

Charter of the People's Democratic Party, Bhutan

(ECB Approved version)

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PREAMBLE

We, the people of Bhutan have enjoyed continuous peace, progress and prosperity under the wise and benevolent reign of the Wangchuck Dynasty. In an unprecedented act without parallel in world history, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck voluntarily devolved power from the Golden Throne to the people of Bhutan with the gift of a Constitution and the establishment of a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy. The People's Democratic Party has been formed to enable the people to exercise the power bequeathed to them by actively engaging in democratic governance to advance their well-being and chart the future course of the Pelden Drukpa in keeping with rapidly changing times. The People's Democratic Party shall ensure that the noble vision and aspirations of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo's selfless act of devolving power to the Bhutanese people are fully realized, and that the power is exercised in a responsible and progressive manner. Towards this end, we offer ourselves, all of our resources and skills to the service of the people of Bhutan.

The People's Democratic Party pledges to serve His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and future Monarchs with absolute loyalty and devotion. The People's Democratic Party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

We, the members of the People's Democratic Party give unto ourselves this Charter and pledge to abide by its provisions.

Article I: Name of the Party

1. The name of the Party shall be the People's Democratic Party (hereafter referred to as "the Party").
2. The name of the Party in the abbreviated form shall be PDP

Article II: Vision

3. The vision of the Party is a peaceful Kingdom of Bhutan that is politically united, culturally harmonious, socially just, economically prosperous, environmentally rich, and secure in its sovereignty enabling all Bhutanese to pursue and enjoy happiness.

Article III: Mission

4. The Party's mission, inspired by our unique philosophy of Gross National Happiness, shall be to:
 - 4.1. Safeguard the independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

- 4.2. Strengthen the unity of the nation through adherence to the principles of equality, tolerance and justice, and to infuse in our people a sense of national identity;
- 4.3. practice and advance democratic governance with the participation and representation of all sections of our society;
- 4.4. safeguard the rights and freedom of our people through democratic governance, justice and the rule of law, and to encourage healthy public debate through a free and vibrant media and civil society;
- 4.5. promote economic growth and self-reliance while ensuring equity, balanced regional development, and the sustainable use of natural resources;
- 4.6. provide equal opportunities and gainful employment to our people regardless of ethnicity, religion, region, gender, social origin, disabilities or language so that they may realize their full potential, and endeavour with the knowledge that merit shall be the only path to success in our country;
- 4.7. foster professionalism at the workplace, and the efficient and responsive delivery of public services by the government and public sector;
- 4.8. achieve social justice, equality and fairness for all our people, regardless of ethnicity, religion, region, gender, social origin, disabilities or language and ensure that all have access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare and education;
- 4.9. protect and conserve our rich and pristine environment and respect the right of future generations to a healthy environment and to all the natural resources our generation enjoys;
- 4.10. preserve and promote our unique cultural, religious and spiritual heritage as the essential basis of our national identity and as a source of enrichment and happiness in the lives of our people;
- 4.11. promote friendly relations with the international community on the basis of peace, cooperation and the sovereign equality of states; to play a responsible and constructive role in regional and global affairs; and in particular to further strengthen the unique, warm and friendly relationship and economic cooperation with India.

Article IV: Symbol of the Party

5. The symbol of the Party shall be a galloping white horse against the backdrop of a clear sky. The galloping white horse signifies dynamism, advancement and purity of the Party while the clear sky symbolizes peace and prosperity of the country. The Party symbol shall be as specified in Annexure I.

