



MANIFESTO 2018

FOR A SELF RELIANT BHUTAN: OUR CONCERN, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Providing Equal
Opportunity

Through Good
Governance

For a
Self Reliant &
Caring Bhutan

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As His Majesty the 4th King was preparing the nation and her people for the parliamentary democracy, He said, *"I desire for an altruistic government, which will strive towards achieving the welfare of the nation and the people rather than a government that is driven by ulterior motives. Therefore, it is very important that our people are mindful in electing a good democratic government who will dedicate itself for the cause of the people's welfare"*. His Majesty said, *"When the elected leaders lose the respect and trust of the people, when they fail to set the right examples and uphold certain standards, corruption and bad practices spread. This greatly destabilizes the entire democratic process and eventually undermines the future of the nation"*. Ten years of parliamentary democracy

should, hence, compel every Bhutanese citizen to introspect and ask her/himself of the part that s/he played in fulfilling our great leaders' aspirations. There is a perceived decline in integrity in public office, undermining the faith of the common people in democracy itself. It is generally believed that a politician cannot win an election without monetary inducement or some kind of coercion. Many people, both in rural and urban areas, express deep sense of frustration, resignation and hopelessness with elected people and the way things are happening. Some people even comment, "there is nothing we can do to change things". Deep public distrust in politics and politicians is palpable.

That is why, in our selection of candidates and in our appeal to the public, we emphasize ability, commitment to the common man's welfare and accountability in the conduct of future politics. As His Majesty states, "*What we need is not a leader to lead the masses, we need leadership of the self*". The need of the hour is for a new brand of collective leadership, which is progressive, courageous and inspiring with a deep sense of mission that goes beyond five years and beyond self. In this election, people must choose the honest and not the dishonest, the disciplined and not the erratic, the selfless and not the selfish. These choices are not negotiable.

Great leadership must inspire trust and hope. Inspiring leadership ensures acceptance by the mass, a caring leadership can positively influence social reorientation within the nation. Ensuring good governance by a government formed by a political party composed of selfless men and women of high integrity and ability is

imperative. BKP will avoid the politics of winner takes all, loser loses all, politics of exclusion, and cash and carry politics. We shall strive through dialogue to ensure the entrenchment of true justice for all and for the emergence of a credible leadership that will instill hope, purpose and direction for Bhutan.

Our dream is that of a country in which all people are united by a common identity, a common purpose and a shared destiny, where appointments to public positions are made transparent, on the basis of merit, where every Bhutanese has equal opportunities, in which people's lives are valued, in which human rights and the rule of law are recognized and respected. Our shared vision continues to be that of a country in which endemic poverty and preventable diseases are eliminated, a country in which people are able to stand on their own feet and reduce dependency.

BKP believes that the success or failure of a government is not simply measured in terms of kilometers of roads built, number of bridges added, number of central schools started, improvements in economic statistics or such other data. What matters is the quality of life our people are going through, whether Bhutanese, especially the youth feel more safe and secure, whether the life of our farmers in the villages have become more comfortable and independent, and whether citizens are empowered to actively engage in governance, which is the bedrock of a vibrant democracy.

If elected, we pledge to provide sound political and economic leadership and work with all Bhutanese, including those in the opposition party, in a spirit of political

tolerance, understanding and reconciliation, thereby consolidating peace, harmony, security and stability as the basis for the prosperity of our country. We pledge to walk the talk and turn our development priorities that take into account the value of natural capital, ecosystem services, and social wellbeing into real benefits for the people of Bhutan. We shall draw on the wisdom and rich expertise of professionals – farmers, entrepreneurs, public servants, and communities as we collectively endeavor to achieve economic self-reliance. It has to be recognized that implementation of some parts of the manifesto will go beyond five years.

These words represent the commitments and the shared vision of a party that is both democratic and progressive. Let us fulfill His Majesty's aspiration for a democracy with rule of law, democracy with unity, democracy with integrity, democracy with talent and meritocracy, democracy that is responsible, and democracy that serves. Together, let us build our future for the benefit of the most cherished possession for us all, our children and our grandchildren.

I present to you the 2018 Manifesto of Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party.

Tashi Delek!

Dasho Neten Zangmo
President

PREAMBLE

As caring and responsible citizens of Bhutan each of us must work for the continued peace and prosperity of the country individually and collectively, according to our capacities. We must do so under the benevolent leadership of His Majesty the King, the jewel and guiding light of our Kingdom, and within the framework of our precious Constitution.

We are inspired by the compassion, wisdom and leadership of His Majesty the King and dedicated to supporting the realization of the noble vision of our beloved Druk Gyalpo - a caring society, a vibrant democracy and a resilient economy.

