

Gross National Happiness Conference Panel One: How do you govern for Happiness?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KINGA TSHERING: Good morning, everyone. I'm Kinga Tshering, still from Bhutan.

[LAUGHTER]

Nice to have-- nice to have all of you back after the opening ceremony.

So today, it's a great honor for me to greet all of you with stellar star performers and experts in the world of happiness and connected to Bhutan and GNH. So we have a very, very interesting panel session for this morning. I'll just go over some few housekeeping rules. So I will introduce honorable speakers very briefly because I hope everyone has got the program booklet and the bio. Everything in detail is there. So I'll keep the introduction very brief.

I will request each of the speakers to talk for about seven to 10 minutes. And with the confidence of some of the honorable speakers, I have requested if our Chairman Dasho, who has traveled all the way from Bhutan. So the criteria was the furthest distance and the smallest country. So he gets to speak for 15 minutes.

[LAUGHTER]

I hope that-- I hope that's OK for you, to make him happy.

So after that we will-- so we will have a timekeeper as well. Dave, can you please stand up? So he'll be showing three minutes, two minutes, one minute, just to get our honorable speakers on the time.

After all the speakers are finished speaking, then I will pose a few questions and then also request them to also, maybe if they have some pressing questions for each other, to exchange that. And then we will open up for questions from all of the honorable audience members here today because I think it's really about each and every one of you who has braved the Saturday morning rain to be here with us today.

So with this, the panel session theme is actually governing for happiness. And as a matter of fact, we borrowed it from Professor Sophus Reinert, who has got a case study on Bhutan which he teaches at HBS. So I will be mentioning that as we introduce him.

And also the Bhutanese statecraft and the spirit of Gross National Happiness, for which we have Dasho Karma sharing with us his experiences in the Gross National Happiness. And also we have, as part of the spirit of Gross National Happiness, something related to Buddhism because our predominant religion in Bhutan is Buddhism, 80%. And we have Hindu and then Christian as well. And Professor Wolfgang is there with us.

And also we have Professor John Helliwell, who is the editor of the World Happiness Report, which has just come out on March 20. And we have copies of the Happiness Report, but this is the 2018 version. And the simple reason is because we couldn't get enough copies for 2019. And I think Bhutan has climbed up only two places.

[LAUGHTER]

But anyway, there are some copies of 2018 and 2017, which the bursar's office has kindly shared with us. So if anybody would like to take copies of those that would be available.

So with these few ground rules and the theme for the panel discussion, let me first introduce to you Dasho Karma Tshiteem. For I think those of us who have been at the opening ceremony, the keynote speaker Madam Doma Tshering has already introduced Dasho, who has been the leading GNH practitioner in Bhutan. He is chairman of the Royal Civil Service Commission, so that is the entire bureaucracy in Bhutan. And Dasho and his commission has actually coined the term from bureaucracy and bureaucrats to bureaucraft. So I think these are some of the terms which has come out of GNH and bureaucrat as well.

Dasho has been secretary of the Gross National Happiness Commission, which is the equivalent to planning commission. So again, to reinforce the lens of GNH in Bhutan. Dasho was appointed the chairman of the Civil Service Commission in 2014 and also awarded the Red Scarf in 2015, by his majesty the King of Bhutan. So if you had noticed again during the ceremony, I was wearing a white scarf and Dasho was wearing a red scarf. So that red scarf is a honor scarf received from His Majesty the King. So with this may, I invite Dasho to kindly share your presentation.

DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM: Yes.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you. You can sit down.

[APPLAUSE]

DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM: Very good morning. Thank you very much, Kinga, for that kind introduction. So I believe I have 15 minutes, not a moment to waste. What I'll do is talk about what the pursuit of happiness as an overarching development goal entails.

The whole journey started when the words GNH, "Gross National Happiness is more important than GDP." And these words were uttered by no other than His Majesty the fourth King of Bhutan, who was running the affairs of the country literally on a day-to-day basis. And that really began the journey of pursuing happiness as an overarching development goal.

Until 2008, when we enacted a constitution and we became a democratic constitutional monarchy, there was actually no definition of Gross National Happiness because the architect, the author of the philosophy, was himself running the affairs of the country. But in 2008, when we became a democratic constitutional monarchy, and now we are going to have

plurality of players, then we felt the need to define. And that's when the work of developing the Gross National Happiness Index began.

So basically in terms of pursuing happiness as an overarching goal, based on my experience as the first secretary of the Gross National Happiness Commission, there are three things we did. First, we had to break down the philosophy to an index that could be used to gauge and guide Bhutan's development. And so that's how we created the Gross National Happiness Index.

We saw at that time that all the other development indicator, indexes, were insufficient to capture this idea that came from His Majesty the fourth King. And we had the UN, HDI. We had GDP. But we found all this inadequate in terms of capturing what really matters and what should be the pursuit of good governance.

Second, we carried out periodic surveys. These surveys are rather long. In fact, the original survey took about four hours to complete. I gather a couple of respondents fainted. It must have been tough.

[LAUGHTER]

I think the surveys must have made them miserable.

The second-- that was in 2010-- the second survey in 2015, it was reduced to about 25 pages. But you still have to answer about 200 questions. I took that during the long break I had in my flight here. And I realized that it is still something which should make you quite miserable.

But these surveys which are carried out across the country, it's a huge exercise. It takes almost between three to six months. And these give us an idea of where we're heading in terms of our desire to enhance Gross National Happiness. So that was the second thing we did, carried out surveys based on the GNH Index to gauge and guide our development.

And the third thing we did is to come out with what we call a policy screening tool because what is the role of government but to influence its citizens for pro-social behavior? That's why we have taxes, right? Not only for equitable distribution, but to make sure that we incentivize people to do what will promote the greater good for as many as possible.

So for that we created this policy screening tool, which is nothing but a tool based on the GNH Index. And we literally put this on like lens, a pair of GNH lens, to look at policies. So irrespective of whatever policy, we use this lens to evaluate those policies. So these are the three things. And I thought I'll just highlight briefly the GNH Index because that is the base which informs all these other tools we use as part of the bureaucracy to try and achieve happiness for the Bhutanese population.

So the GNH index is made up of nine domains. So in Bhutan, of course, many people feel that-- or the perception they have is that, Bhutan, oh, the happiest country. And we're no different from any other country. And as a government, we will never pretend that we are literally trying to put smiles on people's faces because that's not what we are literally trying

to do, because we always recognize that happiness at the individual level must remain the responsibility of individuals.

What can the government do through policies? Create the right conditions, conditions which will allow people to find happiness, hopefully conditions-- and these conditions could be in a variety of ways. So we look at creating the right conditions in nine domains. And we feel those nine domains capture all the areas that are critical to allow and enable people to have the best opportunity of flourishing, fulfilling themselves.

So what are these nine domains? Five of the nine domains are very much areas which are primary considerations for any country. Health, because good health is critical for happiness, right? Education, without education I think there's no question of unleashing one's full potential. The third, living standards. That covers food, clothing, shelter.

