



MANIFESTO

2018

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PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY

དབང་ཚད་ཕྱིར་སྤེལ།

WANGTSE CHHIRPEL

གཅིག་མཐུན། ཚུ་བརྟན། གོང་འཕེལ།

UNITY. STABILITY. PROSPERITY.



MANIFESTO

2018

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Executive Summary

The 2018 National Assembly election is an important milestone in Bhutan's tryst with democracy. It marks a decade of successful transition to democracy and the beginning of yet another exciting period in our nation's journey. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) had the good fortune to serve as the Opposition in the first five years and as the ruling party in the second five years of democracy. In both the occasions, we have served with humility, putting the interest of the people and the nation above all else.

In 2013 parliamentary elections, the PDP presented an ambitious Manifesto to the people of Bhutan. The Manifesto, an embodiment of our collective aspirations, was a bold dream for a small nation. Yet initially, the Manifesto was received with a mix of doubts and apprehensions. However, as we assumed the responsibilities of governance and started delivering the pledges, it restored the confidence of the people. With the blessings and guidance of His Majesty the King, the life force of our nation, we have strengthened our security and sovereignty in the past five years. We have revived our economy from the brink of crisis. We have consolidated our democracy. Our people have become

more prosperous and confident. Today, our nation is stronger, more resilient and dynamic.

The PDP Manifesto 2018 is even more ambitious and daring than the last one because we believe people of Bhutan deserve nothing less than the best. This Manifesto is an expression of our collective dream for a better, stronger and more prosperous Bhutan. Inspired by His Majesty's vision and our ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel*, people are at the center of the Manifesto. No Bhutanese will be left behind. This Manifesto is our unwavering commitment to ensure and sustain peace, unity, stability, and harmony in our country.

We present you the summary of our national priorities and ambitious yet realistic plan to take our nation forward.

1. Economy

Although our economy is one of the smallest in the world, we have the potential and all the ingredients to become an economic powerhouse in the region. The PDP has identified Five Economic Jewels that would trigger Bhutan's economic growth: Hydropower and Energy; Mining; Agriculture; Tourism; and Cottage, Small



and Medium Enterprises. The first two jewels, hydropower and mining, provide significant resources for development while the other three jewels benefit the people directly through creation and distribution of wealth.

Jewel 1: Hydropower and Energy

Hydropower is the bedrock of our economy. We will pursue a dual plan to develop the hydropower sector to maximize economic returns. We will accelerate measures for timely completion of the hydropower projects under construction to achieve a minimum power generation of 5,000MW by the end of 2022 and simultaneously, initiate and complete the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for all hydropower projects that are techno-economically feasible.

Our vision is to develop Bhutan as a knowledge center for hydropower development and related services both in the region and the world. To this end, we will prioritize development of local capacity to design, develop, build and operate hydropower projects through Druk Green Power Corporation and Construction Development Corporation Limited as local expert institutions. In addition, we will promote clean renewable energy technologies with special focus on renewable energy resources like solar, wind, biomass, small hydro and other emerging modern fuels as sources for

energy generation. By the end of 2023, we will ensure electrification of all households in the country.

Jewel 2: Mining

Mines and minerals are scarce national resources that must be sustainably harnessed, keeping in mind the needs of future generations. We will undertake comprehensive geological mapping of all crucial mineral resources in the entire country. The State Mining Corporation (SMC) will be strengthened to be a model mining company in the country and all proceeds of the SMC will go to the education ministry mainly to finance central schools.

The benefits from the mining sector must also spread across all sections of our society, particularly those communities affected by mining activities. To this end, we will ensure local communities are the primary beneficiaries in the mining sector. We will encourage community ownership of mines and develop modalities for local communities to own shares in mining companies.

Jewel 3: Agriculture

Agriculture is an important source of livelihood for a majority of Bhutan's population. We will continue to invest in agriculture through improved land management use, farm mechanization and commercial farming to meet economy of



scale.

We will strive to achieve food self-sufficiency across all major food items in the next five years. We will promote commercial farming through farm mechanization and suitable agricultural technologies, primarily to substitute import and enhance export of agricultural produce. We will promote private ownership of power tillers by subsidizing the cost and facilitate access to finance for agricultural enterprises through Priority Sector Lending (PSL), Rural Enterprise Development Corporation Limited (REDCL), micro-finance programs and Bhutan Development Bank Limited (BDBL). We will provide one more power tiller to every chiwog and ensure that every chiwog has a minimum of two power tillers.

To facilitate agriculture trade and business, we will introduce Guaranteed Buy-back Scheme of agricultural produce. Large areas of our limited arable land are fallow. We will ensure cultivation of all fallow lands in the country. We will construct 700kms of new irrigation channels to irrigate about 50,000 acres of land in the next five years. We will support youth engaged in the agriculture sector.

We will offer land on lease to encourage youth to take up agriculture. Such opportunities will also be extended to retired civil servants and retired armed

force personnel who want to take up commercial farming.

Jewel 4: Tourism

We will continue to pursue 'High Value, Low Impact' tourism policy. Tourism sector needs to be further boosted to cater to the increasing number of tourists visiting Bhutan. The PDP will designate industry status to the tourism sector by passing a Tourism Act. To diversify the benefits of tourism, we will open all dzongkhags to tourism. In addition, we will identify a tourism product or service for every dzongkhag and brand and market each dzongkhag accordingly. We will open all southern gateways to facilitate arrival and departure of tourists.

We will explore the possibilities of constructing additional domestic airports in eastern Bhutan to encourage tourism in the east. We will expand Gelephu Domestic Airport to handle landing of Airbus aircrafts in situation when landing is not possible in Paro. This would be the first step towards expanding the Gelephu Airport into an international one. We will buy additional helicopters to enhance domestic helicopter service and tourism.

Jewel 5: Cottage, Small and Medium Enterprises

The Cottage, Small, and Medium Enterprises (CSME) have huge potential to create wealth and jobs. The PDP recognizes



this sector as an important aspect of our economy. We will facilitate access to finance for CSME through Priority Sector Lending (PSL), REDCL, microfinances and BDBL financial products. We will continue to enhance REDCL to provide finances for CSME and non-formal rural economic activities at a low interest rate of 4% and without collateral. The REDCL will be expanded and it will offer a separate program for the youth and a separate program for women. We will support startup initiatives through support services such as capacity building, access to finance, obtaining clearance and licenses and establishing linkages.

2. Private Sector Development

We are yet to harness the full potential of the private sector. We recognize a lot must be done to stimulate growth in the private sector. We will strengthen the Better Business Council as an apex policy discussion forum between various stakeholders including the government. We will review legislations and rules and regulations to remove bottlenecks and red tape that affect business growth. We will review regulations to address double taxation.

We will simplify procedures to make businesses friendlier and ensure Bhutan's international ranking of Ease of Doing Business reaches the top 50th position in

the world. We will operationalize the four Industrial Parks of Bondeyma (Mongar), Dhamdum (Samtse), Jigmeling (Sarpang) and Motanga (Samdrup Jongkhar). In addition, we will develop mini-industrial estates in every dzongkhag. To enhance exports, we will upscale Brand Bhutan Initiative, incentivize businesses that promote exports, and diversify locally produced construction materials to reduce import of raw materials. We will promote employment creation in the construction industry by incentivizing construction companies that employ Bhutanese work force.

To address problems related to access to finance, we will facilitate access to cheaper loans and capital through REDCL and Priority Sector Lending (PSL). We will review Minimum Lending Rates (MLR) in close consultation with the central bank and explore all options to continue lowering the commercial lending rates of loans and credits. We will also review and increase the loan equity for public transport buses, taxis and trucks from the current 30% to 70%.

3. Quality Healthcare For All

Good health is a prerequisite to lead a happy and meaningful life. As mandated by the Constitution, all Bhutanese will be guaranteed free healthcare services for all



times to come as a gift from the golden throne. We will set the highest standard in healthcare with trained and motivated workforce and modern healthcare facilities, to provide reliable, quality and equal care. We aim to double the Health Trust Fund to Nu 4 billion in the next five years to ensure that our healthcare remains sustainable and free for all times to come.

We will establish two additional referral hospitals in the country and empower all referral hospitals to refer patients abroad. We will institute a welfare office in every regional and referral hospitals to provide assistance to poor patients and the families of the dead. We will strengthen JDWRNH with greater autonomy and financial resources to improve the quality of healthcare services.

We will ensure every district hospital has at least one medical specialist, one Gynecologist, and three doctors along with adequate nurses and technicians. All district hospitals would be equipped with diagnostic facilities and treatment services such as proper OT facilities, X-ray, ECG, lab facilities, dental and blood bank etc. We will establish a mobile clinic unit in every district hospital to periodically reach healthcare services to remote communities, elderly citizens and people in retreats. In addition, we will initiate special mobile health camps providing comprehensive diagnostic services (such as endoscopy) in

rural villages.

Given the significance of BHUs, we will appoint one doctor, two nurses and suitable number of technicians in every BHU. Every BHU would be equipped with minimum healthcare facility and treatment services such as OT facilities for minor operations, X-ray, ultra-sound, and blood-testing facilities. We will provide one ambulance to every gewog. We will expand health Outreach Clinics (ORC) to chiwog and village level.

To meet the increasing HR needs in the health sector, we will enhance post-graduate and specialization programs at the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB). We will start MBBS program at KGUMSB and increase international scholarships for MBBS students.

We will make JDWRNH into a 'Super Specialist' hospital. In particular, JDWRNH will offer tertiary services in ENT, Ophthalmology, mother and child services, organ transplant, and Oncology. To facilitate JDWRNH to become a super specialist hospital, we will build one new referral hospital in Thimphu.

4. Education That Matters

Education is at the heart of PDP's agenda. We have designed a cradle-to-college plan that emphasizes on early childcare and



development and lifelong learning through schools to colleges, and thereafter.

We will establish a central school in every gewog. Currently, there are 63 central schools. We will not close down any school. Instead, we will provide central school facilities to all primary schools. We will provide day meals in all schools in the country. We will establish Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) center in all 1,044 chiwogs in the country.

We will establish one Special Education Needs School in every dzongkhag to provide equal access to education for children with learning difficulties and special needs. We will establish three schools specialized in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); two schools specialized in promotion of performing arts; and three sports academies to promote sports.

We will set up smart classrooms and intensify ICT in teaching-learning process and ICT integrated teaching pedagogy and connect all schools with high-speed Internet connectivity. We will provide one laptop for every teacher. We will declare Saturdays as off days for schools, allowing them to pursue enrichment programs. On top of that, we will reduce teacher workload through one-teacher-one-subject policy and 18 hours contact teaching in a week. We will appoint Dzongkha language

teachers in missions abroad and in places where there is high concentration of Bhutanese.

5. An Effective Civil Service

The civil service continues to play a major role in implementing development plans and activities and in the delivery of critical public services to the people. The PDP recognizes the important role of the civil service machinery and the contribution of the civil servants.

We will initiate affordable housing program leading up to homeownership for civil servants. We will raise the vehicle quota from Nu 800,000 to Nu 1,500,000 and provide one-time vehicle quota of Nu 1,500,000 to civil servants who are not eligible for vehicle quota. We will raise TA/DA and mileage for civil servants in the lower category and make it equal across the board.

We will introduce retirement benefits and pension and PF schemes for ESP/GSP level civil servants. We will raise the salaries of the civil servants and ensure that the pay revision benefits mid and lower level civil servants the most. We will establish crèche services in government offices to cater to the needs of parents with toddlers and babies. We will review and raise the salaries and benefits of the corporate sector.



6. Youth, Our National Asset

Almost half of Bhutan's population is below the age of 26 years. They are our nation's wealth, our future. We are committed to creating favorable conditions for youth to get a good start in life. We believe our youth are our strength and solutions to our nation's problems. We will continue investing in our youth and equip them with skills, knowledge and values that will help them shape their own future, a better future.

We will support every youth to secure employment through a dedicated office. We will provide unemployment and sustenance allowance for youth who have been actively seeking employment for over one year and support them through appropriate measures to get employed. We will work towards eliminating school drop out rate at all levels of schooling and tertiary education and enhance access to college and university education through loans, grants and scholarships. We will empower youth with disabilities and enable them to live with dignity through entrepreneurship trainings, provision of low interest loans and special allowances. We will initiate youth discount schemes for students and young people for public transport and other government services.

7. Employment: Meaningful Jobs for All

We will continue to prioritize jobs creation and meaningful employment for all, with renewed focus on creating employment opportunities for our young people. We will continue to prioritize vocational skills development and training given its immense opportunity in transforming the Bhutanese workforce and in generating employment opportunities. Our main focus will be on market driven skills development to facilitate immediate employment of vocational graduates in the industry.

We will develop a long-term National Workforce Plan to map jobs and forecast the labor market. We will continue to implement Direct Employment Program to ensure jobseekers are readily absorbed in the labor market. We will expand the Overseas Employment Program by exploring international labor markets and collaborating with credible employment agencies to secure well-paying and meaningful jobs for our youth. We will introduce reintegration program to be implemented by a dedicated office to facilitate jobs creation for Bhutanese returning home after working abroad.



