session, you are going to have a deliberation of numbers of issues for the days to come to this two days workshop and I am sure that many meaningful, productive and helpful things not only to the system itself, not only to the tradition itself, but to the community at large community irrespective of cast, color, creed, sex and religion will come up. Therefore, I pray and I hope and I am sure this noble tradition which is there for the centuries in the mankind. Though the Chinese tried their best to eradicate it, though the Chinese did their level best to wipe it off from this surface of earth, but as I mentioned earlier, with the very benevolent and farsighted vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama we were able to not only sustain, but also flourish. With this I extend my very warm appreciation and gratitude to the successive government and the people of India for their support, love and for their sympathy and also at the end I extend my very warm appreciation to the organizers for conducting this program over here and also I appreciate Mr. Patak ji for taking your prestigious time and made your presence felt here. With this I end my note with very deep prayer for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Thank you very much.