Article V: Membership

6. Membership of the Party shall be open to all Bhutanese citizens who are registered voters and support the principles and objectives of the Party.
7. To become a member, a duly filled Membership Application Form shall be as sections 53.4 and 65.2 of this Charter. Upon approval for admission, the person shall pay applicable Member Registration and Annual Membership Fees, from which time on the person shall become a member of the Party.
8. Registration fee shall be Nu. 100 while Annual Membership Fee shall be Nu. 1,200 for each member. However, the Executive Committee shall, from time to time, revise the registration and membership fees within the ceiling set by the Election Commission of Bhutan. Annual membership Fees, except in the case of a new member, shall be payable in the first month of each year.
9. Members of the Party shall enjoy the following rights to:
 - 9.1. Be offered equal opportunities to participate in activities of the Party, and not to be excluded by the deliberate withholding of information or by other unfair means;
 - 9.2. Attend and participate in the Party Convention;
 - 9.3. Attend and observe any other Party meeting unless that meeting specifically resolves that it is a closed meeting and states the reason why its business is confidential;
 - 9.4. Have such details about themselves as may be held by the Party kept confidential and not disclosed to any other person without their permission;
 - 9.5. Be provided any information about the Party and its activities which are available but excluding any information which the Party declares to be confidential.
10. Membership of the Party may be refused, revoked, or suspended by the Party on any of the following grounds:
 - 10.1. Actively supporting a person standing against a Party candidate;
 - 10.2. Assuming membership of another political party;
 - 10.3. Expressing disagreement with the Party policy expressed in a way and to an extent, or personal conduct, that seriously throws doubt on the person's support for the principles and objectives of the Party as set out in this Charter;
 - 10.4. Failing to pay applicable membership dues; or

- 10.5. Failing to comply with prevailing laws and regulations relating to political parties and elections, which shall result in automatic and immediate forfeiture of their membership of the Party.
11. Any person whose membership is refused, revoked or suspended may appeal in writing to the Party. The Party shall take reasonable steps to ascertain the full facts of the case and its decision shall be final and binding. A person whose membership has been refused or revoked may not apply for membership again until one year has passed.
12. In any dispute between members or groups of members efforts shall first be made to resolve the matter at the most local practical level. If the dispute remains unresolved, it may be referred to the President of the Party for arbitration, whose decision shall be final and binding.
13. Any member may withdraw his membership from the Party by notifying the local Party office in writing.

Article VI: The Party Convention

14. There shall be a Party Convention which shall be attended by the following:
 - 14.1. President and Vice President;
 - 14.2. Members of the National Assembly;
 - 14.3. Representatives of the Constituencies;
 - 14.4. Elected representatives of the Committees;
 - 14.5. Secretary; and
 - 14.6. Treasurer.
15. The Party Convention shall meet annually in a Regular Session.
16. All other members of the Party are entitled to attend the Party Convention.
17. The **Executive Committee** may at any time and for whatever reason convene a Special Session of the Party Convention.
18. The Executive Committee shall determine the date, time, and venue of Regular or Special Session of the Party Convention. A calling notice for a Regular Session shall be broadcast at least one calendar month before the date fixed for the meeting.
19. Any Party member desirous of moving a resolution at the Regular Session of the Party Convention shall submit a copy of the draft resolution to the Secretary not less than two

weeks before the date of the Session, provided that the draft resolution shall bear the names and signatures of at least one hundred registered Party members in support of the resolution.

20. Calling notice for a Special Session of the Party Convention shall be broadcast to Party members not less than seven days before the date fixed for the meeting and shall state the agenda for discussion at the meeting. No other item may be discussed at the Special Session.
21. Party policy shall consist only of resolutions passed at meetings of the Party Convention. Election manifestos and policy statements as may be produced by the Party from time to time shall not contradict Party policy.

The functions of Party Convention are to:

- 22.1. elect the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Party;
 - 22.2. lay down the broad basic policies of the Party;
 - 22.3. enact or amend the Charter of the Party;
 - 22.4. elect a new President in case of death, resignation or retirement while in office;
 - 22.5. elect the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee;
 - 22.6. elect four representatives of the Constituencies to the Executive Committee;
 - 22.7. elect five Members of the National Assembly to the Executive Committee;
 - 22.8. determine Party priorities and develop the Party's political strategy;
 - 22.9. approve the annual budget for Party;
 - 22.10. consider a report of the Executive Committee covering the work of the Party since the previous Party Convention;
 - 22.11. review audited accounts and a financial report from the Executive Committee;
 - 22.12. appoint external auditors until the next Party Convention;
 - 22.13. consider policy motions duly submitted for its consideration; and
 - 22.14. decide on any other measures to be taken to further Party aims.
23. The resolutions of the Party Convention shall be adopted before the end of the Session of the Party Convention.