8. A Better Place For Our Women and Children

Women and children will always remain at the center of our policy. Empowerment of women must happen at all fronts - equal rights, greater economic opportunities, access to quality healthcare and education, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. We shall continue our efforts to empower our women to become strong, independent and equal players in our society.

We will establish a Mother and Child Hospital dedicated to the healthcare needs of mothers and children, and establish crèche services in all government ministries, departments and autonomous agencies. We will establish an Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) center in every chiwog.

We will promote and facilitate babysitting and caregiving services through trainings and incentives to relieve working mothers of their domestic responsibilities. We will increase paternity leave to one month to ensure fathers have more time to support the family during childbirth.

We will institute special support schemes for single mothers in need to enable them to live with dignity and invest in vocational

skills training for unemployed women.

9. Social Security: Protecting Your Interest

Even as we pursue an inclusive and equitable development, certain sections of the society are unfortunately left by the wayside, struggling to meet ends. We will, therefore, ensure that no one is left behind. Every Bhutanese must be able to lead a secure and dignified life.

To this end, we will initiate social security and pension schemes for senior citizens who are 65 years and above and provide sustenance allowance to those without care providers through Senior Citizen Care Program.

We will introduce special social security schemes for people living with disabilities such as disability allowances, equal pay and employment opportunities, and non-discriminatory rules for employment. We will ensure people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have access to cheap and affordable housing.

We will introduce social protection mechanisms to support single mothers without proper source of income and livelihood opportunities and invest in skills development and training for single mothers.



10. Empowering Gewogs

We will prioritize gewog development by making substantial investments to make life more meaningful for people living in gewogs and chiwogs across the country. We will increase the Gewog Development Grant (GDG) to Nu. 5 million from Nu. 2 million. We will initiate One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) program in all 205 gewogs. In addition, we will support a 20 million project in each gewog.

We will ensure that every gewog has a minimum infrastructure such as helipad, communal warehouse, fuel depot, farm shop, waste management unit, and automobile workshop and repair centers for power tillers and farm machineries. We will construct an integrated meeting hall and an Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) Center in every chiwog. We will expand farm shops in every gewog. We will provide an additional power tiller to every chiwog to ensure a minimum of two power tillers in every chiwog. We will expand the electric fencing program. We will establish central schools in every gewog.

We will ensure all Gewog Center roads are properly maintained and all major farm roads at least have a base course (if not blacktopped) and proper drainage system to ensure the roads are pliable throughout the year. We will provide one backhoe excavator to every gewog to maintain farm

roads. We will provide public transport services to all gewogs.

11. Empowering Thromdes

Thromdes are important local government institutions responsible for planning and implementing development plans for urban centers, and in providing public services to urban residents. Today, a large number of Bhutanese, close to 22% of the entire population, resides in the four Thromdes of Thimphu, Phuentsholing, Samdrup Jongkhar and Gelephu. The growing population density in these Thromdes requires bigger investments in infrastructure development and public amenities and services to meet the emerging needs.

We will ensure all households in the Thromdes have 24x7 water supply. We will ensure that roads within the Thromde areas are of high quality and maintained properly throughout the year. We will expand amenities such as footpath, street lighting, sewer networks etc. to make the cities livable and resident friendly. We will create more parking spaces for motor vehicles in the Thromdes and install Quick Charging Stations for electric vehicles. We will explore ways to ease the housing problems in Thromdes by constructing cheap housing through public-private partnership model and other viable models.



For the capital Thimphu city, we will ensure 24x7 water supply. We will reduce traffic jams by building additional roads, flyovers, pedestrian bridges and parking space. To address the growing waste problem in the capital city, we will enhance waste collection and waste management efforts.

12. Empowering Dzongkhags

The dzongkhag administration has to be strong and independent to ensure that benefits trickle down to the grassroots in an effective manner. The PDP shall prioritize strengthening of the dzongkhag administration by providing necessary infrastructure, resources and facilities. We will ensure each dzongkhag comes up with its own economic plan to enhance the dzongkhag's productivity cutting across all sectors. We will initiate One-Dzongkhag-One-Project (ODOP) through which the Dzongkhag administration will identify one unique project (commercial or cooperative). We will identify and develop an industrial area for every dzongkhag. We will create 12,000 jobs in 20 dzongkhags over the next five years.

Every dzongkhag will have a cinema hall, waste management unit or facility, proper public toilets and sanitary complex, and warehouse and cold storage facilities. We will expand and build new terminals for public transport buses and parking space for taxis and trucks. We will ensure that at least one football ground in every

dzongkhag has an artificial turf. We will establish Dzongkhag Information and Service Center to facilitate provision of integrated public service delivery.

13. Flagship Programs for Economic Development

We have identified 11 flagship programs to transform the Bhutanese economy and ensure Bhutan's graduation from the list of LDC countries. The Flagship Programs would also ensure that Bhutan achieves its developmental goals in a sustainable manner.

a. National Homeownership Program

We will establish a national agency to spearhead the National Homeownership Program. The National Agency shall work closely with the National Pension and Provident Fund (NPPF) and/or financial institutions to offer homeownership packages to the civil service and the corporate sector. For the private sector, the national agency shall come up with different homeownership packages in collaboration with Financial Institutions. We will provide financial subsidies and loan schemes for people in the rural areas without homes. We will ensure all Bhutanese living across the border in Jaigaon are provided affordable housing within Bhutan.



b. Water for Every Household 24x7

The goal of this flagship program is straightforward – to ensure that each and every house in Bhutan has access to safe drinking water, 24x7. We will establish National Water Commission. We will prioritize access to alternative drinking water sources.

Top priority shall be accorded to rainwater harvesting and groundwater development. We will rehabilitate and build infrastructure to ensure quality and reliable water supply. We will construct 700kms of new irrigation channels to irrigate about 50,000 acres of land. We will adopt new irrigation and water efficient technologies. We will double our efforts to protect and manage catchment areas and water sources.

c. National Highland Development Program

The highland communities are an integral part of Bhutan's unique socio-cultural landscape. It's important for us to ensure that the traditional way of life in the highlands is preserved. This flagship program would create socioeconomically vibrant highland communities with sustainable livelihood. To this end, we will ensure that the highland communities have access to proper housing and shelter, quality education and health facilities, and ICT and recreational facilities. Targeted and customized interventions will be offered based on the specific needs of the

highland communities. We will initiate various economic projects to enhance livelihood opportunities for the highland communities.

d. Startup Bhutan

This national program will serve as a single window providing a platform to transform business ideas into reality. Startup Bhutan will be a semi-autonomous agency and will serve as a single point of contact for the entire startup ecosystem and one-stop-shop for all startups.

We will establish an incubation center to provide facilities for idea generation and provide logistical support for startup like office space, equipment etc. We will help entrepreneurs before the startup, in the process of the startup, and after the startup to ensure startup businesses grow and prosper.

We will support startups in accessing finance, loans, obtaining clearances, license, intellectual property rights etc. We will facilitate international networking, networking events with investors and experience sharing, etc.

e. One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP)

Despite notable improvements in the agriculture sector, there are still daunting challenges. A lot needs to be done to create effective and efficient linkages between the farmers and the market. This calls for development of value chain systems for



products of small-scale farmers. Today, 80 gewogs in the country have OGOP products. The PDP will upscale it and take it to all the 205 gewogs in the country. Every gewog would come up with a product that can be marketed within and outside the country.

We will provide support for production, processing, packaging and labeling, standard setting and marketing of the identified products. We will provide technology support in production and post-production of agricultural products.

f. Digital Drukyul

The PDP strongly believes that e-governance is the future. In today's world, ICT offers the tools to make public service delivery effective and efficient. Digital Drukyul program will enhance use of ICT to improve public service delivery. We will simplify and streamline public service delivery by using ICT platforms and upscale e-governance and streamline efforts to go paperless.

We will establish one Digital Identity for all online services and integrated Business Licensing System.

We will establish Digital Health system and introduce e-patient record management system. We will introduce vehicle tracking system to track vehicles to address vehicular crimes and maintain vehicle statistics.

g. Tourism

We will continue to pursue 'High Value, Low Impact' tourism policy. Tourism sector needs to be further boosted to cater to the increasing number of tourists visiting Bhutan. The PDP will designate industry status to the tourism sector by passing a Tourism Act.

To diversify the benefits of tourism, we will open all dzongkhags to tourism. In addition, we will identify a tourism product or service for every dzongkhag and brand and market each dzongkhag accordingly. We will open all southern gateways to facilitate arrival and departure of tourists.

We will explore the possibilities of constructing additional domestic airports in eastern Bhutan to encourage tourism in the east. We will expand Gelephu Domestic Airport to handle landing of Airbus aircrafts in situation when landing is not possible in Paro. This would be the first step towards expanding the Gelephu Airport into an international one. We will buy additional helicopters to enhance domestic helicopter service and tourism.

h. Organic Bhutan

We strongly believe that Bhutan has huge potential to go completely organic. It will complement the objectives to enhance food security and livelihood by creating opportunities in the agriculture sector.



We will ensure that the entire country goes fully organic.

We will identify priority organic produce or products for every dzongkhag for commercial farming. We will support local organic production through access and availability to organic farm inputs and improve access and availability to organic seeds, bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers, feed and fodder and replace pesticides with bio pesticides.

i. Central Schools

The central schools have been instituted to address the issue of informal boarding, maintaining right class size and efficient deployment of teachers. The central and autonomous schools have instilled significant good practices compared to non-central schools. We will establish a central school in every gewog and provide central school facilities to all primary schools.

j. Rural Enterprise Program

This is a multifaceted initiative that will promote and create opportunities for rural enterprises. It shall include cottage and small industries and all areas in the primary sector, which comprises the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) sector, agricultural sector, and livestock and forestry sectors.

We will initiate the RNR Enterprise Development Program (RNR-EDP) to

facilitate all enterprises engaged in RNR-related business. The RNR-EDP shall facilitate greater investment and more private sector participation to create a vibrant agro-industry in the country. We will establish selected RNR Enterprises in different dzongkhags around the country, based on market dynamics and availability of raw materials. The enterprises will be based on PPP model.

k. Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation will always remain a major priority for future governments. In the past five years, the poverty rate declined to single digit at 8.2% in 2017 from 12% in 2012.

We will target to bring down poverty levels below 5% in the next five years. This will be achieved through multi-pronged poverty reduction strategies and targeted interventions at the poorest communities in the country.

We will also upscale interventions in regions where poverty is more pronounced and speed up growth through various rural development programs.

We will develop targeted interventions in dzongkhags with high prevalence of poverty and develop specific livelihood interventions targeted at the poorest communities in the country.



Conclusion

We have completed 10 years of democracy. But we still have a long way to go. Our journey has only begun. It has to continue and it must continue in the right direction, in the direction of the future we all want and aspire for.

Our Manifesto is an extension of our people's collective dreams. The foundations have been laid for our nation to soar towards the sky. The opportunities are

boundless. We must continue to harness these opportunities to build a stronger nation, to strengthen our security and sovereignty, and to ensure that our children's future is secured.

The people of Bhutan deserve to enjoy a nation envisaged by our beloved monarchs and the PDP shall always endeavor to fulfill the noble aspirations of our Golden Throne.



Dedicated to the Kings and People of Bhutan



The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has been privileged to receive the overwhelming mandate to represent and serve the people of Bhutan as the ruling party for the five years of Bhutan's second democratic government from 2013 to 2018. During our term in office, we have served the Tsa Wa Sum with the collective conscience of the people of our beloved dragon Kingdom and always placed the national interest above all else.

As the first political party of Bhutan, the PDP has always been inspired by the national development philosophy of

Gross National Happiness (GNH) and has worked towards improving the wellbeing of the people.

Our nation has been lucky to be blessed by the omniscient Guru Rinpoche, the omnipotent Zhabdrung and several other Buddhist masters and their blessings have manifested in the form of our benevolent Kings who have sacrificed their lives for the betterment of this wonderful nation. We have been fortunate to have Kings who served us rather than rule us.

As the nation prepares for the third



democratic elections in 2018, we have to go back to 1907 – the historic year when our ancestors unanimously elected Druk Gyalpo Ugyen Wangchuck and entrusted in him the confidence and the responsibility to lead this nation into posterity. It was a decision not made by the people of Bhutan but by the gods and Bhutan was then gifted with the visionary Wangchuck Kings who worked tirelessly for more than a century to build our beloved nation.

A century of hardship later when leaders around the world were struggling to remain in power, our visionary Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, gave back the power to the people by introducing democracy in 2008. His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck took it a step further and consolidated the new democratic Kingdom by nurturing democratic institutions and gave it a modern dimension with the signature vision of our beloved monarchs. His Majesty has stood tall against all odds and continues to be the inspiration for all Bhutanese to contribute to the nation building process.