Unemployment, keeping it low, so on and so forth. Fourth, ecological diversity and resilience. The natural environment, so important, critical. And I think only today we are realizing how important it is to sustainability and flourishing. But this was on our agenda as far back as 1972, when His Majesty, the fourth king, pronounced those words. Environment was one of the four pillars.

Fifth, good governance. Good governance, well, I'm sure you know. But for those who don't, critical and strongly related to happiness. If you have poor governance, it's very difficult to be happy. You turn on the TV, you start getting miserable. So good governance itself, whether is corruption, the leadership, the public service, is critical.

But these five areas I would say are areas which are primary considerations for every government. But the other four areas out of the nine areas that make up the GNH Index, they are actually quite innovative. And we feel that they are even as important, indeed if not more important than the five domains I just mentioned. But they are the domains which actually get no attention from the government. So what are those four domains?

One out of the four, community vitality. All happiness research-- and frankly speaking, we don't need research for a lot of this. You can just reflect on your own lives. What makes a happy life? It's health. It's your friendship. It's the depth and quality of relationships you have, whether it's your family, or friends, or the community in which you live, so critical. So that's one domain.

The next, cultural diversity. So you'll see us very proudly wearing our national dress. We wear this like you wear suit to work. And not only that, this is just one aspect or one facet of culture. There are so many facets.

If you come to Bhutan, you'll notice our architecture is very traditional and our cities look very different because we have zoning rules which ensure that our architecture, traditional architecture, thrives. But also there are other aspects of culture, for instance social etiquette. You must have seen this morning we did a lot of bowing.

That's actually to build harmony. It's difficult to be upset with somebody when they come with a smile on their face and bow to you deeply, and truly, and honestly, very critical. And we cannot underestimate the importance of this aspect. Will they build a fabric of strong societies?

Indeed, these are important because they provide the basis of our identity. And again, I think all literature on happiness shows that you must have a strong sense of identity to really be happy. Otherwise, what do you do? You buy labels and wear the labels outside. And that's how you try to get some identity going, I guess. But that can be quite empty and not really deeply beneficial to you in the long run. So cultural diversity and vigilance, critical domain because it's the foundation of our identity.

Then the remaining two-- and what are the remaining two? Anyone know? I'm buying time. My memory is getting bad. Time use. Why is time use important?

In fact, in the Gross National Happiness outlook, I have always gone around saying that time is not hours or second on a clock. It's our very lives. And if we look at time as life, we start making very different choices, actually choices which would make you happier.

So many times ask people, what's most important to you? And they talking about the relations, their family, their parents, aging parents, so on and so forth. And then you ask them, how do you spend your time? And it's all Facebook, et cetera. And I tell them, that's a recipe for unhappiness because a happiness recipe is where you align your use of your time, which is your life, to what you care about.

So time, extremely-- extremely important. And so as a domain-- one of the nine domains-- what does the government do to promote balanced time use? So we actually have legislation saying that eight hours of work, eight hours of play, eight hours of I guess sleep.

Any other pattern would be unsustainable, right? And that's what we try to promote. So even in the civil service, where I worked as the chairman, I always talk about this idea of working smart. Don't work hard. Work smart. If you work smart, 9:00 to 5:00, Monday to Friday, more than enough time to get everything done.

After that, go out, make the most of your life. Spend it in quality ways. So that then you come back, and again you're able to serve the organization well because you come back fully charged, so critical.

And what's the ninth domain, the last domain? Psychological well-being. Why is psychological well-being important? In a sense, this is almost like an outcome of-- because you can almost-- well, you can see the highest, better states of psychological well-being is equated to happiness.

But also because psychological well-being is actually about the spiritual half that exists, that makes us as persons. And like the physical half,

that we give three meals, and sometimes probably more meals than that, the spiritual half also actually needs nourishment. But we ignore it.

And actually when you ignore the nourishment of your spiritual half, again, it's not a recipe for happiness. And so under that we actually looked at things like meditation. And indeed, based on a survey which showed that on the indicator of meditation, very few business people meditate. On the other hand, we know the strong correlation between meditation, greater mindfulness, and therefore greater happiness. We introduced meditation in all our schools.

So these nine domains guide what the government does. These are the nine domains. And the indicators underlying it are what we measure through the periodic survey. And a subset of the indicators from these nine domains make up the GNH lens that I mentioned we use for reviewing policies. And it's serious business.

If policies viewed with the GNH lenses do not pass a certain threshold, the government does not accept it. The policy is rejected. We have passed many policies successfully with these tools, like education policy, economic development policy. But some policies that persistently failed to meet the GNH criteria, for instance, the mineral development policy. And so what it tells a sector is, we'll pass those policies only when you're able to pass and meet the GNH threshold.

What is the value of this? I thought that would be the last point I can make. The value of this GNH policy screening tool, which makes you have a conversation on all indicators and under the nine domains, irrespective of what the policy focus is, is critical. It is actually getting you to look at all the trade-offs that exists, so that when you make a choice you make the best choice.

I think decision-making theory shows that decisions are heavily influenced by the framework used to make them. So if you make a economic decision using just an economic framework, it may be very good economically. But maybe that's why we have all the problem of climate change, and so on and so forth Because we never had a comprehensive framework that looked at the true trade-offs. And that's the value, the holistic framework of GNH and how it helps policymakers make decisions.

As a result of all this, I am hopeful that the chances of our citizens finding hopefully happier and more fulfilling lives will be higher. I thank you for your time and attention.

[APPLAUSE]

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you Dasho Karma for giving us a very, very succinct, but a comprehensive overview of the statecraft of Gross National Happiness in Bhutan. And especially I think if you make the surveys too long, it makes people unhappy. And so I think we'll find out more about that. Professor John Helliwell is obviously already looking at me.

[LAUGHTER]

But there's another thing that Dasho, as he shared with us-- I suppose I'll make this as part of our follow-up question as well. One thing is, at the village level, there is also a joke that Dasho actually shared earlier with us, I'm saying that, "In Bhutan name is in some ways a very common thing, in some ways very special and unique to everybody." So Kaka is Kaka. And a lot of people ask him why you have only one name?

And the GNH version of translation in Bhutan is [NON-ENGLISH], which is also a name of very, very attractive ladies and women in Bhutan. And I believe when you asked the question, in some of the villages, they said, "Oh, we have heard about her, but never seen her." So I just wanted to prove Dasho on that. How is the practice of the whole GNH lens at the governing level, in your experience, translated at the village, local, and individual level?

DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM: Well, at the local level, of course, they do not have deep knowledge of the nine domains, and the 33 indicators, and the policy screening tool. Those are really tools for bureaucrafty people like us to use.

At the local government level, however, they have a very clear idea that Gross National Happiness is built on the four pillars. And these four pillars was something we came up with when we deconstructed in 2008. To define GNH and come out with the GNH Index, we had to look at what the fourth king did. So when we looked at the fourth king's actions, what characterized his reign, we saw that there were four pillars. And so that's where you hear in older literature about GNH, about the four pillars, sustainable and socioeconomic development, conservation of the environment, preservation and promotion of our culture and traditions, and good governance.