We are a group of conscious citizens who have come together to serve the nation by providing all Bhutanese equal opportunities and leaving no one behind. We are united by our common belief and compassion for each and every Bhutanese citizen and offer to serve the Bhutanese people as their elected representatives, without fear or favor, and in the long-term interest of the country, culture, economy, institutions and the people of Bhutan.

The party will foster an open and inclusive environment, treating each person in our democracy in the manner that reflects Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party's core values. We will be ethical and honest, and inspire trust by saying what we mean, doing what we say, lead by example and taking responsibility and accountability for our actions.

We will fulfill our commitment of building a better, stronger, fairer and more democratic society for future generations,

protecting the Bhutanese culture, tradition and values, meeting our commitments to the Bhutanese people, acting with humility, total responsibility and in a just manner, developing our people in totality (especially our farmers, youth and private sector) and helping improve communities and the global environment.

BKP offers a vision for Bhutan not just for the next five years but beyond. For BKP, the country comes first. In this journey, we are guided by three core principles:

1. We believe that now is the time to have a government that is altruistic, a government that can lead with integrity, a government that can make sustainable development possible. If austerity measures are required, it will be done. We will say what we do, and do what we say. Those who aspire to lead others must have clean hands and be free from corruption. BKP will fight economic and social injustice, inequality, corruption, abuse of power, and will deepen democracy through citizen engagement and empowerment. We are a party comprised of a group of people sharing the same beliefs and values whose sole aim is to serve the people. BKP believes that leaders must lead by example and not by rhetorics. *That is why, our first principle is for the party and all its members never to engage in any form of corruption in body, speech and mind, nor to tolerate corrupt practices in others.*
2. BKP strongly believes that for the Bhutanese people, our most valuable possession is our children, the youth of Bhutan and therefore, in

developing policies, plans and programs, we must keep the future of our children in mind as they are pivotal instruments to growth and development. It will be too detrimental if policy makers and politicians devise plans and programs that may bring some immediate benefits serving the short-term interests of the political parties but have huge incremental costs in the future. BKP will not indulge in this type of myopic game. In the wisdom of His Majesty the King "*Our children's tomorrow has to be created by us today*". Therefore, *our second principle is based on the theme "Beyond Self, Beyond Five Years"*. We have to place the country ahead of the party, think beyond party interests, and not be blinded by short-term political mileage.

3. If any political party is committed to putting the country first, the party has to be independent. Independent of any third party influence. As the newest and youngest player in the 2018 elections, BKP is learning the hard way that engaging in politics is neither easy nor affordable. Mobilizing the resources to finance the numerous party activities has been yet another big challenge. The campaign fund from the State comes only during the actual election period. Many activities like the running of the party offices, familiarization tours by candidates and presidential visits happen much before that. These involve cost. Notwithstanding the financial hardships, BKP's *third principle is to remain "independent". We will neither solicit nor accept any donations or financial support that*

violates electoral laws. Our own candidates or registered members are encouraged to contribute in any manner they can but within the lawful limits.



OUR FLAGSHIP AGENDA



OUR FLAGSHIP AGENDA

01 100% FUNCTIONAL IRRIGATION ON EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Repair existing and develop new irrigation channels through effective implementation;
2. Smart technology suiting crop and climatic conditions; and
3. Smart and resilient agriculture corresponding to climate change.

02 HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT

1. Through improved technology and wider coverage;
2. Review Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995 and create enabling provisions; and
3. Compensations for crop loss and damage (wildlife and natural disaster).

03 DRUK ORGANIC

1. For premium markets based on *dzongkhag* comparative advantage; and
2. Institute a National Organic Program under the Prime Minister's Office.

04 FARM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. Improvement of all farm roads (widening, drainage, consolidation); and
2. Storage, processing, market infrastructure, MSMEs, communication and transport.

05 AUCTION YARDS AND SALES AT PRODUCTION CENTERS

1. Set up market infrastructure at the source of production;
2. Cold storage and warehousing facilities in production centers; and
3. Cash and carry payment system (cash, digital bank transfer)

06 24 HOURS DRINKING WATER IN ALL HOMES

1. Existing infrastructure will be repaired and new ones built to effectively address the shortage; and
2. New technology for collection, storage and distribution.

07 AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP FOR ALL

1. Affordable homes will be created for civil servants, corporate and private sector;

2. SOEs to be advised to incorporate staff housing in their plans and programs;
3. Shelter homes will be built for the less fortunate;
4. Institute a National Affordable Home Ownership Programme; and
5. Partner with National Housing Development Corporation and other real estate developers through win-win models.

08 POTHOLE-FREE ROADS

1. Strengthen implementation and work quality through effective maintenance and repair; and
2. Minister on the road 24/7 agenda.