The term *Wangtse Chhirpel* was coined even before the introduction of democracy. Through the ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel*, PDP aspires to take forward the process of devolution of power, empowering our

people to self-determine not just their own governments but also their destiny. *Wangtse Chhirpel* empowers people for liberty, equality and prosperity by devolving power and authority from the center to the people.

As the nation gears towards another election, the PDP dedicates our blueprint for the nation's development in the form of this manifesto to our beloved and benevolent monarchs and to the people of Bhutan who deserve to have the best democratic form of governance in the spirit blessed by our monarchs.

This manifesto is PDP's vision for Bhutan for the next five years. It is drawn from the wisdom of our monarchs and is inspired by the steadfast commitment towards all the Bhutanese people.

For centuries, Bhutan has braved all challenges and remained a proud nation. We have a unique spiritual heritage that has unified us. Our culture and tradition has kept us intact from all foreign influences. We have converted challenges into opportunities and we have not only survived but also thrived amid insurmountable circumstances and we have always welcomed changing times by adapting to it in our own ways.

We offer our tribute and dedicate this manifesto to our Dragon Kings who have



inspired all generations of Bhutanese people and kept this country unified. Our Kings have sacrificed everything to ensure that the people of this country lead normal lives, to ensure that our farmers till their land in peace, to ensure that the parents send their kids to school for free, to ensure that the sick are attended to and our Kings have taken upon themselves to safeguard our small nation against all threats, both internal and external, and shouldered responsibilities we can hardly fathom.

We also dedicate this manifesto to all Bhutanese people who contribute to the process of nation building in their own unique ways. We dedicate this manifesto to our mothers who sacrifice everything to feed their babies. We dedicate this manifesto to our rural farmers who work under harsh weather conditions, to our teachers who inspire our kids, to our business people who work round the clock, to our doctors who save lives, to our engineers who build this nation, to our clergy who pray for this nation, to our civil servants who run this nation and to everyone else who works to keep their kitchen fire burning.

The PDP family would like to submit this manifesto to the people of Bhutan for consideration with the belief that Bhutan deserves a good government.



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Tshering Tobgay
President
People's Democratic Party

Message from the PRESIDENT

All of us, Bhutanese, dream to serve our beloved nation. This dream unites us. This is a dream that we share because our country has provided for us. It has given us free education. It has given us free healthcare. It has given us our identity, our culture and our tradition that we cherish so much. This dream is the inspiration of our beloved Kings who have given us a nation we are proud of.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has been fortunate to have lived this dream to serve as the ruling party for five years from 2013 to 2018. In our tenure in the government, we have worked hard to live up to the expectation of this dream. We worked tirelessly and dedicatedly because we knew the weight of the responsibility that came when people elected us to run the government.

We offer our deepest respects to the Golden Throne for providing us with the motivation and the inspiration to serve the people of this great nation.

Personally, I have been honored to serve the nation as the second Prime Minister of democratic Bhutan. Everyday, for the past five years, I have begun my day with my prayers to *Kenchosum* and our guardian deities and I have prayed for the wellbeing of our nation and the long life of our Majesties. Everyday, in my prayers, I have thanked my parents, my teachers, my guru, my



well wishers and all my fellow citizens and I have prayed that the sun of peace and happiness shine over the people of Bhutan for all times to come. I also prayed to the guardian deities to aid and guide me in shouldering the overwhelming responsibility of serving our beloved nation.

We, Bhutanese, have been very fortunate to be born in a land where we have always had Bodhisattva Kings. Our Kings have always been our inspiration. During the coronation speech at the Changlimithang on November 7, 2008, His Majesty said, “Throughout my reign I will never rule you as a King. I will protect you as a parent, care for you as a brother and serve you as a son. I shall give you everything and keep nothing; I shall live such a life as a good human being that you may find it worthy to serve as an example for your children; I have no personal goals other than to fulfill your hopes and aspirations. I shall always serve you, day and night, in the spirit of kindness, justice and equality.” These words of His Majesty echoed with every Bhutanese heart.

Unlike other democracies around the world, ours was not a result of a struggle. It came at the best of times. It came as a gift from the Throne. The Golden Throne called upon the people to embrace democracy and the people of Bhutan did so. Our people contributed in their own ways. When we became a democracy in

2008, a 65-year-old woman, Tshewang Dema, answered the call of the Throne to participate in the democratic process and walked more than 600 kilometers from capital Thimphu all the way to Trashiyangtse just to cast her vote.

The PDP became the first political party in 2007 when His Majesty the Fourth King introduced parliamentary democracy. Our people gave us 33% of the national vote in 2008 and we served the nation as a humble two-member opposition. In 2013, the citizens of Bhutan gave the PDP an overwhelming 54.88% of the votes and the honor to serve the Tsa Wa Sum as the second democratically elected government. In the past 10 years, we have served our nation in the capacity of the world’s smallest opposition and also as the ruling party.

Today, Bhutan has reached a point from where it will only grow and all this has been possible with the visionary guidance of His Majesty, the wishful prayers of our clergy and the hard work of all our fellow citizens.

As we approach the third democratic elections in 2018, the PDP has put together, yet again, a crop of experienced and dynamic leaders who have pledged to serve the people of Bhutan with full dedication. The PDP candidates are united in the belief that the people of Bhutan deserve no less than peace, prosperity and happiness



envisaged by the Golden Throne through our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness.

We are united through our ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel* and believe in empowering people for liberty, equality and prosperity by devolving power and authority from the center to the people. The PDP would like to congratulate and welcome all the political parties taking part in the third democratic elections. We strongly believe that all political parties contribute equally to the process of nation building by providing the much needed political and leadership choice to our people.

We also believe and call upon all the political parties to campaign, contest and deliberate towards the election in the spirit of Bhutanese brotherhood to ensure that the elections are free and fair. We call upon the political parties to ensure that the politicking process does not divide our society but rather offer a credible platform for our people to cast their franchise responsibly. We call upon the people of Bhutan to exercise their franchise and do so responsibly.

The PDP family is honored to offer

our pledge to work towards making His Majesty's vision of Gross National Happiness a reality. PDP pledges to serve His Majesty with loyalty and devotion. PDP pledges to serve the people of Bhutan with dedication and humility. We offer our pledge to bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. This manifesto has been prepared with the experience of having served in the parliament for 10 years, after a wide range of consultations with experts and in consultation with the people from all walks of life. This manifesto aspires to meet the aspirations of the people of Bhutan. On behalf of all the PDP candidates, I offer this manifesto to seek your blessings to fulfill the dreams for a prosperous Bhutan, a better Bhutan.

Tashi Delek!



Tshering Tobgay
President
People's Democratic Party





1.1 Our Monarchy: the Life Force of Our Nation

Our Monarchy has been selfless and uncompromising in keeping Bhutan a united, peaceful and sovereign nation. Forward looking in their vision, our Monarchs introduced major political reforms, laying strong foundations of democracy.

The Third Druk Gyalpo instituted the National Assembly with people's representatives. The Fourth Druk Gyalpo introduced decentralization and democracy. And His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck consolidated our democratic institutions and continues to guide and steer our democracy forward.

The Wangchuck Dynasty has always prioritized the welfare and wellbeing of the Bhutanese people above everything else. Under the guidance of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, *Kidu* has been institutionalized taking welfare to the doorsteps of every needy citizen in the country. At times of disaster, His Majesty has been the first to reach the people offering them comfort and helping them rebuild lives. He has always reached out to our young people inspiring them to envision a prosperous Bhutan, which they can build together. During His reign, relations with India, our closest neighbor and friend, has been strengthened not allowing it to strain under any

circumstance. He has been Bhutan's best ambassador to the world presenting a country with a noble vision for the wellbeing of all humanity.

1.2 A Committed Civil Service

Our Monarchs instituted, with utmost care, a bureaucracy that is honest, dedicated and that shares a common vision for the future. Our civil servants, across all levels, have proved to be one of the best, with the interest of the nation always as their top most priority. We have the brightest and the best, from planners, engineers, and economists to administrators that a nation can wish for. Despite challenges that have sometimes undermined their role and despite unreasonable expectations, they have kept their spirits up and contributed immensely in executing development plans and activities and in achieving the vision of Gross National Happiness.

1.3 Steadfast Judiciary

The judiciary has been steadfast in discharging justice, setting the right precedent without fear or favor. Over the years, the judiciary has, time and again, proved to the nation that it is committed to dispensing justice without prejudice. The judiciary has been the trusted custodian of our sacred Constitution and it has upheld its constitutional mandate. After democracy, the judiciary has upheld people's democratic rights and contributed to the process of nation building by



upholding the rule of law.

1.4 Fearless ACC

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), since its inception in 2006, has embraced an uphill battle to fight all kinds of corruption in Bhutan. Despite insurmountable challenges, the ACC has been steadfast in its mandate to root out corruption. It has taken up cases of all nature, from small cases to investigating policy corruption, cases involving private individuals to ministers. The ACC has not deterred in its duty, reinforcing people's faith in the institution time and again.

1.5 Strong Election Commission

The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) has successfully overseen two parliamentary elections in 2008 and 2013 including two Local Government elections. It is well poised to oversee the third elections in 2018. All these elections have been successful, impressing locals and the international community. The ECB has functioned with integrity, ensuring free and fair elections and strengthening the credibility of democratic process.

1.6 Resilient Private Sector

The private sector is the backbone of our economy. After democracy in 2008, the private sector has experienced turbulent times with the rupee crisis, the construction industry coming to a halt,



The People's Democratic Party applauds all our institutions in upholding the highest values of democracy and making our Constitution a living document. Our party shall continue to support and further strengthen all our democratic institutions for a harmonious, prosperous and just Bhutan.

major upheavals in foreign exchange and unfavorable financial climate. But the private sector has braved all challenges and continues to grow. Despite being a small economy, our private sector comprises hardworking business people and entrepreneurs who continue to infuse fresh ideas into business. The private sector continues to invest, create employment opportunities and pay taxes. The PDP honors their resilience and commits to further empower the private sector.

1.7 Proactive Civil Society

Our civil society organizations, small and big, have played a huge role in providing



support to the needy and hope for those in distress. Their role has been immense in supporting women, fighting domestic violence and lifting people from poverty. They have nurtured new entrepreneurs helping many take the road towards prosperity. Without much fanfare, our CSOs have been playing a crucial role in working towards achieving the overarching goals of Gross National Happiness.

1.8 Vigilant Media

After the advent of the private media in 2006, the Bhutanese media grew by leaps and bounds proliferating in numbers and advancing free speech and the fundamental rights to freedom of expression. But the private media soon started grappling with sustainability issues. Yet it did not stop our young media from performing its watchdog role. It questioned the government, exposed corruption, applauded the right policies and kept on keeping the people informed. The media has not deterred in its task of writing the first draft of history without fear or favor.

The People's Democratic Party applauds all our institutions in upholding the highest values of democracy and making our Constitution a living document. Our party shall continue to support and further strengthen all our democratic institutions for a harmonious, prosperous and just Bhutan.



PART II

2. Why PDP

In 2013 parliamentary elections, the people of Bhutan entrusted the overwhelming mandate and responsibility to form the government to the PDP. It was the greatest honor for the PDP. And from the day we assumed office, we have taken this responsibility as an opportunity to serve the Tsa Wa Sum. We have further consolidated and strengthened our national security and sovereignty. The PDP government rolled out the biggest ever plan budget and facilitated the largest ever grant Bhutan ever received. We have revived our economy, which is now stable. We expanded road networks in the country. We electrified 99.9% of households across the country. We improved agriculture production enhancing our food self-sufficiency levels. In short, our nation prospered. We grew stronger as a nation in the past five years. Today, we are more optimistic and confident to face the future. But this is not the success of the PDP government alone. It is the collective success of every citizen.



2.1 PDP – The Party

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) became the first political party of Bhutan in the run up to the 2008 elections when it was formed in March 2007. The party was formally registered as the first political party by the Election Commission of Bhutan on September 1, 2007.

In the first democratic elections in 2008, the PDP secured two seats in the 47-member National Assembly and formed the smallest opposition party in the world. The member elect of Sombaykha Constituency from Haa, Tshering Tobgay, became the Opposition Leader. He went on to assume the role of the party president.

In the second parliamentary elections in 2013, the PDP won the elections securing 32 of the 47 seats in the National Assembly. Party President Tshering Tobgay became the second democratically elected Prime Minister of Bhutan. The PDP also won one more seat in the North Thimphu bye-elections in November 2016 taking the total ruling seats to 33.

2.1.1 Our Vision

A country with secured sovereignty that is economically vibrant, environmentally rich, socio-culturally just and harmonious, politically united that enables the pursuit of happiness by every Bhutanese.

2.1.2 Our Mission

- *To guard and strengthen sovereignty, national security, unity, peace, stability*

and integrity of the Kingdom.