24. The President and Vice President shall be elected by the Party Convention from among the registered members of the Party through secret ballot. They shall hold office for a term of five years and shall be eligible for re-election.
25. Representatives of the Constituencies shall be elected by the Constituency Committee members from among registered members of the Constituencies through secret ballot.
26. The President, Vice President, Secretary General and Treasurer shall relinquish office on being voted out by a resolution supported by two-thirds majority at the Party Convention. The motion for the resolution must be signed by at least one-third of the members of the Party Convention.
27. The Secretary General of the Party shall serve as the Member Secretary to the Party Convention.
28. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the powers and duties of the Chair.
29. When resolutions are put to a vote in the Party Convention, each Party member shall be entitled to one vote, and, in case of an equality of votes, the resolution shall be declared to be lost. There shall be no voting by proxy.
30. **Votes on resolutions shall be decided by a show of hands unless a member demands a ballot.** When a show of hands is used, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has on a show of hands been carried or lost shall be conclusive evidence of the fact.
- 3 1. The maximum age of the President shall be 65 years at the time of nomination.

Article VII: The Executive Committee (*change it according to the discussions....*)

32. The Executive Committee of the Party shall serve as its executive arm and shall be responsible for plans, programs and implementing the policies.
33. The Executive Committee shall comprise the following members:
 - 33.1. The President, who shall also be the Chairperson;
 - 33.2. 20 representatives from Dzongkhags;
 - 33.3. Secretary General as Member Secretary;
 - 33.4. Head, Research Wing;
 - 33.5. Head, Private Sector Development (business development)
 - 33.6 Women Coordinator

33.7 Youth Coordinator

34. The tenure of the members of the Executive Committee shall not be more than five years and shall be eligible for re-nomination or re-election as applicable.
35. The quorum for the meeting of the Executive Committee shall be two thirds of its members.
36. The Executive Committee shall meet as and when necessary and at least two times in a year. The Executive Committee shall also meet once before the Convention to prepare the agenda for the Session and once after the Convention to discuss the implementation of the resolutions.
37. The Executive Committee may establish such committees for specific tasks, as it deems necessary, and shall specify the extent to which its powers are delegated to the committees. Members to such committees may be co-opted from amongst the general membership of the Party.
38. The Executive Committee shall have full powers to direct and supervise the work of the Party Secretariat in accordance with the rules and policies laid down by the Party Convention and the objectives of the Party.
39. The Chairperson shall assume such powers of the Executive Committee when it is not in session, provided that his or her decisions on these matters are put before the next session of the Executive Committee for endorsement.
40. The Executive Committee may establish branch offices of the Party Secretariat in the country for such purposes as it shall deem necessary, and determine the staffing strength and posts within those branch offices.
41. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to borrow from financial institutions within the country for the purposes of the Party such amount and upon such security as shall be specified in a resolution passed by the Party Convention.
42. The Executive Committee shall have power to sign and execute such deeds, documents and other instruments for the purposes of the Party as shall be specified in a resolution passed by the Party Convention.
43. The duties of the Executive Committee shall inter alia be to:
 - 43.1. elect Party candidates to stand for elections to the National Assembly
 - 43.2. direct and supervise the organization, staffing and finances of the Party;
 - 43.3. finalize the agenda for the Party Convention;

- 43.4. recommend the annual budget for the Party;
- 43.5. initiate and implement political campaigns and action;
- 43.6. receive and review regular reports on the Party's finances from the Treasurer;
- 43.7. review the Party's policies regularly;

- 43.8. direct, control and review the functioning of the Dzongkhag Coordinators and Constituency Committees;
 - 43.9. monitor compliance by the Party and Party candidates nominated to stand for parliamentary elections, of all laws and regulations covering political parties and elections;
 - 43.10. propose to the Party Convention such resolutions and declarations as may be deemed necessary to further the objectives and interests of the Party;
 - 43.11. present to the Party Convention a report on its work since the previous Party Convention, along with a financial statement and audited accounts;
 - 43.12. promote the aims and objectives of the Charter and to take any action it deems necessary for such purpose; and
 - 43.13. make such Rules as it considers necessary for the implementation of the Charter and proper administration and discipline of the Party.