09 TOURISM IN SOUTH, EAST & CENTER

1. High volume, high value tourism;
2. Tourism in east, center and south;
3. Tourism diversified-heritage and community tourism, exotic excursion, rural immersion tourism;
4. Review immigration and labor laws creating enabling environment;
5. Solving airline traffic during peak seasons; and
6. Win-win solutions for all players – travel agents, tour guides, taxis, hoteliers, transporters, etc.

3. Develop a National Youth Employment policy;
4. Provide access to credit for projects and business start-ups on merit of business proposals;
5. Provide skills to youth with appropriate level of education and skills to take on employment opportunities;
6. Reduce school leavers so as to ensure that youths do achieve higher level of education and improve their chances of employability;
7. Enabling policy environment for private sector development and expansion; and
8. Regularize contractual agreements.

10 OUR YOUTH, OUR FUTURE

1. Growth led employment (tourism, agriculture, MSMEs, CSIs, entrepreneurship, vocational skills, access to finance);
2. Overseas employment with skills (care-givers, nursing, etc);

11 INCREASE EXPORT EARNINGS

1. Conducive policy framework (EDP, FDI, RMA regulations, cross-border bilateral facilitation, others);
2. Cost savings from procurement of raw materials;
3. Adequate infrastructure and efficient

governance; and

4. Minimal government regulations (immigration and labor laws, etc.)

12 HEALTHCARE BY YOUR BEDSIDE

1. Mobile clinic camps;
2. Treatment and referral protocols based on clinical need and not otherwise;
3. Partnership with national and international agencies; and
4. Patient diet in all BHUs.

13 META-DATA SYSTEM – DIGITAL BHUTAN

1. Digitize Bhutan in all its governance system covering 10 ministries and 20 *dzongkhags*.
2. Public services will be automatic in addition to being time bound; and
3. First come first serve.



OUR CULTURE, OUR HERITAGE





OUR CULTURE, OUR HERITAGE

The yellow jewel in our logo symbolizes our rich and unique culture that values allegiance to the King, the People and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Our identity, independence and sovereignty cannot be taken for granted. We will strive to nurture our culture as it is the most important safeguard for our national security, identity and sovereignty. Our living culture has been a precious asset and must be valued.

We pledge to:

1. Serve His Majesty the King with utmost dedication and loyalty;
2. Advocate the four pillars of Gross National Happiness in all our endeavors;

3. Respect, promote and serve our *Zhung Dratshang* (Central Monastic Body) and other religious institutions;
4. Uphold the values of *Ley-Judre Tha-Damtsi*;
5. Place tradition and culture in the forefront as a cornerstone to economic growth and development;
6. Respect our elders and uphold their wisdom even as we embrace the fast paced realities of the present and future;
7. Conserve our architecture, landscape and sacred sites; and
8. Promote *Dzongkha*, community vitality, and the traditional / indigenous arts and crafts.



II

OUR FARMERS, OUR HEROES





OUR FARMERS, OUR HEROES

Our forefathers have contributed towards a sufficiency economy with almost everything self-contained. To this, BKP heralds our farmers as heroes who have carried us to where we are now. With increasing population and the changing agricultural landscape, the farming sector needs to be made attractive and enjoyable for our present and future generations. We endeavor to make farming profitable, sustainable and socio-economically attractive bringing smiles and greater fortune in our communities.

We pledge to:

1. Provide 100% functional irrigation on the existing infrastructure and beyond;
2. Ensure that all have access to regular drinking water and undertake a comprehensive assessment of water sources and uses throughout the country and develop an action plan for protecting and managing the water resources for our future generations;
3. Address the human wildlife conflict issue as a flagship agenda;
4. Bring farm roads to all season road condition for both input and output markets reducing travel time and cost;
5. Develop attractive markets with intelligent pricing;
6. Decongest FCB auction markets by developing auction hubs based on production centers bringing buyers/traders to source, reversing the current trend and reducing farmer inconvenience;
7. Exempt taxes on income from rural-based farm production and do away with all forms of duties and taxes on agricultural inputs;
8. Prioritize financial inclusion for socio-economic development;
9. Accelerate the One-Gewog-One-Product Programme, diversify agriculture and link with the *dzongkhag/gewog* self-reliance objective;

10. Double the amount of the *Gewog* Development Grant with more effective implementation guidelines that also engage and empower the citizens for larger public good;
11. Achieve self-sufficiency in essential vegetables and major dairy products;
12. Incentivize agriculture-based enterprises in rural areas through a national programme;
13. Pilot a centrally located commodity exchange providing real time information on commodity stock available in each cold storage and warehouse for delivering the stock to local market and for exports; and
14. Enhance rural life insurance benefits to Nu. 50,000.