- *To ensure that every Bhutanese can enjoy security, welfare and prosperity.*
- *To provide equal opportunity to everyone to enable them to develop their full potential to contribute to the process of nation building and to enable them to live a happy and meaningful life.*
- *To preserve and promote social and family values, tradition and culture, religion and spirituality to enrich the life of every Bhutanese.*
- *To conserve the pristine environment in harmony with socioeconomic development.*
- *To accelerate regionally balanced and equitable socioeconomic growth across the Kingdom.*
- *To build a fair and just society with equal opportunities to all Bhutanese.*
- *To expand and improve the quality of health and education services and public amenities and infrastructure.*
- *To encourage active participation of women in political, social and economic affairs.*
- *To empower the youth through requisite knowledge, skills and values for employment opportunities.*
- *To promote goodwill and cooperation with other nations, including the time-tested friendship with India, and respect for international laws and obligations.*



2.1.3 Our Symbol



PDP's election symbol is a white horse trotting confidently. It represents PDP's resolve to serve all people equally, regardless of economic, social, regional, cultural and religious differences. The color white signifies clear vision, transparency and our uncompromising stance against all forms of corruption.

2.1.4 Our Ideology - Wangtse Chhirpel

Empowering people for liberty, equality and prosperity by devolving power and authority from the center to the people.

The ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel* lies in the belief that people know what is best for them. It believes that policymakers at the central government should only facilitate and help people organize and implement their aspirations. The principle of *Wangtse Chhirpel* lies in devolving power to democratic institutions as defined by the Constitution. It believes that the

government should not interfere but instead facilitate governance.

2.1.5 Our Guiding Philosophy

GNH is the legacy of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo and it transcends ideologies. No political party can claim ownership over it. It is a profound philosophy that places people's happiness at the center of all development priorities. We are extremely proud of our development philosophy and will always be inspired and guided by it. The People's Democratic Party's ideology, *Wangtse Chhirpel*, draws inspiration from the profound philosophy of Gross National Happiness. Though theorizing about GNH and placing the idea for the world is necessary, PDP believes in the simple premise on which it is constructed. As His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has succinctly said: GNH is Development with Values.

2.1.6 Our Values

PDP believes in prosperity for all. And our pursuance of social and economic development should mirror the values of liberty, justice, equal opportunity and basic social security for all citizens. The party ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel* is based on these values inspired by Gross National Happiness.

2.2 PDP: Election Slogan for 2018

The PDP slogan for 2018 election is: "Unity. Stability. Prosperity."



Each of the three words is a statement by itself. Thus, each word is separated by a stop.

For 2018-2023, we recognize the importance of building a ‘just, harmonious and sustainable society through enhanced decentralization.’ It is for this reason that the PDP government initiated the drafting of the 12th Five Year Plan with the above theme. The biggest strength of Bhutan as a nation has been its resilience and communal harmony. Under the benevolent rule of our glorious monarchs, Bhutan has always withstood the test of time, cautiously navigating the challenges and braving storms to be globally recognized as a strong sovereign nation. Today, Bhutan enjoys the reputation of being called the last Shangri-La on earth. The Bhutanese identity has never been stronger.

Unity.

It falls on the political parties to build the strong foundation of nationhood handed over to the people by our enlightened Kings. The PDP staunchly believes that the biggest strength of Bhutan is the strong sense of citizenship that unites all Bhutanese. In the past 10 years, democracy has empowered the people. People understand their roles in this new democratic dispensation and actively participate in the democratic process, responsibly engaging in the decision-making process. But we must also

acknowledge that democracy has brought in new challenges. Party politics has divided families and communities, creating conflict and disharmony, which in the long run would be harmful to the nation. Recognizing the paramount significance of unity for a small nation like ours, the PDP government has strengthened unity in the past five years. And PDP shall always work towards building a strong nation where Bhutanese from all walks of life are united as ‘One people under one King’.

Stability.

For a society to grow, it needs the foundations to take off. The preconditions required are a sound economy, a healthy society, dynamic leadership and a vibrant and progressive society, which can only come with stability. PDP is offering a pledge of stability in the country. To achieve any kind of growth or development, a nation has to be stable. The PDP values this and believes that stability is the means and also an end in itself. Stability gives us strength and security. There cannot be growth or development without stability and the PDP is offering a pledge to make Bhutan a more stable nation.

Prosperity.

Prosperity can only be achieved with unity and stability. PDP stands to deliver prosperity by empowering our people



through unity and stability where every Bhutanese shall be able to exercise his or her democratic rights and privileges. Every Bhutanese citizen must enjoy the conditions to prosper but it cannot happen in a political environment inflicted with deep-rooted divisions, be it based on race, ethnicity, politics or religion. PDP aspires to deliver inclusive and sustainable development, which contributes to overall human development. With unity, stability and continuity, we will achieve peace and prosperity.

2.3 PDP Vision Beyond 2023

The PDP's long-term vision is to create an economically vibrant, environmentally rich, socio-culturally just and harmonious, and politically united country with a secured sovereignty. The PDP's vision is to create favorable conditions for every Bhutanese to be able to pursue happiness. We aspire for a nation where every citizen will be a proud Bhutanese.

Our beloved nation has been blessed with visionary monarchs who have selflessly worked to secure the sovereignty of our nation and at the same time ensured that no one is left behind. Despite always being challenged with resources, our monarchs have ensured free education for our children and free healthcare facilities creating a level playing field for all Bhutanese to charter out a deserving life. As a political party, the PDP is inspired by our visionary monarchs and we lay

steadfast in our commitment to contribute to our nation for all times to come.



The PDP's long-term vision is to create an economically vibrant, environmentally rich, socio-culturally just and harmonious, and politically united country with a secured sovereignty.





PART III

3. Our Pledges to the People

The PDP Manifesto 2018 is even more ambitious and daring than the last one because we believe people of Bhutan deserve nothing less than the best. This Manifesto is an expression of our collective dream for a better, stronger and more prosperous Bhutan. Inspired by His Majesty's vision and our ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel*, people are at the center of the Manifesto. No Bhutanese will be left behind. This Manifesto is our unwavering commitment to ensure and sustain peace, unity, stability, and harmony in our country.



3.1 Security and Sovereignty

Security and sovereignty of the nation are non-negotiable. The PDP accords the highest of priorities on strengthening our national security and sovereignty. We shall follow prudent foreign policy adopted by our Kings which have served the nation exceedingly well in the past. While continuing to tread on the international stage cautiously, we will further our engagement with India and strengthen the strong bond of friendship.

3.2 Peace, Unity and Harmony

The strengthening of our sovereignty and security has ensured the continuation of peace, unity and harmony. These are conditions that create opportunities to greater triumphs and achievements for our people in a “sea of tranquility” that many nations envy. The unprecedented levels of peace, unity and harmony we enjoy is solely because of the unfailing leadership, guidance and support of His Majesty The King.

Peace, unity and harmony are the key determinants of happiness of a nation and the conditions for ensuring our fundamental right to life, liberty and security as guaranteed by our Constitution. His Majesty’s tireless dedication and commitment to the nation and people continue to be the source of our strength and building blocks for the foundation of our peace, unity and harmony. We call on

the nation to offer our humble prayers, dedication and gratitude for His Majesty’s hard work that is evident from morning till late night meeting people, providing advice and counsel, granting audiences to government, civil servants, civil society and citizens. Travelling all around the country especially rural areas, to schools and colleges, meeting teachers and students. Granting *Kidu* to people, spending time in each village and its people until they are satisfied. Being at the forefront of disaster relief by placing people first ahead of his own personal safety and looking after those affected.

3.3 Foreign Policy

Our foreign policy shall prioritize strengthening our time-tested friendship with India. We shall foster good relations with the neighboring Indian states of West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim and Bihar to ensure the safety of Bhutanese travelling through these states and improve business relations and people-to-people interactions.

We shall continue to strengthen relations with all countries to ensure Bhutan’s presence in the international arena. However, our approach shall be cautious and we would take informed stands on issues that pertain to Bhutan, especially that concern our security, sovereignty and independence. We shall focus on strengthening security to ensure the safety





of our people living in and near the border towns.

We shall continue the ongoing border negotiations with China. We will strengthen our relation through active participation in global, regional and multilateral organizations like the

UN, SAARC, BIMSTEC, and the EU.

We will strengthen our relations with traditional friends and partners like Japan, Switzerland, and with countries we have diplomatic ties with. We will work closely with our regional neighbors like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY



UNITY. STABILITY. PROSPERITY.

4. ECONOMY

The Bhutanese economy is one of the smallest in the world. And rather than viewing its geographical size as a disadvantage, it has to be turned into an advantage. Bhutan's global brand as a 'happy' and 'organic' country and the bastion of Buddhism and an environmental champion are positive attributes that can

be harnessed to drive our economy. In that sense, Bhutan has all the ingredients to become an economic powerhouse in the region. Despite being a poor country, Bhutan has to capitalize on its salient strengths and uplift its economy by advocating the right policies.

Pledges:

- *We shall deliver an average growth rate of 10% in the next five years.*
- *We shall review the Economic Development Policy to make it more relevant to our emerging economic needs and challenges.*
- *We shall establish 100 more medium and large industries in the next five years.*
- *We shall create around 35,000 more jobs in CSI, hydropower, mining, medium and large industries, and trading sectors in the next five years.*
- *We shall work towards 20% increase in export volume of 22 identified products having export potential.*
- *We shall enhance promotion of Consumer Protection activities.*
- *We shall promote Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects.*

4.1 The Five Jewels

More than 60% of the population is still dependent on agriculture. On the revenue front, hydropower has triggered the economy for the past few decades. At the same time, tourism has grown

into a major industry. We must prioritize prime industries to play a pivotal role in economic development. The PDP government has identified five economic jewels that would trigger Bhutan's growth, creating jobs and wealth for the people of



Bhutan. The first two jewels, hydropower and mining, provide significant resources for development empowering the central government. The other three jewels benefit the people directly through creation and distribution of wealth.

The Five Jewels include:

- i. Hydropower and Energy
- ii. Mining
- iii. Agriculture
- iv. Tourism
- v. Small & Medium Enterprises (SME) and Cottage & Small Industries (CSI)

4.1.1 Hydropower and Energy

a. Hydropower

Hydropower is the most productive sector in the country. Meaningful exploitation of this important natural resource shall be one of the biggest priorities for the PDP. The timely completion of the ongoing hydropower projects under construction will ensure economic growth and address external debt situation. The PDP will ensure that the projects are completed on time.

We will also facilitate local business community including the local

construction sector to be meaningfully engaged during the construction phase of the projects.

The PDP will prioritize development of hydropower projects with the main aim to achieve sustainable economic self-reliance, meet the nation's domestic energy security, promote industrial growth and enhance the national revenue.

Bhutan has a hydropower potential of 30,000MW of which 23,760MW is techno-economically feasible. Today, Bhutan exploits 1,614MW of hydropower in the country. This accounts to only 7% of the total estimated potential.

Table 1: *Hydropower projects in operation in Bhutan today*

Sl. no	Hydropower Project	Capacity (in MW)
1	Chukha HP	336
2	Kurichhu HP	60
3	Basochhu I & II	64
4	Tala HP	1020
5	Dagachhu	126
6	Mini and micro HPs	8
	Total	1,614





Pledges:

- *We shall ensure all households in the country are electrified by 2023.*
- *We shall develop Bhutan as a knowledge center for hydropower development and related services both in the region and the world.*
- *We shall develop local capacities to design, develop, build and operate hydropower projects through Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) and Construction Development Corporation Limited (CDCL) as local expert institutions.*
- *We shall implement acceleration measures for timely completion of the hydropower projects under construction. This is essential in light of the fact that delays in projects would translate to revenue forgone. Timely completion would also ease pressure on external debt.*



- *We shall strive to achieve a minimum power generation of 5,000MW by the end of 2022. It would then increase the current 7% generation of total estimated potential to about 17%.*
- *We shall complete the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for all hydropower projects that are techno-economically feasible.*
- *We shall revise the Electricity Act to incorporate the changes that have taken place in the hydropower and power sector in general.*
- *We shall revise electricity rate for domestic consumers.*
- *We shall carry out timely and regular monitoring of critical glacial lakes and risk assessment.*
- *We shall ensure adequate supply of power to power intensive industries to boost the private sector and create employment.*
- *We shall develop local human resource capacity in the hydropower sector to take up skilled works. This would create employment opportunities for local skilled workforce.*



b. Renewable Energy

Along with hydropower, the PDP shall equally prioritize alternative renewable energy in order to diversify the energy supply mix and enhance energy security. The development of hydropower projects remains a top priority but it is equally important to develop other forms of

renewable energy and only a parallel focus would help meet the primary energy requirements and address the issue of energy security in Bhutan. The country also imports fossil fuel and the import figure has been on the rise, which makes it imperative to focus on the exploitation of renewable energy in Bhutan.