- 44. The Executive Committee shall elect the leader or nominee of the Party as the Prime Minister from amongst the elected Members of the National Assembly who shall then recommend candidates for appointment as Ministers from amongst the elected Members of the National Assembly.

Article VIII: Registered Head Office

- 45. The registered Head Office of the Party shall be the Secretariat of the Party and based in Thimphu.
- 46. The registered Head Office of the Party shall be headed by a Secretary General.
- 47. The Secretariat shall be responsible to conduct the day-to-day functions of the Party.
- 48. The Secretariat shall be headed by a Secretary General who shall manage the affairs of the Party Secretariat with the sole purpose of advancing the interests of the Party.

49. The term for the Secretary General and Treasurer shall be five years from the date of appointment. An outgoing Secretary or Treasurer shall be eligible for re-election.

50. In the event of the post of Secretary General becoming vacant, the Executive Committee shall nominate an Acting Secretary to serve until the next meeting of the Party Convention.

51. The Secretary General shall serve as the Secretary of the Party Convention and Member Secretary of the Executive Committee.

52. The duties of the Secretary shall include to:

52.1. collect and submit agendas to the Executive Committee for Party Convention;

52.2. summon the Party Convention and meetings of the Executive Committee;

52.3. conduct the correspondence of the Party under the directions of the Executive Committee;

52.4. maintain an up-to-date register of Party members;

52.5. keep all members fully informed of all important activities of the Party Convention and the Executive Committee;

52.6. record minutes of the Party Convention and the Executive Committee meetings;

52.7. inform Party members at least one calendar month before the date fixed for the Party Convention, and seven days before the date fixed for a Special Session;

52.8. serve as the spokesperson of the Party;

52.9. manage all affairs of the Party Secretariat, including the performance and conduct of Party Secretariat officials in accordance with the Party Service Manual;

52.10. direct and supervise the work of such branch offices of the Party as may be established by the Executive Committee;

52.11. maintain the records and monitor the functions of the Affiliated Associations.

Article IX: The Dzongkhag Offices

53. A Dzongkhag Office shall be established in each Dzongkhag to coordinate the functions and responsibilities of the constituencies in the Dzongkhags.

54. The Dzongkhag Office shall be headed by a Dzongkhag Coordinator who shall be elected by the Constituency Committee members of that Dzongkhag from among registered members of the Party in that Dzongkhag through secret ballot.

55. The Dzongkhag Coordinator shall inter alia:

55.1. be responsible for the organization and finances of the Constituencies;

55.2. determine Party priorities and propose the annual budget for the Constituencies in consultation with the Constituency Committees;

55.3. coordinate campaigns in the Constituencies during the campaign period as notified;

55.4. register new members to the Party and collect registration and membership fees and receive voluntary contributions on behalf of the Party for which the Party shall make **appropriate rules**;

55.5. promote awareness and understanding of the plans, policies, programs and principles of the Party;

55.6. propose prospective candidates from the constituencies to the Executive Committee for election to the National Assembly;

55.7. submit annual reports on the works of the Dzongkhag Coordination Office and the Constituency Committees to the Executive Committee; and

56. The Dzongkhag Coordinator shall be responsible to the Executive Committee and shall abide by all its decisions.

57. The term of office of the Dzongkhag Coordinator shall be **three years** and shall be eligible for re-election.

58. The Dzongkhag Coordinator shall relinquish office on being voted out by a resolution supported by two-thirds majority of the members of the Constituency Committees in the Dzongkhag. The motion for the resolution must be signed by at least one-third of the members of the Constituency Committees.

59. A bank account shall be maintained for the funds of the Dzongkhag Coordination Office and the Constituency Committees and an annual financial statement shall be submitted to the Executive Committee.