III

OUR CIVIL SERVANTS, OUR KEY HUMAN RESOURCE





OUR CIVIL SERVANTS, OUR KEY HUMAN RESOURCE

Today, there are as many as 28,000 civil servants in Bhutan, one civil servant for every 27 Bhutanese citizens. Close to 50% of these civil servants are in the professional and management cadre, made up of mostly the teaching staff. Like everywhere else, the civil servants are the backbone of the government as they are the ones preparing, implementing, monitoring and ensuring timely completion of the government plans and programs.

We pledge to:

1. Invoke Article 30 of the Constitution and empower the Pay Commission to revise the salary and allowances of the civil servants, restructure and rationalize TA/DA, retirement benefits;
2. Develop affordable housing schemes for civil servants;
3. Review the Civil Service Act 2010 and if necessary, propose for an amendment, so that the concerns of the civil servants can be better dealt with.



IV

PRIVATE SECTOR FOR A SELF RELIANT BHUTAN





PRIVATE SECTOR FOR A SELF RELIANT BHUTAN

As a driver of inclusive growth and job creation, contributing towards improving livelihoods and revenue for the government, BKP supports the private sector through but not limited to the following.

We pledge to:

1. Support existing industries that are of strategic value to our economy through enabling policies, fiscal measures, infrastructure, skills, training and research;
2. Ensure industries and businesses have access to reliable and affordable energy, and deliver the required infrastructure of roads reducing

- transport and freight costs tied to creating more jobs for the unemployed and additional revenue for the government;
3. Invest in intelligent infrastructure facilitating trade and business growth (integrated licensing systems, integrated export and import windows);
 4. Enforce value addition criteria to all industries, given the limited mineral resources and the ecological sensitivity of mineral development;
 5. Develop the tourism industry diversification / value addition of products and services, agro/ eco-tourism, immigration and labor regulations, entry points beyond Paro and P/ling, roadside amenities, tourism promotion in east, center and south, incentives for development of tourism infrastructure beyond the western region, work with the central bank to ease bank transfers, predictable tourism policies and incentive packages;
 6. Develop the private sector through enabling policies (easy and cheaper access to credit, timely bill payment, low transport cost, effective fiscal instruments, minimal government regulations, transparent procurement procedures);
 7. Expedite the development of industrial estates in Samdrupjongkhar, Gelephu, Monggar and Samtse;
 8. Work with the Remit Bhutan program initiated by the central bank to involve Bhutanese citizens

living, studying and working abroad to participate in nation building by jointly funding important projects in the country;

9. Allow any Bhutanese to open and maintain foreign currency accounts in the country subject to central bank regulations;
10. Provide transport and other cross-border support schemes to facilitate all exports; and
11. Create conducive environment for foreign direct investment and for cross-border investment within the SAARC/BIMSTEC region and beyond.



V

**INVEST IN YOUTH,
FOR A BRIGHTER
FUTURE**





INVEST IN YOUTH, FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

To meet our country's needs for responsible development, employment creation is BKP's top agenda. Under the broader economic revival initiative, we will accord high priority to job creation and opportunities for entrepreneurship, creative space and the arts, professional and career development. Together with employers, industry and youth representatives, BKP will help the young Bhutanese acquire skills and progress in their careers. We will invest in every young Bhutanese to help them get good jobs both inside and outside Bhutan. Enabling policies on labor, employment, industries and others will ensure that there is pride and recognition in every job.

We pledge to:

1. Allocate special funds to provide numerous start-up opportunities empowering our youth for self-employment through incubation centers in both rural and urban areas;
2. Provide gainful and dignified employment through policy promulgation and finance (PSL, CSI loans, other financial inclusion strategies, favorable fiscal policy, ease of doing business, trainings and skill development);
3. Strategically develop well-paying and dignified jobs in both agriculture and allied industries;
4. Provide incentives for integrating our youth into agribusiness value chains, including market guarantees and incubation centers;
5. Impart specialized career learning and skills development for short, medium and long term professional and career development in partnership with the private sector;
6. Ramp-up apprenticeships and mentoring;
7. Provide creative space and platform for the arts and expressions respecting talent and opportunity;
8. Explore and formalize bilateral labor contractual arrangements (MoU Agreements, People to People Friendship, Government to Government) with countries where labor laws are of international standards allowing Bhutanese to

work in a safe and secure environment with no occupational and health hazards;

9. Strengthen and consolidate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers to train rural youths on farm production, value addition and entrepreneurship, skills development and support MSMEs;
10. Review and strengthen courses on vocational training and skills development in higher secondary and pre-university curriculum so that graduates are better prepared and equipped to benefit from job opportunities;
11. Strengthen and incentivize robust micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that generate jobs and enhance per capita incomes throughout the country according to their comparative advantage; and
12. Create and empower a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Youth Employment.