To this level, even local leaders, local people, have awareness. But beyond that, what I mentioned, the nine domains, that is actually what we are using as a planning body to allocate resources, come out with interventions, to create and improve conditions.

One thing I would like to see-- and this is something that a gentleman-- now, I don't know the name. He's a lecturer somewhere. But he did one of the more in-depth studies on GNH. And what he found in the study, and I'll agree with his findings, which is that we are quite good in the articulation of Gross National Happiness. We were quite clever in the way we broke it down into the domains and the indicators. But in terms of all our policy interventions, to realize policy intentions, it was quite weak.

And yet, he saw in those four case studies that he did that the outcomes were still very consistent with policy intentions, even though the tools we had were not so good. And he came to the conclusion that the reason is because the underlying values, the values that underlie this whole GNH, is shared by Buddhism. It is informed and influenced heavily by Buddhism.

So since the many actors had the same values, so the outcomes sort of aligned, even though in between the instruments were not that clever. So that's what I would like to share, that, yes, the knowledge is up to the type of details I shared is not there. But at least up to these four

pillars and the underlying value, that is shared quite widely. And I think that's why we see some success with whatever we tried to do, yes.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you. Thank you, Dasho. So I think the thread of I guess value at every community level and local level are a very important component of the happiness principle and philosophy.

I'd like to next move to Professor Sophus Reinert from the Harvard Business School. Professor is to me I think very inspiring, and well-known, and popular for his very popular course, may I say, governing for happiness, because of the case study on Bhutan. No, actually it's not.

It's a very popular course on globalization in emerging market, with 25 countries. And it's a fascinating course, enjoyed every minute of it. And professor has done a very, very thorough and comprehensive study on Bhutan. And his case study is called "Governing for Happiness on Bhutan." And it gives you a great pleasure and honor, professor, to welcome you and share with us your views.

SOPHUS REINERT: Thank you. Do you mind if I sit here?

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Kinga. Kinga gave me seven minutes. Now, I'll try to stick to that.

Now as should be evident, I'm not Bhutanese. And I sleep less than eight hours a night. I am, in fact, Norwegian. And Norway has a history of caring about happiness. And for those of you who know any Norwegians, it's sort of surreal that again and again Norway is declared one of the happiest countries in the world when every single Norwegian has this deep, dark soul.

There is a tension there that has driven, I think, my curiosity at least with regard to Bhutan and happiness, and meaning of life, and all these things. Now taking a step back, why on earth am I here? There are not that many avenues for collaboration between the Business School and the Divinity School, lo and behold, shouldn't surprise many. You know what sort of gods we worship there.

But I must say, only a couple of weeks ago I found myself in the Divinity School for a very particular reason. Namely, there was no other library at Harvard where you could find the complete works of Karl Marx. And there are many things one can make of that. But the most important thing I'd like to communicate is that we all know somehow that capitalism, the way it's been pursued for the past few decades, is simply not sustainable. We are at a crossroads.

We're all in the middle of rethinking how to engage with this. We have new courses on reimagining capitalism that are now increasingly popular in the Business School. And we sort of need to engage with the world in new ways. And that's how I essentially came to Bhutan. Namely, I had to teach for first year HBS students a course in macroeconomics. And we teach national economic accounting. We teach GDP accounting.

And in a way, we quickly-- students quickly realize that there are quite obvious costs and benefits to GDP. It's extremely useful for very particular things. It's elegant. It's comparable. It's really powerful. But then it also has these clear drawbacks. If you bomb a country and rebuild all its cities, that's great growth. And clearly, there's something that isn't quite measured properly there. And save the entire sectors of the economy that are not noticed, like housework.

So if I were to marry my pool boy, GDP would go down. I don't have a pool or a pool boy, but the point is there are all these important human activities that somehow aren't taken into consideration. So I end it always-- concluding my class in GDP by reading a quote by our local Bostonian Bobby Kennedy, who quite eloquently explained, "Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry, or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate, or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our will, wit, or our courage, neither our wisdom, nor our learning, neither our compassion, nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything in short except that which makes life worthwhile."

So my entire-- I realized my entire course on GDP was to undermine the concept as much as I could. And I thought how to find [INAUDIBLE]. And Bhutan was the obvious alternative at the time. And I've been teaching this case for about seven years. More than 700 students have taken make my case on Bhutan. And I thought it would be useful to say just a few words about what my lessons have been of teaching this case on Bhutan to 700 MBA students.

And there are sort of themes that occur and repeat themselves. You may not know what the case is. So a case is a document like this. It's usually 15 pages of prose analysis of a country, followed by 15 pages of statistics. And inevitably GDP will be exhibit number two, following the map, which is exhibit number one. And all cases begin with some person, usually a dude, looking out a window, contemplating some major decisions.

We call these decision points. I tried to be inventive, saying he was staring into a wall. There are ways of trying to make-- students read hundreds of these, so after a while, you need to get their attention. But the decision points in the Bhutan case was quite straightforward. It was given the conditions of Bhutan should they dam this big river to get electricity, to get lights into households and to export electricity to India for an exchange? Or should they not?

Because if they dammed the river, it might lead to the extinction of a rare heron. And it was a of simplifying the dichotomy of GDP, GNH. And students inevitably are divided by this. As the point of the decision point, it's meant to give you good examples to bolster different kinds of arguments.

Students tend, not surprisingly, to think in sort of Maslovian terms. That there's a hierarchy of needs, and Bhutan needs electricity for households at this point more than it needs those extra herons. But there's always a

tortuous dilemma. But it reaches the-- it really underlines the one main takeaway that all students get by this, which is, to quote Her Excellency this morning, the necessity of a more holistic look at life, and essentially the entire system in which we operate.

We need to take care not only of my pool boy, but the environment. And all these other ways of looking at things are essentially not even an option. They're a necessity at this point in our global development. They also, however, do tend to highlight some drawbacks. And they were evident even in the discussions this morning between the dean and Her Excellency.

In that the dean spoke very importantly of inclusion. And we've heard the word community repeatedly. Students always pick this up. Whose happiness are we really looking out for, given our consideration is for making the world a better place? Even the motto of HBS students is to teach people to make a difference in the world, ideally about a good difference. I mean, there are many ways of making a difference, but I [INAUDIBLE] The original motto was even better. It was to teach decent people to make a decent profit decently. It was clearly too quaint. And now we're making a difference.

But students do see that there are ways of making differences that have different-- operate on different levels of a society. We have the world-- we have the community of humanity. We have the community of Bhutan. And we have the communities of individuals, who also been erased often. And there are times when happiness for the community may not necessarily be happiness for an individual, whether that is a minority of some sort, or a refugee, or-- there are many forms of communities.