Article X: The Constituency Committees

60. Each Constituency shall have a Constituency Committee comprising:

60.1. up to three representatives from each Gewog within the constituency elected by the Party members registered in the Gewog;

60.2. up to two representatives of the Thromde within the Constituency.

61. The Executive Committee based on voter population and spatial nature of settlements in the

Constituency shall determine the number of Gewog and Thromde representatives in each Constituency.

62. Gewog representatives shall be elected by the registered members of the Party in the respective Gewogs from among registered members of the Gewog through secret ballot.

63. Thromde representatives shall be elected by the registered members of the Party in the Thromde from among registered members of the Party through secret ballot.

64. Constituency Committee members shall serve for a period of **three years**. Its members shall be eligible for re-election, and any casual vacancy amongst members of the Committee shall remain unfilled.

65. Constituency Committee members shall be voted out of office by a two-thirds majority of the registered members of the Party in the Constituency. The motion for the resolution must be signed by at least one-third of the members of the Party in the Constituency,

66. The Constituency Committees shall be responsible to the Executive Committee and shall abide by all its decisions.

67. The Constituency Committee shall be responsible for implementing the Party's policies, plans and programs within the constituency. In particular, the Committee shall:

67.1. promote awareness and understanding of the plans, policies, programs and principles of the Party;

67.2. register new members to the Party and collect registration and membership fees and receive voluntary contributions on behalf of the Party for which the Party shall make appropriate rules;

67.3. submit proposals to promote the aims and objectives of the Party through the Dzongkhag Coordinator.

67.4. propose prospective candidates for their constituencies to the Executive Committee through the Dzongkhag Coordinator;

67.5. initiate and carry out campaigns during the campaign period as notified;

67.6. submit annual reports on its work along with a financial statement of its accounts to the Executive Committee through the Dzongkhag Coordinator,

Article XI: Conduct

68. The Party shall conduct strictly in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Political Parties in all Party affairs.

69. The Party shall abide by all electoral laws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines, Notifications

and Orders of the Election Commission of Bhutan, issued thereunder.

Article XII: Financial Management

70. The overall financial management of the Party shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee.

71. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all the funds of the Party, and shall maintain a proper set of books covering all financial transactions of the Party.

72. The Treasurer shall have a place as of right on any committee appointed to oversee the finances of the Party, and has a right to address any meeting of that committee, or the Executive Committee, on the financial implications of a proposal before the vote on that proposal is taken.

73. At the end of each financial year the Party's accounts are to be audited by an external auditor appointed by Party Convention and whose report is to be embodied in the annual accounts.

74. The Party Convention shall agree on a budget for each financial year and observe the restraints imposed by the budget, and take any action that may be necessary to contain excess of expenditure or manage any shortfall in income.

75. All cheques and other financial instruments shall be duly signed by the Secretary or Treasurer and one of two other signatories authorized by the Executive Committee.

76. The Treasurer shall be responsible for drawing up the Financial Statement and Accounts for presentation to the Executive Committee.

77. The Executive Committee shall appoint an Internal Auditor to audit the financial transactions of the Party.

78. The Party shall not accept any money or assistance from foreign sources including foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, private organizations, private associations, or individuals.

Article XIII: Dissolution of the Party

79. The Party shall stand dissolved as per Section 145 of the Election Bill.

80. The Party may only be dissolved if a proposal to that effect is passed by a three-fourths majority of its members present and voting at a Special Party Convention.

81. Any proposal to dissolve the Party must incorporate proposals for the disposal of the assets and records of the Party.

Article XIV: Amendments and Interpretations

82. This Charter shall only be amended by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a Party Convention. The Executive Committee or any member of the Party may propose amendments to the Charter provided that the proposed amendment shall bear the names and signatures of at least one hundred registered Party members in support of the amendment.
83. In any question of interpretation of this Charter, or where a matter arises in which the Charter is silent, the President of the Party shall give a ruling that may be reversed by a two-third majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Executive Committee.

Initial
Authorised Representative
People's Democratic Party