VI

QUALITY EDUCATION WITH VALUES





QUALITY EDUCATION WITH VALUES

We recognize that our people are the nation's greatest asset and we will therefore continue to give high priority to inclusive and quality education. Education is what empowers an individual to actualize his/her full potential. BKP will invest in the education sector so that every child grows up with skills and capabilities that will not only benefit himself/herself but will contribute towards the well-being of the country. We commit to an education system that will ensure wisdom and skills in every child, who will have the right understanding and feeling, stay healthy, have the capacity to live in relationship with other beings, be productive and that s/he has the confidence to believe in oneself.

We pledge to:

1. Develop a comprehensive and dynamic education policy for Bhutan's long-term self-reliance which will provide continuity and priority framework across the five year plans and beyond (rethink education policy, early interventions, upgrade school infrastructure and facilities, redesign learning space for effective learning through technology and others, mid-day meals, transportation facilities, curriculum, teacher's workload, student-teacher ratio); revisit the Education Blueprint;
2. Redress our curriculum to bring rightful balance between learning of Core Bhutanese Values (or GNH values) and western knowledge and technologies (which all other subjects represent);
3. Educate and train at least 10% of the teachers in each school/educational institutions, to be master teachers in GNH value education who practice and live these values;
4. Educate and train all teachers in each of the schools and educational institutions in the 'leadership of the self' through GNH values education;
5. Upskill, motivate and invest in teachers through use of technology and knowledge;
6. Transform all schools and educational institutions and the classrooms into GNH inspired communities who live these values - a place

where everyone is supportive and learning is joyful experience;

7. Strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early years of the child to ensure a good start in life. Make 'Parenting Education' an essential part of education of a child as children spend a great deal of their time with parents including the first five years where the foundation for learning is laid;
8. Review the Central School Policy to make it sustainable and affordable, more relevant for the children of poor parents, and also prescribe a minimum age for children to be admitted to central schools;
9. Retain existing Community Primary Schools and Extended Class Rooms in the communities where feasible;
10. Recruit qualified and effective school leaders to transform the schools;
11. Review and reform vocational training education to enhance skills development;
12. Promote skills in the areas of music, art, drama, poetry as part of mainstream education;
13. Make values of honesty, integrity, hard-work and sincerity central to learning;
14. Do away with classes on Saturdays in all government schools from PP to grade 3; and

15. Encourage establishment of more private schools and colleges through the Economic Development Policy and Foreign Direct Investment policy.



VII

**HEALTH AND
WELL BEING**





HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Health policies and programmes will be adjusted to conform to the long term self-reliance policy and meet the needs of everyone no matter who they are and where they live.

We pledge to:

1. Appropriately augment effective health education so that people in organizations adopt healthy lifestyles, reducing the incidence of lifestyle related diseases, and consequently related health expenses;
2. Strengthen preventive health care advocacy, dietary improvement, mother-child health and nutrition;
3. Provide high quality health care for each and

every Bhutanese through increased investment and improved management by posting 2-3 doctors in every *dzongkhag* hospital;

4. Improve access to quality health care that is inclusive, responsive, and equitable by establishing CT scan machines in all regional hospitals and X-ray and endoscopy machines in all *dzongkhag* hospitals;
5. Focus on rural health care delivery and reduce waiting time in hospitals;
6. Strengthen traditional medicine services and promote *Sowa-Rigpa* in other allied sectors;
7. Support JDWNRH to provide state of the art health care services to all Bhutanese for free;
8. Provide patient meals in all BHUs and staff them adequately;
9. Digitize the patient information system in all hospitals using individual CID numbers for patient history enhancing faster and more efficient health care;
10. Ensure that ambulance service is dispatched within 20 minutes of the first call;
11. Increase government funding for doctor and nursing scholarships;
12. Provide a one-time gift of Nu. 5,000 for the birth of every second child; and
13. Build one helipad in each *gewog*.



VIII

AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL





AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

A central goal of any administration is economic growth and stability as the foundation of the country's prospects. BKP will endeavor to sustain broad-based and regionally balanced economic development and growth. We will provide equal opportunities and avoid exclusion while respecting diversity as part of the enabling environment for socio-economic development.

BKP believes in a fair economic environment where more Bhutanese citizens benefit and not a selected few. We will focus on developing i) Hydropower ii) Tourism iii) Manufacturing and Trade iv) Agriculture v) Natural Resources vi) Information Communication and Technology (ICT) vii) Construction and Transport, and viii) Human Resources.