Pledges:

- *We shall develop the Renewable Energy Master Plan.*
- *We shall diversify the energy supply mix to explore all other forms of clean and renewable energy sources that will supplement hydropower generation shortage faced in the country during the lean season.*
- *We shall promote clean renewable energy technologies.*
- *We shall promote the use of alternative renewable energy and adoption of cleaner and energy efficient technologies.*
- *Special focus shall be given on renewable energy resources like solar, wind, biomass, small hydro and other emerging modern fuels as sources for energy generation.*
- *We shall promote biogas plants as alternate source of fuel for cooking.*
- *We shall promote the use of energy efficient wood stoves to reduce fuel-wood demand.*
- *We shall promote the use of solar water heating systems as alternative means for heating water and space.*
- *We shall rollout nationwide Light Emitting Diodes (LED) program.*
- *We shall promote grid electrification and supply electricity to 1,500 off-grid households.*



4.1.2 Mining

Mines and minerals are scarce national resources that must be sustainably harnessed, keeping in mind the needs of future generations. The mining sector is a significant trigger of economic growth. In 2016, the mining sector generated revenue of Nu. 258 million excluding taxes. The mining sector employs 2,065 Bhutanese. And the mining industry provides employment to local communities. Mineral exports also boost the nation's export figures, helping balance of trade.

Currently, there are 24 active mines and 40 quarries covering a total land area of 3,320 acres. A big challenge for the mining

sector is that only 40% of the country has been geologically mapped which means that there is a lot more to do to sustainably harness the full potential of the mining sector. Mining is a vibrant economic sector but it could also bring about negative social, health and environmental impacts. As such, the PDP will exercise caution to exploit the mining sector and the wellbeing of the people would also be at the forefront. Currently, the most commonly exploited minerals include limestone, coal, graphite, gypsum, slate and dolomite. The mining sector is relatively underdeveloped and most mines are small operations.

Pledges:

- *We shall undertake geological mapping of crucial mineral resources.*
- *We shall encourage value addition of our mineral resources by promoting industries that would use our mineral resources.*
- *We shall enhance export of raw minerals where either value addition is not possible or it does not offer economic advantage.*
- *We shall encourage our mining sector to create employment opportunities for Bhutanese.*
- *We shall increase annual export of mining products by Nu. 1.5 billion.*
- *The State Mining Corporation (SMC) will be strengthened to be a model mining company in the country and all proceeds from the SMC will go to the education ministry mainly to finance the central schools.*
- *We shall ensure environment friendly mining practices and upscale green*



mining technologies in the mining sector.

- *We shall ensure that local communities are primary beneficiaries in the mining sector.*
- *We shall encourage community ownership of mines and develop modalities for local communities to own shares in mining companies.*
- *We shall ensure that mining companies adhere to their Corporate Social Responsibilities, which shall benefit communities impacted by mining activities.*

4.1.3 Agriculture

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for a majority of Bhutanese. The agriculture sector employs 57% of the population, making it the biggest sector in the country. Greater investments in agriculture will uplift the lives of our farmers, address rural poverty and bring about equitable development. Towards this end, the PDP will focus on agriculture sector to ‘achieve food self-sufficiency of 80% for a prosperous and self-reliant society living in harmony with nature.’

We will address the impending challenges in the agriculture sector, which is multifold including the lack of infrastructure like

roads and water, acute labor shortage, loss of arable land to urbanization, difficult terrain, and fragmented land holdings, loss of crops to wildlife, lack of access to market and agricultural credit, climate change and natural disasters, post-harvest management issues and subsistence nature of farming.

We will provide land on lease to encourage youth to take up agriculture. Such opportunities will also be extended to retired civil servants and retired armed force personnel who want to take up commercial farming. Many of the retired civil servants and armed force personnel are still in their productive years and can contribute positively to the economy.

Pledges: Agriculture

- *We shall strive to achieve 70% food self sufficiency across major food items in the next five years.*
- *We shall introduce Guaranteed Buy-back Scheme of agricultural produce to purchase farm produce and facilitate agriculture trade and business.*



- *We shall promote commercial farming through farm mechanization and suitable agriculture technologies.*
- *We shall promote cultivation of all fallow lands in the country.*
- *We shall maintain existing irrigation channels and construct 700 kms of new irrigation channels to irrigate about 50,000 acres of land.*
- *We shall adopt new irrigation and water efficient technologies.*
- *We shall establish agricultural enterprises for products such as honey, egg, piggery, dairy and others in different parts of the country.*
- *We shall promote farm mechanization.*
- *We shall promote private ownership of power tillers by subsidizing the cost and facilitate access to finance for agricultural enterprises through Priority Sector Lending (PSL), Rural Enterprise Development Corporation Limited (REDCL), microfinance programs and Bhutan Development Bank Limited (BDBL).*
- *We shall provide one more power tiller to every chiwog and ensure that every chiwog has a minimum of two power tillers.*
- *We shall establish repair and maintenance workshops in every gewog for repair and maintenance of farm machinery such as power tillers.*
- *We shall encourage contract farming through Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.*
- *We shall enhance access to finance for agriculture related businesses through programs such as REDCL, PSL and BDBL.*
- *To encourage youth in agriculture, we shall facilitate access to finance through Priority Sector Lending (PSL).*
- *We shall promote organic agriculture and organic livestock farming through several strategies including developing Organic Guarantee and Certification System (OGCS).*
- *We shall continue to support Farmers' Groups for production and marketing.*
- *We shall increase the export of Bhutanese agricultural produce and products by establishing market linkages abroad.*



- *We shall provide land on lease to encourage youth to take up agriculture. Such opportunities will also be extended to retired civil servants and retired armed force personnel who want to take up commercial farming.*

Pledges: Forestry

- *We shall provide timber subsidy to the rural population.*
- *We shall institute mechanisms in place to measure the state of our natural forests and to undertake carbon stock assessment.*
- *We shall strengthen the management of protected and conservation areas.*
- *We shall develop 'Zero Poaching' policy and institute smart patrolling approaches to reduce forestry and wildlife offences and conflicts.*
- *We shall prioritize ecotourism and facilitate nature-based ecotourism programs.*
- *We shall prioritize habitat enrichment plantations for effective management of wetlands and watershed areas.*
- *We shall reduce the incidences of forest fires through use of better technologies and intensifying advocacy.*

Pledges: Livestock

- *We shall promote Climate Resilient Livestock Farming.*
- *We shall prioritize highland agriculture and livestock farming by developing the capacity of highland livestock rearing households and providing livestock input supplies.*



- *We shall address Human-Wildlife Conflict by upscaling use of electric fence and exploring modern technologies.*
- *We shall strengthen Crop Endowment Fund for Crop and Livestock Conservation and simplify the process for insurance claims for crop damage.*

4.1.4 Tourism

Tourism is the biggest service industry in Bhutan and it generates significant volume of foreign currency and contributes immensely to national revenue. It provides employment to a significant number of people and its benefits are cross sectional from tour operators to farmhouse owners to people engaged in providing trekking services.

The policy of 'high value, low impact' tourism has been inspired by our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which positively highlights our national culture.

The tourism industry also offers a wonderful opportunity to brand Bhutan as a credible and premier tourist destination

in the world. The PDP is fully aware of the opportunities of the tourism sector and is committed to capitalize from the industry.

However, there are major challenges in the industry. The districts of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Wangdue and Bumthang are the major beneficiaries of the industry. Seasonality is another major issue, with tourist arrivals concentrated in Spring and Autumn.

Moreover, 80% of the tourists visit Bhutan on cultural tours, amplifying the need to diversify tourism products. There is also a need to build tourism infrastructure in the eastern, northern and southern parts of the country to promote tourism in these parts of the country.

Pledges:

- *We shall designate industry status to tourism sector to facilitate access to finances and business promotion.*
- *We shall work towards enacting a Tourism Act in close consultation with all stakeholders.*



- *We shall develop and promote tourism assets such as tangible and intangible heritages.*
- *We shall open up all dzongkhags to tourism.*
- *We shall open the southern gateways to facilitate arrival and departure of tourists.*
- *We shall create 5,000 new jobs in the tourism sector in the next five years.*
- *We shall explore the possibilities of constructing additional domestic airports in eastern Bhutan to encourage tourism in the east.*
- *We shall develop and expand the Gelephu Domestic Airport infrastructure as an emergency landing airport to handle landing of Airbus aircrafts in situations when landing is not possible in Paro. This would be the first step towards expanding the Gelephu Airport into an international one.*
- *We shall buy additional helicopters to enhance domestic helicopter service and tourism.*
- *We shall identify every dzongkhag as tourist destination for special product or services and brand and market it accordingly.*
- *We shall promote eastern, southern and central dzongkhags as attractive tourism destinations to diversify benefit from the tourism industry.*
- *We shall promote Bhutan as a unique destination for adventure sports.*
- *We shall promote linkages between tourism and other sectors like agriculture, handicraft, businesses and other creative industries.*
- *We shall also promote domestic tourism by developing and advocating pilgrimage and spiritual tourism sites for Bhutanese.*
- *We shall promote Bhutan as a unique Meeting Incentive Convention and Events (MICE) tourism destination.*
- *We shall facilitate capacity enhancement of our tour guides through various training programs both within the country and abroad.*
- *We shall facilitate the establishment of training centers and tertiary institutes in the hospitality sector.*



- *We shall continue providing economic incentives to promote eco-tourism.*
- *We shall extend the incentives already enjoyed by high-end hotels to all tourist standard hotels.*
- *We shall facilitate and promote the handicrafts sector through various incentives.*



4.1.5 Cottage, Small & Medium Industries

The PDP has identified the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs) as one

of the five economic jewels for Bhutan to realize sustainable economic development.

Pledges:

- *We shall facilitate access to finance for CSMI through Priority Sector Lending (PSL), REDCL, microfinances and BDBL financial products.*
- *We shall support startup initiatives through support services such as capacity building, access to finance, obtaining clearances and licenses and establishing linkages.*
- *We shall continue to enhance REDCL to provide finances for CSMI and non-formal rural economic activities at a low interest rate of 4% and without collateral.*
- *The REDCL shall be expanded and it will offer a separate program for the youth and a separate program for women.*
- *We shall upscale One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) Program to cover all 205 gewogs to enhance rural livelihood.*
- *We shall continue to implement entrepreneurship development programs focused on our youth.*

4.2 Private Sector Development

We strongly believe that a vibrant and robust private sector is crucial in driving economic growth. Towards this end, we shall accord special priority on private sector development through right policies

to create an ideal platform for our private sector to take off. In addition to the five jewels, we will initiate specific and targeted interventions to boost private sector growth.



4.2.1 Investments in Industrial Estates and Dry Ports

Having the necessary economic infrastructure in place is fundamental for private sector growth. Therefore, we shall facilitate and fast track the development and operationalization of industrial estates and dry ports.

Pledges:

- *We shall develop and operationalize the four Industrial Parks of Bondeyma (Mongar), Dhamdum (Samtse), Jigmeling (Sarpang) and Motanga (Samdrup Jongkhar).*
- *We shall construct a dry port in Pasakha, Phuentsholing, and access road to the port.*
- *We shall complete the detailed feasibility study of Gelephu Dry Port.*
- *We shall complete the ground works for Nganglam Dry Port and operationalize it.*
- *We shall invest in the maintenance of industrial parks in Pasakha, Phuentsholing and Bjemina, Thimphu.*
- *We shall develop a mini-industrial estate in every dzongkhag.*
- *We shall explore the possibilities of creating infrastructural linkages to or with railways network in India to boost export.*

4.2.2 Improving Ease of Doing Business

Bhutan's ease of doing business ranking has significantly improved in the past five years. Recognizing that ease of doing busi-

ness is crucial in promoting private sector growth, the PDP will create conducive environment for businesses to flourish.



Pledges:

- *We shall strengthen Better Business Council, the apex policy discussion forum between various stakeholders including the government, into National Business Council.*
- *We shall establish regional and Dzongkhag Business Councils.*
- *We shall improve Bhutan's World Bank Doing Business ranking to top 50 position in the world.*
- *We shall put in efforts to improve our global business competitiveness ranking to create enabling environment for business.*
- *We shall review regulations to address double taxation.*
- *We shall review legislations and rules and regulations that impact our business to remove bottlenecks and red tape.*
- *We shall encourage and promote businesses that focus on import substitution.*
- *We shall streamline and fast track services by introducing One Roof Services.*

4.2.3 Developing Local Economy

Pledges:

- *We shall work with Local Governments to stimulate growth of rural economy.*
- *We shall explore urban and export markets to promote rural economy.*
- *Cottage and Small Industries with economic potential shall be promoted with the objective to generate employment.*
- *We shall initiate One-Gewog-One-Product program through a special flagship program.*



- *We shall initiate One- Gewog-One-Project and One-Dzongkhag-One-Project programs to boost local economy.*
- *We shall facilitate access to finances for businesses that promote local economy and jobs creation.*
- *We shall prioritize the integration of local enterprises and communities in the tourism industry.*
- *We shall promote rural economy, tourism, handicraft and other indigenous products.*
- *We shall create market linkages and product promotion for SMEs & CSIs.*

4.2.4 Export Promotion

Pledges:

- *We shall upscale Brand Bhutan Initiative.*
- *We shall incentivize businesses that promote exports.*
- *We shall ensure that the average growth of export in the next five years increases by 5% annually.*
- *We shall work towards 20% increase in export volume of 22 identified products having export potential.*
- *We shall increase value of export of manufactured products by more than Nu. 5 billion.*
- *We shall institute economic packages for industrial estates to boost exports.*
- *We shall establish and enhance institutional linkages and product promotion within and outside country.*



4.2.5 Construction Industry

The construction industry is a major economic driver playing a crucial role in the private sector. The industry currently contributes 17% to the GDP and employs 3.2% of the national labor force. The sector has over 4,009 contractors.