And though clearly GNH is something the world needs to take seriously, there are no perfect systems. And they're all works in progress. You may not notice, but-- certainly, there's no reason any of you should know this, but the first attempt at measuring welfare was an 18th century affair, long before GDP. And it was put together by an 18th century Welshman named Henry Lloyd, who said, "The way to measure the welfare of polities is to add up population, plus taxation, and then divide by a million."

Now, clearly, you learn that yes, France is better than Portugal by those terms. But clearly, there are also many things you lose out on these things. These measures are always, as the critique at the time was, at times somewhat crude and absurd. It's a process of learning. And we're all embarking on this together, which is why I'm so delighted that we're putting this excellent conference together to really think seriously about really what is the most important thing in life.

And I think the ultimate takeaway for my students is that, and my own, working in Bhutan, I guess, is that Maslow didn't just give us a hierarchy of needs. He gave us a very neat metaphor-- that many claim Wittgenstein came up with but-- "If everything you have is a hammer, then most things start looking like nails." And Bhutan is, I think, the best reminder to all of us that we can have more than one tool in our tool kit.

We cannot just have the hammer of GDP. We may not want to entirely discard the hammer of GDP. But we need to be conscious of the spectrum of tools that public policy needs to domesticate for the pursuit of happiness, not merely for individuals and communities, but indeed for humanity as such. I believe that was exactly 10 minutes. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor Reinert, for sharing your thoughts, the various succinct summary of the case study, which when I was taking his class took me over two weeks just to go through. So thank you all for that. So I think having had the privilege of being in your class and getting the feedback of the wonderful students-- I think this was a huge class, I think almost as big as this, one of the things that I hear was of course the challenges that you mentioned, especially across the river, Harvard Business School, the golden passport, the bastion of innovation, capitalism.

And I do appreciate that you have ventured-- dared to venture across to this side of the river in search of spirituality, and then some of the books that you're after.

SOPHUS REINERT: They have to take me back.

KINGA TSHERING: I hope so, yeah. Well, we would be happy to have you here. Let me see if I can speak with the dean. But Professor, how do you really sort of convince and make an impact in an environment where, not intentionally, but just the fact that it's a business world. It's in some ways rat chase rat, and cut throat, and just to-- basically, golden passport is actually at the cost of, a lot of times, at the expense of others.

And I think to your point on the definition of happiness and what good are you looking for-- is it for the community, is it for the individual, and to that extent, whether even somebody maybe in a certain situation is capable of defining what good it-- what is good for himself or herself, even, I think to sort of look at a moral content philosophy as well. So your take on how have you been able to influence or convince your students.

SOPHUS REINERT: I must say, I like making fun of myself and all institutions. There's nothing personal about this. I think the Business School has changed dramatically. And I think there's not only a supply, of course there's also a demand of new ways of thinking about this. There's an enormous hunger among the students for finding ways of making the world a better place through private enterprise.

The social enterprise initiative is one of the most popular ones of the school. And in a way, there's a risk of having a sort of 1950s take on, a sort of Mad Men take on what the world of businesses is. And the world of business is changing. And I'm glad we can be part of that.

I should say this is the last case I teach at the very, very end of my course, which is the last course students take in the second semester of

their second year. And it's in the module about the future of globalization and the meaning of life. And it is inevitable every single year, it is the student's favorite case. Precisely because they feel a need for thinking seriously about these broader issues, about their role in the world and the role of business in that.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor. So with that update in the case, maybe I'll sign up again. Thank you so much. Next I would like to move on to Professor Wolfgang Drechsler. Professor is at the Davis Center here at Harvard University. Professor is also a Professor of Governance at Tulane University of Technology in Estonia. Professor has a PhD from the University of Marburg and Honorary Doctor from Corvinus University of Budapest. Has been advisor to the president of Estonia.

And among many other things, Professor has been a thought leader, especially in the areas of governance, public administration, and specifically with contextual relationship to Bhutan, Southeast Asia. And as far as I know, Professor is the only one who has done a comprehensive study of Buddhist economy in three of the most fascinating countries in the world. And one of them, I hope, is Bhutan. So with this, Professor, take it away.

WOLFGANG DRECHSLER: Thank you very much, Kinga. What a pleasure it is to be here. And what a wonderful way to spend one's Saturday morning. My generation would still say this is when you are at home, watching cartoons, eating bad food. That's not a thing anymore because the older ones of you remember television, the younger ones don't anymore.

But still, how nice it is to have a Saturday morning like this. But that's already me being over to be funny for this morning. Because for those of you who have a South Asia background, come from there or study that, we have the 13th of April 2019 today. Does that ring a bell, that date?

OK, so today is the 100 anniversary of the Amritsar Massacre, the most important of the anti-Indian, anti, if you will, Congress or Indian independence movements by the British Crown that moved in the garden of Amritsar. And there were peaceful assembly of 1,200 to 1,600 people. And the British opened fire without warning, targeting everybody, women, children, and the men within two minutes of moving in.

They had submachine guns. And when Colonel O'Dwyer, who commanded them, was later asked why he didn't put the machine guns in, he said because the doorways were too small. If they would have been wider, of course, I would have used them because it is important to teach these people a lesson.

Why am I mentioning this, other than that this is a very important date for that part of the world? What we know from the investigations later, and also of the lieutenant governor of the Punjab, a guy by the name of O'Dwyer, who was actually the main perpetrator, is that these people were actually absolutely sure that they were improving the situation in the Punjab, that they did the right thing, that they had all the theory, that they had all the ethics on their side. These are people to whom you can't leave voting, because they don't know what it really means.

Mind you, this is India. And its people coming from Britain, where we see today [INAUDIBLE]. Never mind, but--

[LAUGHTER]

In the end, the Gandhian point, to say that Western civilization would be a good idea is not entirely frivolous a statement, yeah? And that is very important before I start talking about Bhutan. Because one of the most interesting things for me is the strange tension between Bhutan and Gross National Happiness as a PR tool, as something towards the outside, and also as something to be packaged for the world, for a better world for us. Can we transfer Bhutan as it is into our lives? And what it means in the inside of Bhutan.

Now, of course, Gross National Happiness completely changed. The history of-- this is not written, but it meant something completely different when the Fourth King phrased it. But even during the last decades, during the various prime ministerships, it really changed its meaning. So there is no such thing as the GNH, but you would have to talk about which one it is.

But why I was mentioning the Amritsar story, I do think that in the end it is up to the Bhutanese to decide what the GNH is. But of course, being an academic, that said, I will now offer my interpretation of it. But with this caveat, that in the end, I would find it more than legitimate, but actually ideal if the Bhutanese don't listen to people who look like me. Because lesson of world history in the last 100 years is if you do that, there may be an issue.

So I think that overall-- my main area is governance and actually public management-- where Bhutan has stuck to its own traditions, and as we would say at the government department, upgraded themselves-- that means became a better version of themselves, rather than adopting Western principles, and packaging their happiness in such a way that it is Western compatible, that has been a success. Whereas, the take over of Western reforms has not always been as successful as would have been desirable. And I phrase it that friendly only because I'm sitting next to you.