We pledge to:

1. Make our economy strong and bring prosperity to the whole of the country by giving people real opportunities through sound public finance and enabling policies;
2. Invest in infrastructure and people ensuring the whole of our economy across all twenty *dzongkhags* grow by broadening opportunities while being mindful of ecological health;
3. Push for effective and smart planning, and timely implementation of hydropower projects to avoid macro-economic imbalances especially during the construction phase;
4. Target an average economic growth at 8%, keeping in mind that the growth figure, driven by government expenditure on one hand, and hydropower development on the other, can go up and down, depending on the magnitude and timing of these two large factors;
5. Carry out a thorough review of the status of the ongoing hydropower projects as well as those in the pipeline, according greater emphasis and priority to timely completion of the projects already underway rather than embarking on new projects given the limited absorptive capacity in the Bhutanese economy and its destabilizing impact on the economy overall. If the JV model of project financing does not work, we will explore other funding options;

6. View hydropower development from the lens of job creation for our youth, business development for the private sector, domestic capacity development, vocational training opportunities, markets and townships for our *dzongkhags*, community development and a vibrant local economy;
7. Improve trade balance by boosting agriculture productivity and promoting exports (Export Processing Zones) of strategic industries;
8. Provide finance beyond tangible collaterals into project based mechanisms (Priority Sector Lending, CSI Banking, CSO partnerships);
9. Create an investment-led, job creating economy driven by increased green economic activity, ICT, high value agriculture, floriculture, trade and business;
10. Ensure sustainable economic growth in all sectors of the economy to generate employment;
11. Fund research and development to enable business and industry to grow;
12. Shift development into the rural areas by creating “growth centers” based on comparative advantage around which new service facilities will be provided; to distribute wealth and jobs by encouraging private entrepreneurs to locate businesses in these rural growth centers and to invite financial institutions to provide special incentives for investment in rural areas;

13. Promote increased domestic savings as well as remittances from abroad and invest resources to create new wealth by supporting indigenous enterprises especially small and medium and those owned and operated by women and youth to take advantage of economies of scale;
14. Promote domestic bond market as an alternative source of long term financing to not only meet financing requirements but also induce competition in market interest rates;
15. Work with the central bank for further reduction of lending rates;
16. Review the provisions of economic development policy to ease foreign exchange restrictions for import of raw materials;
17. Review and implement all policies concerning state resources (mineral, rivers, lakes, forest) and make it inclusive, broad-based, equitable and sustainable; and
18. Amend the Mines and Minerals Management Act 1995 to keep with changing times as well to align with the noble principles enshrined in the Constitution.



IX

SECURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY





SECURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fiscal sustainability is central to the achievement of economic self-reliance. The principle of fiscal sustainability is embedded in Article 14, Section 5 of the Constitution of Bhutan which stipulates that “the government shall exercise proper management of the monetary system and the public finance. It shall ensure that the servicing of public debt will not place an undue burden on the future generations”. BKP shall work towards achieving the long term goals of economic self-reliance for greater well-being and happiness of the Bhutanese people.

Economic self-reliance is important for maintaining the sovereignty of the nation. Economic self-reliance will zoom on four critical areas covering fiscal space, agriculture productivity and marketing, skills development and trade.

We will form a group of experts from within the country and seek assistance from renowned institutions outside to frame a dynamic policy on economic self-reliance along with strategies, timelines and costs to implement the policy, by applying a well-established evidence-based methodology.

Allocation of annual grants to local governments will be tied to pursuit of economic self-reliance, which will be extended to *dzongkhags* and *gewogs*, and ultimately to villages and households depending on comparative advantage and local potentials.

We pledge to:

1. Optimize the use of government resources by curtailing unnecessary and excessive spending;
2. Cut back any initiatives being proposed that are unsustainable, have minimal benefits and eat away significant amount of public resources;
3. Come up with clear rules and guidelines for entertainment and hospitality of the Cabinet Ministers during travels within the country and outside to avoid excessive and uncontrolled spending during ministerial visits;
4. Not purchase new duty vehicles for Ministers;
5. Increase revenue as a percent of GDP through technology and intelligence led tax practices that support national priorities (expanding tax base, promoting re-investment in the country,

encouraging local economy) ensuring economic growth;

6. Synchronize the upper PIT rate and the CIT/BIT rates;
7. Incentivize *gewog* off-farm/non-farm economic activities accruing benefits of (job creation, curtailing urban migration, exports and import substitution) through credit, tax holidays, incubation centers, ready markets, etc.
8. Withdraw the 5% sales tax on mobile vouchers;
9. Reduce dependence on grant aid;
10. Work with relevant international organizations, especially the UN agencies, to look at options for alternative and innovative sources of financing development programs like those being considered for financing critical activities relating to biodiversity and climate change;
11. Contain the level of public debt, especially non-hydropower related debt and not create the burden on future generations and threaten national solvency. In order to make debt management transparent, we will form a debt management committee to screen and vet all government proposals requiring loan financing. The committee will recommend whether to avail any such financing and also propose the most effective and viable financing option and source;
12. Publish quarterly reports on the government's