The construction sector is today challenged

with lack of professionalism; inadequate technical, managerial and financial capacity of local contractors; unemployment issues and huge outflow of resources. This has resulted in defective and substandard quality works. In the 2016-17 fiscal, about 65% of the construction works, amounting to 464 works, failed to complete on time.

Pledges:

- *We shall prioritize diversification of locally produced construction materials, thereby reducing import of raw materials.*
- *We shall promote professionalization, sustainable maintenance, and improvement of quality infrastructure and promotion of green and disaster resilient construction technologies.*
- *The Bhutan Schedule Rates (BSR), which is the basis for all the cost estimates in the construction industry, shall be reviewed and updated through study and review of Labor Material Coefficient (LMC), construction cost index, valuation of properties and specifications.*
- *We shall develop user-friendly guideline on Building Construction approval.*
- *We shall promote the use of relevant advanced technologies to promote mechanization in the construction sector.*
- *We shall promote employment creation in the construction industry by incentivizing construction companies that employ Bhutanese.*



4.3 An Efficient Public Finance and Sound Macro Economic Management

A dynamic fiscal policy and a prudent fiscal discipline are fundamental to achieve sustainable economic growth with stable macroeconomic environment. Efforts have to be made to strengthen public finance management for effective resource mobilization, efficient allocation, prudent expenditure and debt management with proper accountability of public resources.

Domestic revenue grew at an average of 20% annually from 1980 to 2017 increasing from Nu. 120 million in 1981-82 to Nu 28,034 million in 2015-16. The increase in internal revenue generation shows a remarkable progress in the mobilization efforts in both tax and non-tax revenue.

While tax revenue has grown at an annual average of 19% from 1980 to 2018, non-tax revenue grew at a higher rate of 25%. Major contributors to tax revenue include corporate income tax, sales tax and excise duty whereas dividend and profit transfers from state owned enterprises were major sources of non-tax revenue.

4.3.1 Addressing Public Debt

Bhutan's public debt stands at Nu. 173 billion today, which mainly consists of rupee denominated hydropower debt. But it has to be noted that 72% of the total debt is self-liquidating hydropower debt. Although the debt levels are expected to decrease and remain within threshold, the PDP shall redouble efforts towards earning hard currency to sustain external debt service.

Pledges:

- *We shall deliver an average growth rate of 10% in the next five years.*
- *We shall enhance domestic revenue to cover about 80% of the total expenditure.*
- *We shall explore and consider partnership under Public Private Partnership (PPP) modality with financial institutions like National Pension and Provident Fund (NPPF) to bridge the gap in infrastructure financing.*
- *We shall develop a robust and inclusive macroeconomic model to strengthen coordination, reporting and policy formulation.*
- *We shall promote e-procurement and e-auctioning systems.*



- *We shall promote e-payment initiatives.*
- *We shall revise the Procurement and Financial Manual.*
- *We shall formulate debt management strategy and prepare periodic debt reports.*

4.3.2 Revenue and Customs

Pledges:

- *We shall enhance the Revenue and Administration Management Information System (RAMIS) to enhance revenue collection.*
- *We shall offer Fiscal Incentives to create conducive environment for economic growth and other tax measures to enhance domestic revenue.*
- *To improve service delivery and strengthen public financial management, we shall prioritize the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). This e-payment initiative shall be accorded high priority.*

4.3.3 Improving Access to Finance

Pledges:

- *We shall review the Minimum Lending Rates (MLR) in close consultation with the central bank and explore all options to continue lowering the commercial lending rates of loans and credits.*
- *We shall study the remittance sector in Bhutan and work to facilitate and upgrade RemitBhutan program of the central bank.*
- *We shall strengthen and upscale REDCL to empower small and value added businesses.*



- *We shall prioritize the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to ensure that rural and agriculture based entrepreneurs have easy access to finance.*
- *We shall explore and implement seasonal loans for farmers to ensure that they get easy access to finance when they need it the most.*
- *We shall facilitate different modalities to ensure that access to loans is improved for the private sector.*
- *We shall review and increase the loan equity for public transport buses, taxis and trucks from the current 30% to 70%.*

4.3.4 A Sound Macroeconomic Management

Pledges:

- *We shall establish Economic Early Warning System to strengthen coordination, reporting and policy formulation.*
- *We shall make prudent efforts to forecast key economic indicators to determine growth trajectory and establish macroeconomic inter linkages between sectors to ensure forecast results are consistent with economic realities.*
- *We shall strengthen and develop Fiscal Framework as per international standards.*
- *We shall initiate and promote green and environment friendly procurement.*

4.4 Human Settlement and Housing

Under the human settlement sector, we will prioritize improvement of livability through improved planning, better infrastructure and services and affordable housing.

The Comprehensive National Development Plan (CNDP) 2030 shall guide the human settlement sector. We will prioritize reduction of vulnerability to flooding, solid waste management and wastewater management. A livability index shall be



developed to measure the urban livability in terms of urban amenities and services. We will initiate the National Homeownership Program to enable all Bhutanese to own a decent home. In the first phase, the program would target to provide homeownership packages to civil servants, corporate and private sector employees in the urban areas. It would be done in collaboration with financial institutions.

The PDP strongly believes in empowering our people at all fronts and it has to begin with the basics. Having a decent home is the birthright of every Bhutanese. The social and economic benefit of a stable homeownership across all levels of the population is fundamental in building an empowered nation. This program would be implemented as a special flagship program.

Pledges:

- *We shall develop homeownership policy to provide affordable housing and homeownership for all.*
- *We shall develop 16 Thromdes and Yenlag Thromdes with basic public amenities.*
- *We shall provide affordable housing within Bhutan for all Bhutanese living across the border (Jaigaon, India).*
- *We shall ensure the development and implementation of Disaster Management Contingency Plan (DMCP).*
- *We shall prioritize wastewater systems and solid waste management facilities and new technologies in the sector.*
- *We shall prioritize Flood Hazard Management and Flood Risk Management and develop flood control measures and implement it.*



4.5 Roads

With the completion of the Northern East-West Highway improvement, blacktopping of Gewog Center roads and construction of various farm roads, the road connectivity has reached 968 chiwogs out of 1,044 (92.72%). As of December 2017, there are 18,395kms of roads in the country, which is about 1 km of road for every 42 people. In the next five years, the PDP shall focus on consolidation, enhancement of national

highway grid and completion of the missing links. The national highways shall be improved using environmental friendly road construction and climate proof technology. Bypass roads and tunneling options will be explored to reduce travel time. The PDP shall accord high priority to construction and maintenance of roads and bridges.

Pledges:

- *We shall construct:*
 - i. *Southern East-West Highway*
 - ii. *Lhuentse-Trashiyangtse Highway*
 - iii. *Shinghar-Gorgan road*
 - iv. *Lhamoizingkha-Sarpang Highway*
 - v. *Dewathang-Nganglam Highway*
 - vi. *Samrang-Jomotshangkha road*
- *We shall ensure all major farm roads have a minimum of a base course to make it all weather roads.*
- *We shall maintain all Gewog Center (GC) roads.*
- *We shall improve and maintain Northern East-West Highway*
- *We shall blacktop Haa-Samtse Highway.*
- *We shall explore the tunneling of Thimphu-Paro and Thimphu-Wangdue roads.*
- *We shall shorten Trashigang-Mongar highway from Sherichu to Gongrizomsa on Gyalposhing-Nganglam highway by about 30km.*
- *We shall come up with a comprehensive network of national highways*



connecting the entire nation.

- *We shall develop minimum standards for national highways to ensure the most economical, safe, reliable and quality national highways in the country.*
- *We shall build restroom facilities along all major national highways.*

4.6 Safe, Eco-friendly and Affordable Transport

Safe, reliable and efficient transport system is vital to the growth of the economy.

It is therefore necessary that we build a strong network of quality roads, surface and air transport connectivity in the country to facilitate easier movement of people and goods. This would improve trade and business, contributing to overall socioeconomic development.

We also need to be mindful of the negative impacts of increasing number of vehicles in the country and therefore switch to more fuel efficient and eco-friendly alternatives. Affordable and efficient public transportation systems in populated thromdes would be prioritized to address traffic congestion.

Pledges:

- *We shall introduce public bus services to all gewogs to increase connectivity.*
- *We shall provide tax incentives to electric and eco-friendly vehicles.*
- *We shall install quick charging stations for electric vehicles in all major towns and cities and along highways.*
- *We shall provide government subsidies for non-profitable bus service routes.*
- *We shall expand and build new bus terminals and parking space for trucks and taxis in all dzongkhags.*
- *We shall build wheel chair ramps at bus terminals across the country.*
- *We shall explore the possibilities of constructing additional domestic airports in eastern Bhutan.*
- *We shall upgrade and expand the Gelephu Domestic Airport infrastructure.*



- *We shall develop Aerodrome in Bumthang and Yonphula airports.*
- *We shall review and increase the loan equity for public transport buses, taxis and trucks from the current 30% to 70%.*
- *We shall enhance the load carrying capacity for trucks in view of the improved road conditions and in light of the fact that trucks these days are technically better and safer than in the past.*
- *We shall streamline red tapism in transit documentation required for truckers and vehicle transit agencies.*
- *We shall institute a dedicated office with a special contact number to take care of truckers, taxi drivers and travellers travelling in India in times of emergencies.*



5. Human Development For All

The primary objective of human development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and meaningful lives. The PDP is committed to creating the right conditions, enhance opportunities and improve the overall wellbeing of the people. We are determined to enhance access to quality healthcare and meaningful education, and improve the living conditions of the people. We shall continue our efforts to improve the standards of living through inclusive policy actions and bold measures targeted at the poor and economically disadvantaged groups.

5.1 Reliable, Quality Healthcare Services For All

Good health is a prerequisite to lead a happy and meaningful life. As mandated by the Constitution, free healthcare will be provided to all Bhutanese. High quality healthcare services must be complemented by policies that enable people to stay healthy.

Bhutan's overall life expectancy has improved to 70.2 years (PHCB, 2017) from 66.3 years in 2005. This means, as a nation, we are living healthier and longer. However, drastic shift in lifestyle and food consumption patterns has resulted in increasing health burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD), which accounts for 60% of deaths in the country. More and more people are living with conditions like diabetics, cancer and other lifestyle related diseases. We must provide them with quality care and support them to live with dignity.

The PDP government has made concerted efforts in providing reliable, quality healthcare services and in promoting healthy living. Yet, we understand more has to be done and more can be done to build a robust healthcare system that is sustainable, reliable, and accessible. We will set the highest standard in healthcare with trained and motivated workforce and modern healthcare facilities, to provide reliable, quality and equal care.