So this is an important thing here. On the other hand, let me say very clearly, it is not frivolous to say that Bhutan is so much better known and so much more loved by the world because of GNH than would be logical for a country of that size and sandwiched between India and China, both of which have a track record of taking over little countries in the Himalayas just because they want to. Not only China, but also India. This is an important story for the Bhutanese context. The word for this is [? sikkim. ?]

And what you see over the time is this shift of the meaning of GNH inside and outside. And in a certain sense, I think it is fair to say-- not everybody agrees-- that it has become all the more scientific, all the more Western compatible, and sellable, in a certain sense. But that is not a bad thing for various reasons. But on the other hand, this is one of these public policy, international public policy tensions that we can't really solve.

What is more important, global standards, we are all one human kind? Or saying we do respect the local context first of all, and we think about whether we should really not engage in some high quality shut-upperly from the Western side before we give moral lessons to other places? Because the track record of that is so catastrophic.

Now, if I look at the genesis of GNH in context-- and this is what Dr. Tshering kindly mentioned as one of my main interests, and indeed it is-- then what we see is that GNH is not as unique as it is sometimes mentioned, neither by its time, nor by its context. But it is a typical mid-70s form of Buddhist economics.

That is when Buddhist economics really go back to center stage also in the West. Many of you will know the book by EF Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*. And that then reverberates back to Asia and gets into the context of Buddhist economics, that is not Buddhism as such, but a very, very specific form of it, with ecology, sustainability, happy villagers, and so on, and so on. It's usually focused on agriculture, not an industry. That is different in different ways, but Buddhism as such is not about agriculture. But the way it emerged then, and what we today understand as Buddhist economics is that.

And classic other examples is today still the sufficiency economy in Thailand, and also the unification of King and people in [? Jakarta, ?] which is shocking to many because that comes from a sultan. And how can be a sultan a Buddhist King? But yes, it's possible even if some absolutists don't like it.

Back then, Schumacher based it actually on a non-monarchical case. Oh, God, three minutes, that kills me. How can I run through that? Ask me some good questions later that I can really finish. Buddhist economics like that are based on a definition of happiness that it doesn't make you happy to get what you want, but that you manage what you want. That you reduce your wants beyond that what you really need.

No Buddhist economics says you shouldn't have clean water. But do you really need the last version of the iPhone? Actually, my opinion shouldn't [INAUDIBLE]. I'm [INAUDIBLE] If you go for the iPhones, then don't go for the last one. This kind of thing of ostentatious behavior, mass consumption, and so on does not make you happy. And the logic in the Buddhist economic system is that there is a moral authority empirically, almost always a genuinely trusted Buddhist monarch, the so-called Dharmaraja, that fills-- that provides a space within which you can find your Dharma, that allows that. So there is a logical combination between the two.

And the GNH is originally envisioned, I think, as this. If it's a form of Buddhist economics, let me acknowledge the elephant in the room that is an issue for those in these countries who are not Buddhists and not part of that system. That said, it also means that the system is not as transferable as you think. We have this big industry trying to secularize, popularize, and westernize Buddhism. You know, that what they call the yoga mat approach to Buddhism in order to sell it better.

But if we are serious about that, which I think in the Divinity School we can be, and we can say that this is a form of Buddhist economics. It needs a government setup also that is not really transferable. So what I think we can do, and what I find interesting about the GNH is it's not interesting where it's scaleable, it's interesting where it's different. It's interesting where it reminds you of our priority. It is interesting where it says the global Western context is not everything there is. We can do things differently.

We cannot transfer the Bhutanese GNH to anywhere else, but we can learn from it. It's policy learning, not policy transfer that we want. We can learn the prioritizations. We can work the questions. We may emulate, as Sophus talked about in a multi award winning book about policy emulation, economics emulation. And I think this is where the greatness comes. No fear of what is different, but an embracing on it, which makes us reflect on what our priorities actually are.

And in this one, Bhutan is the country in the world that makes us question of whether we made the right decisions in our priorities or not. Thank you so much for your attention.

[APPLAUSE]

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor. You were good about the time. I know that-- A disclosure, I have been also yesterday privileged to be at one of the sessions at the TH Chan School of Health where Professor was speaking. And I feel that this may not be a good question, but as a follow up, I wanted to do a share with us basically a summary of, from what I hear yesterday, was actually that we should not go into measurement and indices. And that's not what actually GNH is all about. Would you clarify on that?

WOLFGANG DRECHSLER: In how many minutes?

KINGA TSHERING: 10 minutes. You have like three or four minutes, yeah.

WOLFGANG DRECHSLER: That's my job. You know, the famous thing, like what the German professor says before he speaks, he says, before I start speaking, let me say a few words.

[LAUGHTER]

I do that for a living. That's a great quote, isn't it? It's one of the key takeaways from here. OK, the great conference we have, and thank you so much for arranging it. It was a brilliant program of health and happiness in the Chan School-- of bringing that together and how to operationalize it, and how to be data driven on these things.

Again, what is interesting, and let me just put it on the GNH thing, where you see the difference. It starts, the GNH starts also as a suspicion of quantification, of the idea of a numerically informed life, of numbers that have an authority beyond human interpretation. This is what the stats say, and therefore, we must do that. And what prevents policy from doing that? And that you are forced by indices.

I think this goes-- this builds a great bridge to John's later presentation, exactly because that's one of the main issues you are grappling with and that we've been discussing, about the relativity of indices and how the relevance of statistics is created in human interaction. Numbers, as such, do not speak to us. This is a recognition in this context.

And then what happens with a GNH is that it becomes more and more numerical, more and more quantitative, in a certain way mirrors the GDP, or GNP, that from saying, we don't want to give any numbers, it comes to, yeah, but we kind of have to. We live in one world. We do not live in a world in which you can justify public policy without giving numbers.

Up to where it is now, where do you have a one number index-- yeah, Bhutanese happiness is one number with a lot of digits after the comma. And that means it goes up and down. Whereas, some people might say happiness means not living according to indices. And that is a serious question also on the policy level.

And for me, what my point was is, this is exactly this tension. I think if you have decision-making authorities that you trust, and that make decisions beyond the numbers-- think about doctors. We have an analysis of our health. This is there, but you still want an experienced doctor to specify it down to you. You don't actually want the computer to design your therapy, even if this is where it's coming. And I think this is very important on the policy level as well.

But the tension, again, is there, the tension between the two. You need to justify through numbers, but on the other hand, there is the problem with numbers and basing everything on numbers. And in a sense, Bhutan has gone the way towards quantification, whereas I found the early time of rejecting the numbers, and saying, no, no, we don't do it, we know, playing game, guys, more fascinating, also for the rest of us.

But I do understand in the world, Bhutan is not a country that can say no to international transfers, transfers from India. And they will require, as I was told, they will require statistics, even if they are made up. They are not made up in Bhutan. But the donors would say, write something, but we need some numbers. Seriously, this is not a joke story.