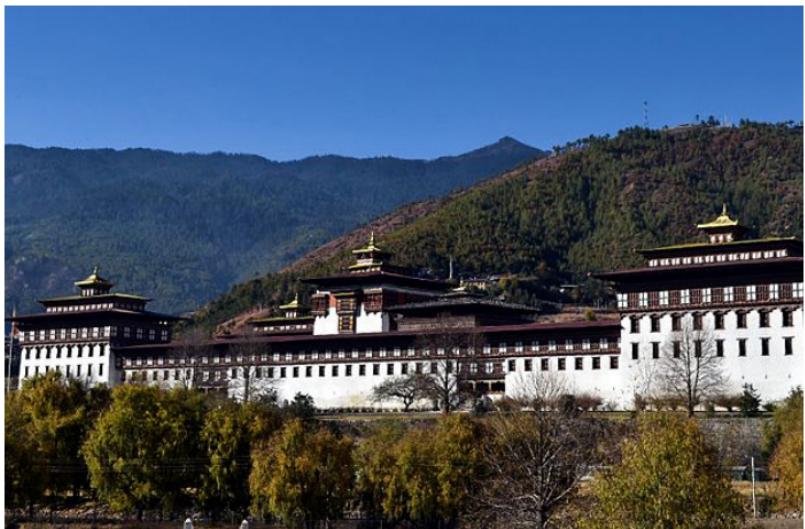
- debt position, which will be uploaded on the Ministry of Finance website for public viewing;
13. Base all government investment decisions on thorough assessment of needs and socioeconomic benefits as against popular wasteful investment;
 14. Review the fiscal incentives package to link benefits accruing to the economy with the revenues foregone, while also making businesses competitive, especially the export-oriented ones through incentives and government facilitation. Fiscal incentives will be targeted towards priority sectors such as agriculture, youth development and CSMI. Mechanisms will be put in place to carry out an incentive-benefit analysis at regular intervals; and
 15. Replace the existing sales tax regime with a more dynamic general service tax (GST).



X

**CLEAN AND
RESPONSIVE
GOVERNMENT**





CLEAN AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

BKP values harmony in society - One Kingdom Equal Citizens where differences of views can be held, without disrespecting or infringing the rights of others. Good governance will be critical for the health of the socio-economy, the environment and our unique culture. BKP will pay utmost attention to ensuring a clean public service as well as respect for the rule of law and the effective implementation of the law.

We pledge to:

1. Ensure the Prime Minister receives equal pay as the Cabinet Ministers;
2. Strengthen inclusive decision making at the grassroots;

3. Instill a sense of ownership and pride in the citizens-*My Dzongkhag, My Gewog*;
4. Form a government that people can trust, that is transparent and free from corrupt practices of all sorts including nepotism and discrimination, and that we remain exemplary to the people in ethics, conduct and manners;
5. Build an effective meta-data system for planning, service delivery and governance through ICT and other infrastructure;
6. Strengthen and enforce Code of Conduct that reaffirms the core principles and practice underpinning the way holders of Ministerial office discharge their duties;
7. Bring in a system that avoids concentration of governance powers in the hands of the Prime Minister or any one individual;
8. Ensure that major government decisions are made based on proper research and analysis and active consultations with civil servants and relevant organizations and not force decisions on narrow political agenda;
9. Deregulate trade / business licensing that are currently under the number restrictions;
10. Enact a National Procurement Law;
11. Review laws to ensure consistency, currency, and implementation effectiveness through an appropriate law review body;

12. Facilitate open disclosure of information, plans, processes and actions including soliciting feedbacks and recommendations of the National Council;
13. Support and strengthen internal governance systems to ensure transparency, accountability and preventing corruption in close coordination with relevant stakeholders;
14. Devote sufficient resources and attention to timely and effective public service delivery, incorporating monitoring and performance measures;
15. Support initiatives for further decentralization of functions and authority to Local Governments, being mindful of the need to enhance their absorptive capacity;
16. Meet all SDG targets and milestones incorporating social accountability mechanisms; and
17. Deepen democracy through enhancement of citizens' participation and empowerment.



XI

INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT





INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure provides the backbone for all other socioeconomic development and is the foundation of our development paradigm.

We pledge to:

1. Make all highways, *dzongkhag* roads, *gewog* roads and urban roads pothole free through effective and improved maintenance;
2. Bring all farm roads to all weather condition;
3. Provide 24 hours drinking water in all homes;
4. Provide safe and efficient public transport enabling free and easy movement of people,

goods and services. In particular, we will aggressively support measures to decongest large urban areas by introducing mass public transport facility along with required infrastructure, beginning with Thimphu;

5. Institute subsidized public transport facilities in non-viable routes across the country;
6. Prioritize road development program to cater to increased traffic (human and freight) as a stimulator of local trade and commerce;
7. Develop affordable housing in various centers through home ownership schemes;
8. Build connectivity and neighborhoods that are well served with lightings, water and sanitation, recreation, sewerage and co-located with education and other social services;
9. Construct *Shingkhar-Gorgan* highway;
10. Construct Nganglam-Dewathang road; and
11. Construct access bridge over *Mao Khola* in Gelephu.