Pledges: National Level

- *We shall continue to provide free health care services, both in modern and traditional medicine, to all Bhutanese.*
- *We will make JDWNRH into a 'Super Specialist' hospital. In particular, JDWNRH will offer tertiary services in ENT, Ophthalmology, mother and child services, organ transplant, and Oncology. To facilitate JDWNRH to become a super specialist hospital, we will build one new referral hospital in Thimphu.*



- *We shall establish kidney transplant facilities at the JDWNRH and explore the possibility of constructing a kidney transplant center.*
- *We shall build a Mother and Child hospital and a Cancer hospital in Thimphu.*
- *We shall review the health policy to meet the emerging health requirements.*
- *We shall review the existing health curricula of health institutes in the country to equip health workers with relevant skills and knowledge to meet the emerging needs in the health sector.*
- *We shall formulate and pass the Health Bill.*
- *We shall double the Health Trust Fund to Nu 4 billion in the next five years to ensure that our healthcare remains sustainable and free for all times to come.*
- *We shall build a National Traditional Medicine (Sowai Rigpa) hospital in Thimphu to enable people to avail traditional medicine services and treatment.*
- *We shall establish Digital Health system and introduce e-patient record management system.*

Pledges: Regional Referral Hospitals

- *We shall establish two additional regional referral hospitals in the country.*
- *We shall empower regional referral hospitals to refer patients abroad.*
- *We shall strengthen emergency referral system to neighboring states such as hospitals in Guwahati.*
- *We shall introduce MRI facilities in all the regional referral hospitals.*
- *We shall institute a welfare office in every regional and referral hospitals to provide assistance to the poor patients and the families of the dead.*



Pledges: District Hospitals

- *Every district hospital shall have at least one Gynecologist and a medical specialist assisted by three doctors and adequate nurses and technicians.*
- *All district hospitals shall provide the following diagnostic facilities and treatment services: proper OT facilities, X-ray, ECG, Lab facilities, dental and blood bank etc.*
- *We shall establish emergency obstetrics and essential surgical trauma centers in every district hospital.*
- *Every district hospital shall have a mobile clinical unit that will periodically reach healthcare services to remote communities and offer home based healthcare services to immobile/bedridden patients.*
- *We shall introduce health program for people in retreat and meditation, which will be provided by dzongkhag mobile health teams periodically.*
- *We shall open satellite health clinics in populated thromdes to decongest district and referral hospitals.*

Pledges: BHUs

- *We shall ensure that every BHU has one doctor, two nurses and suitable number of technicians.*
- *Every BHU shall have a minimum healthcare facility and treatment services such as OT facilities for minor operations, X-ray, ultra-sound, and blood-testing facilities.*
- *We shall provide one ambulance to every gewog to enable timely evacuation and referral of patients.*
- *We shall expand the health outreach clinics to chiwog and village level.*
- *We shall initiate special mobile health camps providing comprehensive diagnostic services (such as endoscopy) in rural villages.*



Pledges: Human Resource

- *We shall strengthen human resource to meet the demand of 21st century healthcare services.*
- *We shall start MBBS program at Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB).*
- *We shall enhance post-graduate specialization programs in KGUMSB and increase the number and diversify areas of specialization.*
- *We shall increase the number of specialization programs for general doctors across all medical fields, with priority in those areas where there is an acute need of specialists, for example critical care.*
- *We shall develop a Retention Policy for all levels of medical professionals to reduce or limit the number of health workers leaving their profession with special focus on curtailing attrition rate of medical specialists and doctors.*
- *We shall encourage establishment of private medical institutes and colleges that will offer diploma and technical courses, producing more health workforce.*
- *We shall review medical allowances for health professionals.*
- *We shall introduce medical allowance for ambulance drivers.*

5.2 Education: Shaping Our Future

Education is at the heart of PDP's agenda. Our nation's future depends on the kind of education we impart to our children. Therefore, we must ensure that every child in the country receives the best education. Every child deserves a great start in life and our education system must be in a position to nourish and nurture every child so that they can harness their full potential to

become productive citizens.

We have designed a cradle-to-college plan that emphasizes on early childcare and development and lifelong learning through schools to colleges, and thereafter. This will ensure healthy development of our children into young adults who are prepared with the right knowledge, skills and val-



ues, enabling them to embrace the future with confidence. To ensure that no child is left behind, we will continue investing in improving access to education to remote and highland communities and children from economically disadvantaged families and renew our focus on special education

for children living with disabilities. We will continue to invest in training and development of teachers as they are the backbone of our education system. Our vocational institutes and colleges must provide world-class training so that our young men and women are globally competitive.

Pledges: Schools

- *We shall establish a central school in every gewog. Currently, there are 63 central schools.*
- *We shall not close down any school. Instead, we shall provide central school facilities to all primary schools.*
- *We shall establish Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) Center in every chiwog. There are 1,044 chiwogs in the country.*
- *We shall establish one Special Education Needs School in every dzongkhag to provide equal access to education for children with learning difficulties and special needs.*
- *We shall promote autonomous schools to empower our school authorities for greater creativity and innovation in education practices.*
- *We shall establish three schools specialized in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).*
- *We shall establish two schools specialized in promotion of performing arts.*
- *We shall establish three sports academies to promote sports.*
- *We shall establish a special school focused on agriculture.*
- *We shall set up smart classrooms and intensify ICT in teaching-learning process and ICT integrated teaching pedagogy.*
- *We shall connect all schools with high-speed Internet connectivity.*



- *We shall ensure that schools remain closed on Saturdays allowing them to pursue enrichment programs.*
- *We shall provide day meals in all schools in the country.*
- *We shall provide safe sanitary pads for every girl student who cannot afford it.*
- *We shall establish two scout centers, one national and one regional, to boost the scouting program.*
- *We shall construct three youth centers in different parts of the country.*
- *We shall install air conditioning facilities in schools in southern Bhutan and those located in warmer climatic zones. And we shall install heating system in classrooms for schools located in higher altitudes.*
- *We shall continue providing loan scheme for tertiary education with special focus on students from economically disadvantaged families.*
- *We shall raise the stipends for tertiary education.*
- *We shall provide two school guidance and counsellors (Male and female) to all secondary schools and large primary schools.*



Pledges: Teachers

- *We shall provide one laptop for every teacher.*
- *We shall provide a minimum of 80 hours of professional development training to all teachers including teachers of private schools.*
- *We shall enhance opportunities for masters degree for all teachers.*
- *We shall reduce teacher workload through:*
 - *One teacher one-subject policy;*
 - *18 hours contact teaching in a week;*
 - *Providing support administration and staff to schools.*
- *We shall promote teacher exchange programs with schools abroad.*
- *We shall ensure affordable government housing for teachers within the school premises.*
- *We shall introduce homeownership programs for teachers.*
- *We shall raise the salary and allowances for teachers.*
- *Since it is the mandate of the Parliament to review and amend legislations, we shall review and amend the RCSC Act to improve performance system, working and service conditions of our teachers.*
- *We shall provide Research Endowment Funds to undertake action research for teachers.*
- *We shall appoint Dzongkha language teachers in missions abroad and in places where there is high concentration of Bhutanese.*
- *We shall review education HR policy to facilitate smooth promotion of our teachers, vice principals and principals.*
- *We shall streamline services of ECCD and NFE instructors through salary raise and improved service conditions.*
- *We shall introduce paid vacation for support staff serving in schools.*
- *We shall introduce national level professional development programs for Non-Formal Education instructors.*



Pledges: Curriculum

- *We shall align our curricula to the needs of the 21st century economic realities.*
- *We shall encourage creativity, project work, simulation as pedagogy of the 21st century.*
- *We shall review the examination system for our schools.*
- *We shall digitize textbooks where possible.*
- *We shall participate in PISA international program.*
- *We shall continue promoting performing arts in our schools.*
- *We shall include technical and vocational education curriculum in the mainstream education.*

5.3 Youth: Investing in Our National Asset

Almost half of Bhutan's population is below the age of 26 years. They are our nation's wealth, our future. We will leave no stone unturned to secure a bright future for our young citizens. Our young people have immense potential, which must be developed and harnessed, to enable them to live fulfilling lives. We are determined now more than ever to create the right

opportunities for our youth so that they can realize their full potential.

We are committed to creating favorable conditions for youth to get a good start in life. We believe our youth are our strength and solutions to our nation's problems. They are not the problem. They are the solutions. We will continue investing in our youth and equip them with skills, knowledge and values that will help them shape their own future, a better future.

Pledges:

- *We shall support every youth to secure employment through a dedicated office.*
- *We shall provide unemployment and sustenance allowance for youth who have been actively seeking employment for over one year and support them*



through appropriate measures to get employed.

- *We shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Overseas Employment Program to ensure safe, reliable employment for the Bhutanese youth abroad.*
- *We shall encourage youth to pursue sports as a career alternative by incentivizing careers in sports.*
- *We shall build three more youth centers across the country that will provide one-stop youth service center to provide easy access to all information and services related to youth in the country.*
- *We shall promote sports for youth by enhancing sports facilities and amenities across the country.*
- *We shall intensify our fight against drug and substance abuse through preventive measures and invest in rehabilitation program and reintegration of recovering addicts through gainful employment.*
- *We shall work towards eliminating school dropout at all levels of schooling and tertiary education.*
- *We shall enable students completing class X and XII who do not qualify for college education to pursue vocational training in various vocational and training institutes.*
- *We shall enhance access to college and university education through loans, grants and scholarships for students from economically disadvantaged families.*
- *We shall initiate youth discount schemes for students and young people for public transport and other public services.*
- *We shall develop entrepreneurial capacity of the youth and provide low-interest loans to facilitate business startups through a special flagship program.*



- *We shall empower youth with disabilities and enable them to live with dignity through entrepreneurship trainings, provision of low interest loans and special allowances.*
- *We shall provide guaranteed jobs for students and graduate youth living with disabilities and youth with special needs.*
- *We shall encourage youth cooperatives in rural areas through financial support and cheap loans.*
- *We shall strive to secure employment to every youth through:*
 - *Job placements abroad;*
 - *Creating jobs within the country;*
 - *Paid internship programs;*
 - *Dedicated startup businesses for the youth;*
 - *Intensifying vocational training programs for the youth.*
- *We shall promote and support engagement of youth in performing arts and provide financial support for youth music bands, youth professional sports clubs, and youth in creative industries.*



5.4 A Better Place For Our Women and Children

Women and children will always remain at the center of our policy. Although Bhutan has made positive strides in improving equality for women, we acknowledge that more needs to be done. Empowerment of women must happen at all fronts - equal rights, greater economic opportunities, access to quality healthcare and education, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

Building on our record, we shall continue our efforts to empower our women to

become strong, independent and equal players in our society.

Our children must receive the best quality care. Early care and education are crucial in the wholesome development of our children. It is essential that every child have access to education, health and nutrition, and safe home and caring family. We must nourish and nurture our children with love and care, particularly those from economically disadvantaged families, to enable them to face the future with confidence and optimism.

Pledges:

- *We shall establish a Mother and Child Hospital dedicated to the healthcare needs of mothers and children.*
- *We shall establish crèche services in all government ministries, departments and autonomous agencies to allow working mothers to spend more time with their child.*
- *We shall encourage establishment of crèche services in all corporate and private sector companies and enterprises.*
- *We shall establish an Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) Center in every chiwog to provide learning space and to harness the potential of children from an early age and to help mothers, especially single mothers, in rural communities.*
- *We shall promote and facilitate babysitting and caregiving services through trainings and incentives to relieve working mothers of their domestic responsibilities.*



- *We shall institute special support schemes for single mothers in need to enable them to live with dignity.*
- *We shall increase paternity leave to one month to ensure fathers have more time to support the family during childbirth.*
- *We shall invest in vocational skills training for unemployed women and initiate cooperatives for rural as well as urban women.*
- *We shall support women in the informal sector through training and financial assistance to boost the informal sector.*
- *We shall continue the Non-Formal Education (NFE) program for rural women to enhance literacy and lifelong learning.*
- *We shall introduce social security schemes for vulnerable women including women working in the drayangs.*
- *We shall continue interventions on sex education and awareness on teenage pregnancy and risks of HIV/AIDS and STIs among young girls.*
- *We shall study the issue of civil registration of fatherless children and come up with appropriate recommendations and strategies to address the issue.*

5.5 Employment: Creating Meaningful Jobs for All

The People's Democratic Party has accorded the highest priority on creating employment opportunities for all. Our aspiration is that every Bhutanese must be gainfully and meaningfully employed so that they can provide for their children and families and live fulfilling lives.

Our youth are our nation's true treasure. They are not the problem. In fact, they are the core solutions to our nation's problems. Almost half of Bhutan's population is under

26 years presenting us with a demographic dividend that must be harnessed to propel our nation forward. Around 66,000 new jobseekers with secondary and university education are expected to enter the job market in the next five years. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. The PDP will continue to prioritize jobs creation and meaningful employment for all, with renewed focus on creating employment opportunities for our young people.

We will continue to prioritize vocational skills development and training given its immense opportunity in transforming the



Bhutanese workforce and in generating employment opportunities. We will focus on market driven skills development

to facilitate immediate employment of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates in the industry.

Pledges:

- *We shall develop long term National Workforce Plan to map jobs and forecast the labor market.*
- *We shall come up with 11 special flagship programs that will spur economic growth and create at least 10,000 jobs in the next five years.*
- *We shall support every youth to secure employment through a dedicated office. We shall strive to secure employment to every youth through:*
 - *Job placements abroad;*
 - *Creating jobs within the country;*
 - *Paid internship programs;*
 - *Dedicated startup businesses for the youth;*
 - *Intensifying vocational training programs for the youth.*
- *We shall provide unemployment and sustenance allowance for youth who have been actively seeking employment for over one year and support them through appropriate measures to get employed.*
- *We shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Overseas Employment Program and explore international labor markets and collaborate with credible employment agencies to secure well-paying and meaningful jobs for our youth.*
- *We shall introduce reintegration program to be implemented by a dedicated office to facilitate jobs creation for Bhutanese returning home after working abroad.*
- *We shall implement Direct Employment Program to ensure jobseekers are readily absorbed in the labor market.*



- *We shall invest in entrepreneurship development trainings to equip our youth with necessary business skills to initiate startups for self-employment.*
- *We shall provide low interest loans to enable individuals to start businesses both in rural and urban areas.*
- *We shall enable dzongkhags and gewog administrations to create employment through various projects such as SMEs.*
- *We shall enhance social protection and safety net for employees in the private sector.*
- *We shall ensure all salaried employees are covered under the Pension and Provident Fund scheme.*
- *We shall empower youth with disabilities and enable them to live with dignity through entrepreneurship trainings, provision of low interest loans and special allowances.*
- *We shall provide guaranteed jobs for students and graduate youth living with disabilities and youth with special needs.*
- *We shall promote and support engagement of youth in performing arts and provide financial support for youth music bands, youth professional sports clubs, and youth in creative industries.*
- *We shall invest in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to offer a diverse range of industry related skills to our young people.*
- *We shall introduce diploma programs in the TVET sector and upgrade some TTIs to vocational colleges.*
- *We shall ensure that at least 90% of the TVET graduates are employed within six months to one year after graduation from TVET institutes.*
- *We shall create entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture sector targeting import substitution and creating jobs at the same time.*



5.6 Social Security: Protecting Your Interest

Rapid socioeconomic development over the past five decades has dramatically transformed the lives of our people. And our development success cuts across all fronts, with significant reduction of poverty levels and improvement in living standards and quality of life, access to education and quality healthcare services, and overall human development. Our rural communities have also undergone major changes with road connectivity and telecommunication services reaching nooks and corners of the country and

access to better economic and livelihood opportunities.