And so I understand that since we live in a world that privileges quantification and indicators, that we have to go there. On the other hand, the more you go back on that as much as you can, the better it would be. The unique case is, and you may dismiss that or not, that this is also part of Buddhist economics. Because the idea of the Dharmaraja is that there is a special access to reality that does not necessarily need artificial quantification to get the kind of information that you would have another system. But I know that not many people would go along that road. I'm just telling that this is part of that economic system. OK.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you. Thank you, Professor, for sharing that.

[APPLAUSE]

So as you have indicated, I think-- and also, a lot of what Professor remind us is that a good question is always followed by, an answered by the next light. In this case, it's not the next line. We have our next speaker-- Professor John Helliwell, who will be, I suppose, answering quite a few of those questions on numbers and indices.

Professor John Helliwell, Professor Emeritus of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, [INAUDIBLE] Program on Social Interactions, Identity, Wellbeing. Professor has been, among so many other things that he has done, right now he's spearheading as the editor of the World Happiness Report, which has just come out. And I had the honor of attending the big launch day in New York on March 28th.

And Professor also has been to Bhutan, and I believe will be heading there next month as well to look at organization and Gross National Happiness. So without further ado, I just wanted to mention a small thing on Professor John Helliwell. I had a friend actually who called me up from Israel, saying that I heard Professor John Helliwell is coming here to speak. And then I managed to meet her in New York.

And one thing that sort of really exemplifies Professor Helliwell and why he's taking on this huge responsibility, I suppose, on the happiness initiative is, as she says, that he's one of the first few guys who can really make anybody happy just by looking at his face. I think that's so true.

JOHN HELLIWELL: Oh, my gosh.

KINGA TSHERING: So with this, Professor, if can please--

JOHN HELLIWELL: Are you still happy? So the secret is, if you see you're not smiling, all I have to do is smile. Can I speak and smile at the same time?

What if the things that are important can't be counted, but you need evidence in order to show that? And that's the conundrum you have placed for us. And I'm going to take you through some history as to how I think in fact has worked to some extent, and lots left still to be done.

I got in, as the second song we sang this morning indicated, I got into the study of happiness in the 1990s, jointly with Robert Putnam and the study of social capital through the following puzzle. If social capital is really important, how can we measure its value in order to get people to take it seriously? And people started seeing whether it affected economic growth.

And so it either affects life deeply, or we won't be able to make a convincing case. So at that time, we discovered there was quite a lot of evidence about people evaluating the quality of their own lives. And I said either this is the most important fact I've run into in decades or it's a sham.

Because if true, it enables economics to go back two centuries and acquire the bread it lost when it got stuck into thinking of material things as being the measure of progress. Because if you could have some judgment about the quality of life, then welfare economics can be an applied science, not just a theology, as it otherwise is inclined to be. Theology is the wrong word. I meant purely theoretical in the literature as it was.

So by the time the century turned and got the International Gross National Happiness Conference-- I was the first one in Canada in 2005 and several since. I was very much in that community while also studying happiness and social capital more broadly. So that when the prime minister and the secretary general were responsible for that direction-turning resolution in June 2011, before the United Nations, that was passed unanimously, and to take happiness and well-being as a focus of national policies recommended to the member countries.

And immediately after that, a conference was convened, chaired by Jeff Sachs and the prime minister in Bhutan. And because of my history, I was among those invited to a planning session, as it essentially was, for a meeting to be held, a high-level meeting, in April 2012 at the United Nations. And at that time, the decision was made in the prime minister's office, after this two or three day meeting, that we should put together a scientific report about what is known in the science of wellbeing. What kind of evidence is available, what kind of truths are known, or hypotheses are there about what does lead to a better life.

And so that report was written and became-- It's important, as Her Excellency said earlier this morning, to note that at that April 2012 meeting, while the World Happiness Report was part of it, it had a double platform. The other was for sustainability. And increasingly now, we're trying to mesh those two agendas in a tighter way than has been done before. But it's quite clear, it has to be done.

Now, what happened then was that it there was quite a take-up of the first report. And so we felt there was enough take-up of it that we should keep doing it. And, in fact, have done ever since. And so what is this-- because it was part of-- the question is, how do you take a basic idea, exemplified and essentially made famous by Bhutan-- I mean the credit goes to Bhutan. It's enormous. It's not a tourist brand. It's an idea that has infused the world.

And this UN resolution and its outflow was clearly seen to be, hoped to be, and turned out to be a critical juncture at doing that. So it essentially took what was an idea and converted it into a global pattern of thought. Well, in order to get further, if you then say, what should people in their communities and what should their governments think? You then have to build up a scientific basis that can allow them to make their decisions differently.

But the first thing we had to do is then find out what are the supports for a good life, because after all policies to deliver it must know what to do. The Bhutanese structure is great, but it doesn't, as evidence, it doesn't translate directly. So what we do is take these data and use them all over the world to say, what is different in the countries that are

happier? What is different among the people within countries who are happier? And the cities within countries that are happier?

And it turns out, those are precisely those things that aren't captured by numbers in the conventional way. So we found essentially six factors that underlie the highest ranking of lives. And I can get back to why you think the dark Norwegians aren't happy, because it turns out the Norwegians are very high on all six of these factors. And they'll resonate with you as at least tapping into a space of life that is vital.

And too, of course, the standard development goals of GDP per capita and healthy life expectancy, either necessary or important in supporting life. Interesting, I entered this field quite explicitly, as Aristotle's research assistant. And so, that's why-- it's a good job.

[LAUGHTER]

He said ask someone in a reflective moment to value their life. And he said, here are my hypotheses about what will be important. So I essentially took all that list, and took them through the data. And it turns out-- he said, if those do not turn out to match the world as it is, then it's mere theory. And so I said, he needs a research assistant. So we did. And he passed with flying colors.

Because everyone-- the only one that's missing of his items is purpose. And that's just because we don't yet have it in the relevant data. And this is one of those cases where you have to keep asserting something's important even if you don't have data for it. But beyond those two, the others are really about the social construct of humanity, social support. Do you have someone to count on in times of trouble? You could imagine how that would generalize in many ways.

Freedom, do you have freedom to make your key life decisions? This is our doors open, our opportunities open to you, writ large. Generosity-- Aristotle didn't mention that, but it turns out to be absolutely fundamental. There's a lovely chapter in this year's World Happiness Report by real experts in the field on the power and generality of generosity and pro social behavior. And their untapped instruments to allow people to build better lives.

And finally, the Gallup poll has measures of corruption. But that's a negative measure of trust. But in fact, trust, the extent to which people not just won't cheat, but if you dropped your wallet, they would watch your back, pick up the wallet, and chase you down, and give it back. All of those things are things that make people deeply happy. And all of those are things that are very high in Norway.

All right, now, what has this report done? Well it turns out-- and I hated the rankings. We didn't have any rankings in the first report. But it turned out I had to come down the list, because everybody phoned up and wanted to know what number they were. So now we put numbers beside the country names. The rankings are only to get people in the room. Then we want them to think what underlies a good life.