XII

MEDIA, SPORTS, ARTS AND FILM





MEDIA, SPORTS, ARTS AND FILM

BKP accords due recognition to media, sports, arts and film as important constituents for national building and strong unifying factors. They bring all of us together, strengthening our bond as a nation and help maintain the social fabric.

We pledge to:

1. Conduct regular press meetings with cabinet ministers and parliamentarians to discuss topical national issues;
2. Strengthen and build a responsible public media and broadcast service, and career development through increased funding and policy support;
3. Inform, entertain and uplift media services that

reflect our values of cultural diversity, artistic expressions, independence of thoughts and idea with content produced to meet standards of quality and relevance that meet the needs, interest and aspiration of the Bhutanese people;

4. Promote and develop sports both traditional and modern by allocating required funds and planning attractive career path for sports persons;
5. Invest in sports infrastructure and technology across all *dzongkhags*;
6. Support our athletes and strengthen talent team; and
7. Support the arts and the film industry by establishing a town hall in each *dzongkhag* to serve as a movie screening theatre besides serving other public purposes.



XIII

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND





LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

BKP will not leave anyone behind by reaching the unreached while also acknowledging the potential of development actors like the private sector, farmers, youth and the civil servants. BKP will provide a caring government to help the poor, vulnerable, marginalized and the left behind. Every Bhutanese citizen (rich or poor) has the right over the natural resources of the country and we must empower each citizen with the ability to actualize that dream providing dignity and pride. The real success of the development process lies in the happiness of the common man with the fruits of development reaching the weakest, most deprived and remotest of people. We will hold hands and move together as fellow Bhutanese.

We pledge to:

1. Enable broad-based public ownership of companies by providing financing schemes for those who cannot afford share price purchase;
2. Ensure all State resources are equitably and sustainably utilized employing the best business model;
3. Support women and child welfare and development and accord high priority at all levels through health care, nutrition, education and policies;
4. Target the left behind (homeless, jobless) through programs (jobs, education, targeted policy) and with relevant partners, to bring them at level with the rest;
5. Support small business enterprises for improved livelihoods;
6. Provide special educational scholarships and housing to the marginalized;
7. Support the welfare of senior citizens, especially their socioeconomic wellbeing;
8. Enforce the Labor and Employment Act 2007 with regard to appropriate post service benefits so that all workers are entitled to provident fund facilities;
9. Address the needs of citizens with special needs ensuring disable-friendly infrastructure (access to public facilities, public buildings, transport,

education and health);

10. Facilitate access to credit and information and skills upgradation;
11. Ensure the rights of sexual and gender minorities and other sections of LGBT group and enhance the dignity of their lives;
12. Provide support to reduce social ills such as suicide, rape, depression and drug addiction; and
13. Build shelters for the needy and less fortunate incorporating cultural, local, traditional and modern amenities.



XIV

FOREIGN RELATIONS





FOREIGN RELATIONS

The world is more interconnected and interdependent than at any other time. Scientific and technological advances and the speed with which ideas and knowledge can be transmitted have empowered people but have also increased risks and volatility in the international system.

Drawing on Article 9 Section 24 of the Constitution, BKP shall “endeavor to promote goodwill and cooperation with nations, foster respect for international law and treaty obligations, and encourage settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in order to promote international peace and security”.

We pledge to:

1. Strengthen our friendship and cooperation with India based on mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit, being mindful of each other's aspiration, interest and sensitivities;
2. Comply with our obligations under international conventions and agreements to which Bhutan is a member;
3. Remain an active member of regional and multilateral organizations and maintain strong strategic partnerships with our key neighbors to support peace, trade and investment, transfer of knowledge and skills; and
4. Continue to share our development philosophy of GNH for a peaceful and secure world.



XV

SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE





SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE

BKP considers the senior generation of Bhutanese as important members of our society that require special attention. The elderly are the source of wisdom and knowledge. We will introduce a new culture to enable the elderly people to be useful and appreciated.

We pledge to:

1. Develop programs for the elderly people to enable them to impart their accumulated wealth of knowledge and experiences to children and the youth so as to preserve our tradition and heritage;
2. Exempt all pension payouts from PIT from the tax year 2018;
3. Correct the pension rules to allow senior pensioners to receive annual increment / indexation, and avoid the situation of pension stagnation;
4. Adopt special measures to provide the elderly with adequate medical facilities and other support and health care; and
5. Enact a National Pension Law.