So what has happened? Of course, Bhutan has got tourists coming on GNH. But that's not really where these rankings are taking people. They're looking at all the countries. And immediately after a Danish colleague set up the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, he's buried in people coming and wanting to know about the sources of happiness in Denmark. And the same thing is happening in Norway and in Finland. And it's quite appropriate.

These are thinkers writing books. These are style leaders, saying what's going on there, and what are they doing that we can copy. And it turns out, once they get past the giggles, and they start looking in what the community life looks in these places, you say, oh, that Finnish education system is not just wonderful because they get good marks, that's not the point. It's because they are creative in the way they run the schools, and the way they treat their teachers, and the way they treat each other in order to prepare people to live happy and fulfilling lives.

And so those kind of lessons are being learned by people going off to try and emulate things where they're done to deliver better lives. And a better life is to stop speaking right now, because you're--

[APPLAUSE]

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor. As I shared earlier, 10 minutes, 10 hours is too less for I think what you have in front of you, the whole report on the Global Happiness ranking. But we do have some of the copies available outside as you go out. So please feel free to take them.

And Professor, I think a few of the things that you mentioned was one, was the fact that you, through your experiences and realization that it was not-- in fact, GNH is not a tourism packaging that you have seen. It's a genuine initiative which now I think globally there is a realization that we could make use of some of the things that has been done in Bhutan.

I think one of the questions that, even in the Global Happiness Report, that people ask is, I think, while this has captured all some of those [INAUDIBLE], one thing is, what is your understanding of the cultural differences when you rank something on the subjective scale?

And so some friends, for example, asked me, well, in US if you ask people are you happy, and generally people are more open, and they want to prove that we are-- yes, I'm happy, I'm doing well, and so you tend to read yourself seven or eight. Whereas in a culture like Bhutan, normally-- even if you're offered something, you have to refuse it three times, right? And in the Western concept, if you refuse it three times, then you don't give it to him anymore. But in Bhutan, have to push the fourth time, fifth time, and then they accept.

So the thing is, it could be a reason where people are genuinely shy and say, oh, I'm not happy. And there's the middle bar, OK, then 10 plus, 0, 10 divided by 2, so 5 a good number. And I do find that, actually, in the World Report Bhutan is ranked 5 in terms of happiness indexes. So any idea on the cultural differences on how impacts the way somebody answers on the happiness index question?

JOHN HELLIWELL: There are systematic differences across cultures and across continents. What is astonishing is when you take the data for each country and fit it within that country, the extent to which these human values are the same everywhere, quite astonishing. But the manifestations across nations are very different. Actually, the styles, the modes, the social norms, and so on, they really do differ. And some of them are more successful for supporting happy lives than others are.

So then do you then say, it's just that way they think of the question differently? Or is, in fact, that set of social norms not quite as good as it could be for producing happy lives? And of course, we don't really know, because the two are meshed together. But we're trying to sort it out. One of the things that helps to sort it out is to follow through time, where those long-standing norms are sort of constant. And so if things are getting better or worse for some particular subgroups in particular aspects of life, then you've got something holding the other constant.

One of the-- they're sort of called the Latin American bubble, that in fact, these average score-- especially on affect yesterday-- the sort of [INAUDIBLE] joy part. But also on the life evaluations in total, which are supported by the joy-- in Latin America, above what you'd think by looking at those six factors I talked about. And we had a special chapter last year-- these reports are online, so you can get them even if the copies run out, out front-- on happiness in Latin America by Mariano [? Rojas ?] from Costa Rica.

And he went much deeper in terms of the evidence about the structure of family life and the nature of respect and desire there. And it was quite clear in all the dimensions that they did more of it. They wanted more of it. Three generation families were the choice, not the obligation. And the happiness they got from these warm and tight families, much more than in other countries, because they had comparable measures in other countries. And a good part of that Latin American boost was simply that, once you took account of the fact that aspect of life was especially well-developed and especially-- it's valuable everywhere. It was valued even more there, and present much more than a good part of that puzzle was explained.

Also there is a east Asian departure on the low side. So once again it's this question of low answers and so on. We do find all these things of a little bunching at the end points, and five, and some differences. But it turns out, they're second order. And, of course, in this business when you start, you're looking for first order ways of making better lives. And the second order things are of interest, but not an obsession.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor. So I really want to get our wonderful audience here for the Q&A, questions and answers. But before that, if you may allow me, I don't want to keep the-- you can say your best piece last two minutes or whatever, I think that puts additional pressure on you to wrap up. So I think before that, before I go to the audience, maybe perhaps I would like to provide an opportunity for the honorable speakers to comment, each two minutes each, on the conversation that has taken place so far. And starting with Professor Reinert.

SOPHUS REINERT: We call this a cold call where I [INAUDIBLE].

KINGA TSHERING: I get to get back at my professors now.

[LAUGHTER]

SOPHUS REINERT: [INAUDIBLE]

KINGA TSHERING: You taught me.

SOPHUS REINERT: I don't think I ever cold called you, but I will have to get you back for this somehow. But the point about subjectivity is, of course, at the core of this. And when I first came here, again being a dark and brooding Norwegian, and you asked people how they're doing-- I'm awesome. Everything is awesome. It's that LEGO song, right? Everyone is over the top all the time.

And clearly, you can't really just ask people how they feel. And I'm sure you have all sorts of methods for dealing with this. But my personal-- the reason I am more like Camus, that if you look for happiness, you'll never find it, I'm very skeptical about these things temperamentally. Because I am sharing my idea of happiness with my students.

I have these slideshows. And I found a picture-- what I wanted to do over break, after finally having talked for a year, and been up for tenure, and all that, I wanted to walk along a cold Nordic beach. And I found this wonderful image of a man in a coat, walking on this snowy beach. And that was my happiness. And it was image number three under depression on the [INAUDIBLE].

[LAUGHTER]

So clearly, what makes me happy may not make-- evidently doesn't make other people happy. And I think as an historian, I'm just more attuned to the [INAUDIBLE]. I'm very, very partial to Wolfgang's take on the problem of putting things in numbers. This is really-- if the moral message of GNH is all you lose from the scientism, then there is just a deep, deep danger of losing something important in trying to make it all really scientific.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. And as you can see, when you talk about packaging everything, that's what they do best in Harvard Business School.

SOPHUS REINERT: How?

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you so much. No, I mean the cold Norwegian image.

SOPHUS REINERT: Ouch.

KINGA TSHERING: So, anyway, Professor Wolfgang.

WOLFGANG DRECHSLER: Well, I mean, this is a nice key. What I appreciate about this conference, and this panel, and we see it with the conference

yesterday as well, is there is a lot of emotion in this GNH. Because for many of us, this is like a breakthrough, the kind of where the world has gone wrong empirically, or with wrong values, or with from systems.

And then, of course, if Bhutan is that cool, there is a backlash. And if you're in a certain place, and you want tenure, you have to write something anti-Bhutanese because everybody has heard the [INAUDIBLE] Bhutanese stuff already. It's so popular. You get this backlash right now. And what I've seen is that the last-- and I don't want to say we are the greatest and the other ones are not, but many of the last both publications or conferences about Bhutan were very one-sided.

They were either just really rah-rah, and with their own cheer leading crowd or very critical. And most of them, very positive. One really has to say, basically, remember it's a success story. But it was this or that. What I really liked about this panel, and I like how Kinga has done it, and what I really like with this audience, is that here, we really seem to look at the various sites.

And we seem to be able to discuss, to say in principle this is great, but there is a but, and we're not going to put it under the rug. And so, also with the quantification, because there is such a thing as data imperialism. And there are people who think that over-quantifying life is the main problem that we're actually having. But on the other hand-- but on the other hand, we are living in a world in which you have to, and so on, and so on.

So there are so many, shall I say, cliché words like ambivalence and ambiguities here, but something like that. That altogether this is great. Altogether, this allows us to reflect GNH is real, once you get through it, even if it shifts through time and space in what it is. It's a moving target to understand. But I think with this kind of openness, methodological background wise, and the de-siloized Harvard that we have here, people who use the bridges over the rivers, that is a great accomplishment already. And so thank you very much for putting this conference on. And we are off to a greatly auspicious start. And I think this is really good. Thank you.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor.

[APPLAUSE]

[INAUDIBLE]

DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM: A conversation on Gross National Happiness is really about beginning with the end in mind. And I think that's the real value, that if you start taking your means as ends. And that's what's happening with just focusing on stock-- what's happening on the stock exchange and GDP. At least getting that conversation shift is actually itself I think a big nudge in the right direction.

I think there are many imperfections. But I think those imperfections are less of a problem. The fact that we are standing and looking at the red

dash is itself I think a big plus. And I think that's really what GNH has done.

I wanted to reflect further on what Professor Wolfgang shared, that I do agree that too much infatuation with numbers not necessarily that useful. And indeed, as a planning agency, actually that magical number, the index we made, we were not actually interested in it. We are actually more interested at the indicator level. At that level, it's actually very useful.

And so I would not discount all measures. I think if you don't have measures, accountability would be difficult. And we will have elected leaders who will try to do all sorts of things. And if we now say we will move away from any kind of measures, then I think we might give free reign and lose-- create more problems than solutions.

So I do feel that moving into measurement was positive, even though the subject is to do with happiness and it is quite challenging. But there are more and more clever ways coming out, thanks to institutes in areas like here in Boston.

The other thing I'm hopeful is, if you remember what I mentioned, that the more innovative areas are actually the areas which are much more difficult. We know they are important. But we don't know about what sort of interventions or conditions we can create. So that is a challenge for, I think, those in the business of governance for happiness. And in this regard, I find that the growing-- in the behavioral sciences, the knowledge that has come up about biases, about how you do [INAUDIBLE], those are actually a very good complement.

And actually, now they're giving us an idea about what we can do to get those poor social behaviors in areas where it's not as simple as making a road. So, yeah, I thought I would just share. That thank you very much for this opportunity.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

JOHN HELLIWELL: One of the charming things about Norwegians is their modesty and humility. And when Norway became top of the-- became top of the list, some people said, well, that's because of the oil. We had to remind them, no, I'm sorry. You're just in there with-- Norway's not top because of the oil, Norway is on top in spite of the oil. It's a very rare country that can handle natural resources as beautifully as Norway did.

[APPLAUSE]

SOPHUS REINERT: Thank you.

JOHN HELLIWELL: And this didn't come from out of the blue. It was in the Norwegian values in the first place. A big lecture we had on this topic, many years ago, somebody wanted-- we were looking for examples as to why

social capital is so high in those countries. And a Norwegian put up her hand in the audience.

She said, you know, on a Saturday morning what happens in Norway is that people go out and they paint each other's houses. It's this idea of doing things with each other, for each other, is just endemic. And that leads people to think of their lives as successful lives. It's not a question of joy. It's a question of this is a good life. And those of us outside witness that and we admire it. And we're grateful for Norway for giving us these kinds of examples that we can follow.

Getting back to your other point, was if you lose a moral base in a process of quantification, then you've made a deep mistake. And that has to be true. So I go back to Aristotle here. If it was true that these measures gave us a purely epicurean view of life, then that would be a mistaken index. Aristotle said, I think, in fact, the stoics and the epicureans are specialized views, each of which represents part of a true person's life. And that the golden mean involves them both.

And indeed, we have found very strong evidence, to my gratitude, and a bit of surprise, the extent to which people do build morality into their judgments about their own life. For example, we are now finding that to live in a country where there is great inequality makes you less happy than you would have been before, even if you're among the favored. And it turns out to be even truer where the inequality is inequality of well-being, which I would argue is what's really important, rather than of income and wealth, which is only a part of the story.

Similarly, people are happy-- it turns out Americans will sometimes laugh at the idea that was announced by each of the Nordic ambassadors speaking at the UN launch. Where they said, people like paying taxes in our country. They appreciate paying taxes. It's their opportunity to pay their share of the services that are trustworth-ally designed and delivered in the right ways to the right people.

And that's the kind of society you want to live in. Where all the people with whom your work, whether they're in businesses, or in government bureaucracies, or your neighbors, are people you trust, you like, you'd like to share your community and your lives with. And it's something we can all learn something from.

KINGA TSHERING: Thank you, Professor.

[APPLAUSE]

Because of time, I won't even, I guess, attempt to summarize, because we still have the rest of the day to continue the conversation. But I think as we started off, at the end of the day, it's how we make this whole policy and the philosophy, governing values and matrices as accessible as we can at the individual level.

And as Professor Reinert was sharing in the morning about his story of how he crossed the river and came to the Divinity School, similarly we also-- in my case, a lot of my friends say, you were at the Kennedy School, why

did you end up at the Divinity School now? And [INAUDIBLE] shared this story, that when it comes to car seat belts, the MIT friends have designed it, technically made it. That's a device that obviously saves thousands of lives.

But then again, not to pick on you professor, it's the HBS who has perfected on how to market it. And as a matter of fact, this is a [INAUDIBLE] And then in come the Kennedy School, and they set the speed limit. So then you don't need the seat belt.

But Bhutan, actually, if you look at the best seller, Geography of the Bliss, the author says that when you drive in Bhutan, actually, you don't need either. Because either speed limit or seat belt doesn't help you at all, because the roads are windy, precipitous, and you can fall any moment. And when you ask the driver how do you really drive in a road like this, they said, you have to believe in reincarnation.

[LAUGHTER]

So with this, I would like to thank all the honorable speakers. But just to mention that we have a great two panels again continuing in the afternoon, moderated by none other than our Dasho Karma here. And then Professor [INAUDIBLE], who has held this terrific workshop yesterday at the TH Chan School of Health and Happiness. And so we would urge you to step back after the wonderful and sumptuous lunch. So with this, before I break off, I would like to request some gifts to be-- a small memento for our honorable speakers to be handed over.