Even as we pursue an inclusive and equitable development, certain sections of the society are unfortunately left by the way side, struggling to meet their daily ends. We will therefore ensure that no one is left behind. Every Bhutanese must be able to lead a secure and dignified life. To this end, we will strengthen our social security system with targeted interventions for senior citizens, people living with disabilities, the homeless and the orphans, and vulnerable women and girls.

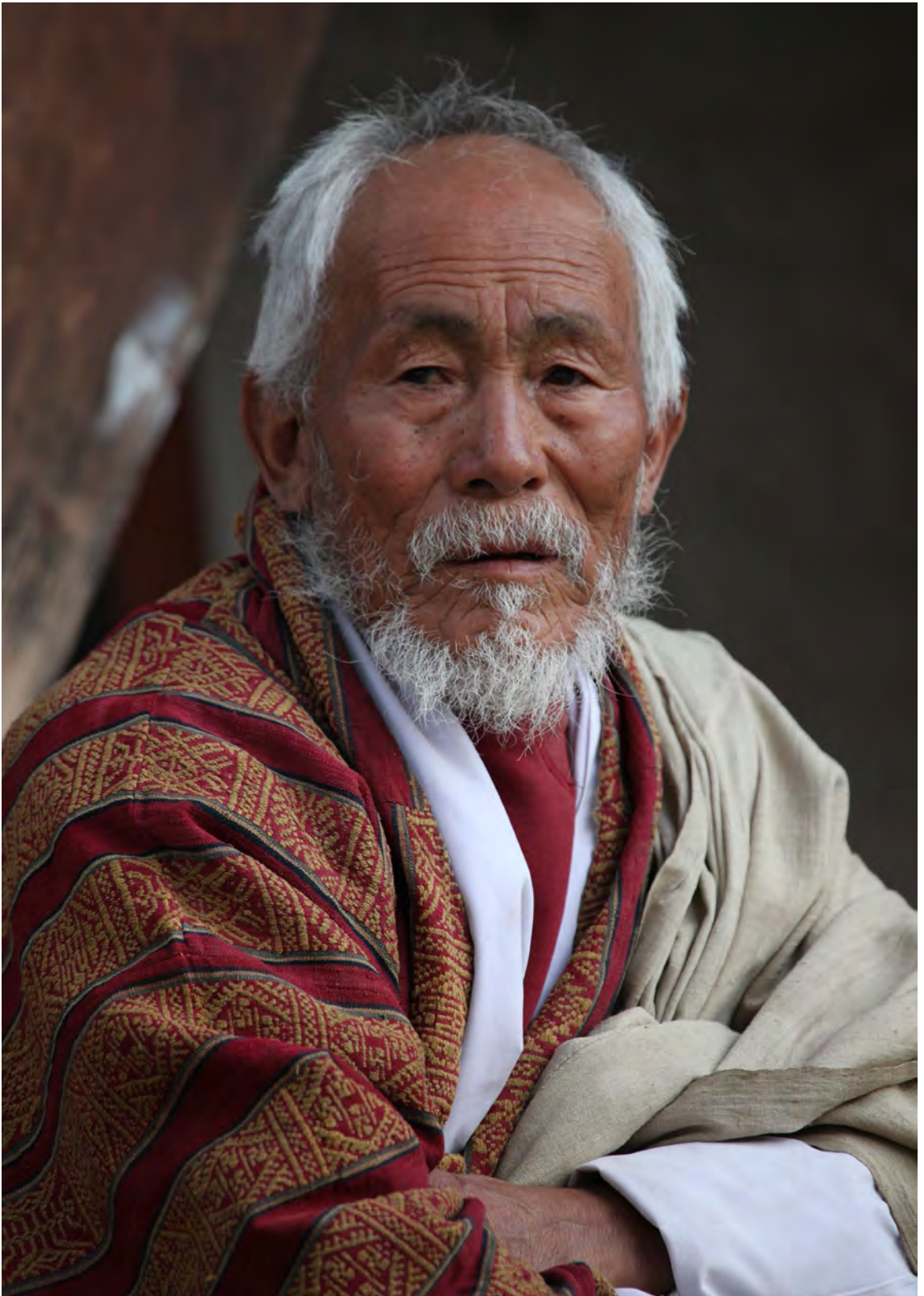
Pledges:

- *We shall provide unemployment and sustenance allowance for youth who have been actively seeking employment for over one year.*
- *We shall initiate social security and pension schemes for senior citizens who are 65 years and above and those without care providers will be provided with sustenance allowance.*
- *We shall initiate Senior Citizen Care Program to provide quality care to elderly citizens living in both rural and urban areas by collaborating with civil society organizations and volunteer groups.*
- *We shall introduce special discounts schemes in public transport and air travel for senior citizens.*
- *We shall institute priority service counters for senior citizens in hospitals and othe public services.*



- *We shall institute Nu 20 million seed fund for Royal Society of Senior Citizens.*
- *We shall introduce special poverty alleviation interventions to uplift the quality of life for the poor through provision of social welfare schemes, economic incentives, and livelihood development programs.*
- *We shall introduce special social security schemes for people living with disabilities such as disability allowances, equal pay and employment opportunities, and non-discriminatory rules for employment.*
- *We shall provide guaranteed jobs for students and graduate youth living with disabilities and youth with special needs.*
- *We shall establish transitional care facilities to provide care to the homeless and the orphans who have no one to look after them.*
- *We shall introduce social protection mechanisms to support single mothers without proper source of income and livelihood opportunities and invest in skills development and training for single mothers.*
- *We shall institutionalize strong safety nets for vulnerable women and girls without skills or sources of income.*
- *We shall work towards strengthening the social security system and welfare schemes for private sector employees.*
- *We shall ensure people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have access to cheap and affordable housing.*
- *We shall introduce the national homeownership program under the flagship program to enable Bhutanese to own a decent home.*
- *We shall ensure that ESP/GSP level civil servants receive appropriate retirement and pension and provident fund benefits.*
- *We shall institute special university scholarships for students from economically disadvantaged families.*
- *We shall institute mobile health teams to periodically take healthcare services for people in retreats and offer home based healthcare services to immobile or bedridden patients.*





6. Good Governance

Good governance is a hallmark of a functional democracy that encompasses the rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, the most important pillar of our development philosophy of GNH is Good Governance. Without Good Governance, we will not be able to achieve the vision of GNH. Our pursuit of equitable socioeconomic development, environmental sustainability and cultural preservation is dependent upon Good Governance.

6.1 Constitutional Bodies

We believe in strengthening our constitutional institutions to function without interference. Strong constitutional bodies are the backbone of a functional and effective democracy. They have to be strengthened with funds and the required human resources.

The constitutional bodies require to be strengthened by trusting them with their authority and independence to ensure that democracy succeeds. The PDP shall create a forum to regularly meet the constitutional bodies to ensure that they are able to fulfill their constitutional mandates to the best of their abilities. We will ensure that all the constitutional bodies are adequately staffed and have enough resources to fulfill their constitutional functions.

6.2 Empowering Local Government

PDP's ideology *Wangtse Chhirpel* places great importance on empowerment of people. Decentralization of power enhances the democratization process by empowering people to self-determine their own development needs and priorities, leading to equitable and balanced socioeconomic development and ultimately uplifting living standards and overall wellbeing of communities at the grassroots.

We will continue to make efforts in empowering the people through greater decentralization and more inclusive, bottom-up approach to planning and decision-making, so that, the benefits would directly trickle down to local communities throughout the country.

6.2.1 Empowering Gewogs

Each of the 205 gewogs in the country is a microcosm of our national life. Rural villages are the bedrock of our civilization and the birthplace of our unique culture and traditions, customs and heritage, and traditional way of life. We will prioritize gewog development by making substantial investments to make life more meaningful for people living in gewogs and chiwogs across the country.

Besides devolving power to the gewog administrations, we shall ensure that each gewog is able to capitalize on its unique resources to become self-sufficient. We



shall ensure that each gewog has a bare minimum infrastructure to stimulate the development of rural economy, facilitate trade and business, and create conducive environment for community vitality and wellbeing. By harnessing its unique resources and realizing its potential, we envisage each gewog to be a model of its own. To this end, every gewog shall have the necessary infrastructure and amenities to foster development.



We shall increase the Gewog Development Grant (GDG) to Nu. 5 million from Nu. 2 million.

Pledges:

- *We shall increase the Gewog Development Grant (GDG) to Nu. 5 million from Nu. 2 million.*
- *We shall initiate One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) program in all 205 gewogs.*
- *We shall fund a Nu. 20 million project in each gewog to be identified by the people.*
- *We shall provide sufficient human resource such as engineers, accountants and land record officers to gewog administrations to effectively and efficiently implement plans and activities.*
- *We shall construct a helipad in every gewog to facilitate emergency medical evacuation and for swift response during disaster emergencies.*
- *We shall build a communal warehouse in every gewog to facilitate storage of agricultural produce and trade.*
- *We shall construct an integrated meeting hall in every chiwog to provide*



space for public gathering and community events and activities.

- *We shall build an Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) Center in every chiwog to provide a congenial learning environment for children.*
- *We shall ensure every gewog has a fuel depot and a farm shop.*
- *We shall introduce Guaranteed Buy-back Scheme of agricultural produce to purchase farm produce and facilitate agriculture trade and business.*
- *We shall establish a waste management unit in every gewog.*
- *We shall establish an automobile workshop in every gewog to facilitate timely repair, maintenance and servicing of vehicles.*
- *We shall provide an additional power tiller to every chiwog to ensure a minimum of two power tillers in every chiwog.*
- *We shall establish repair centers for power tillers and farm machineries in every gewog.*
- *In order to take financial and banking services to the rural doorstep, every gewog shall have a gewog bank.*
- *We shall connect all chiwogs with farm roads by end of 2023.*
- *We shall ensure that all Gewog Center roads are properly maintained.*
- *We shall ensure all major farm roads that connect chiwog centers and populated villages at least have a base course (if not blacktopped) and proper drainage system to ensure the roads are pliable throughout the year.*
- *We shall provide one backhoe excavator to every gewog to maintain farm roads.*
- *We shall ensure that every BHU has one doctor, two nurses and suitable number of technicians.*
- *Every BHU shall have a minimum healthcare facility and treatment services such as OT facilities for minor operations, X-ray, ultra-sound, and blood-testing facilities.*
- *We shall provide one ambulance to every gewog to enable timely evacuation*



and referral of patients.

- *We shall expand the health Outreach Clinics (ORC) to chiwog and village level.*
- *We shall introduce public transport services in all gewogs.*
- *We shall enhance supply of electric fencing and improvise electric fencing to upscale our fight against wildlife encroachment and predation.*

6.2.2 Empowering Thromdes

Thromdes are important local government institutions responsible for planning and implementing development plans for urban centers, and in providing public services to urban residents. Today, a large number of Bhutanese, close to 22% of the entire population, resides in the four Thromdes of Thimphu, Phuentsholing, Samdrup Jongkhar and Gelephu. The growing population density in these Thromdes requires bigger investments in infrastructure development and public amenities and services to meet the emerging needs.

Our Throms and cities must be livable, environment friendly, and above all, enable people to live productive and meaningful lives. For that, Thromdes must be endowed with necessary resources, financial and human capacity, to implement bold initiatives that would transform the experience of living in the cities. Every Thromde has its own unique potential and opportunities and we shall ensure that each Thromde fully optimizes this potential to enhance living standards, create better opportunities, and contribute to the physical and emotional wellbeing of people living in cities.

Pledges:

- *We shall ensure that all households in the Thromdes have 24x7 water supply.*
- *Leveraging on the existing Thromde service delivery through online platforms and mobile apps, we shall further enhance service delivery by opening service counters in different locations of the Thromdes.*
- *We shall ensure that all Thromde services are delivered within 48 working hours from the day of application.*



- *We shall invest in building more parks and open spaces in every Thromde to provide a breathing space and for people to engage in physical activities, community get-togethers and for children's entertainment.*
- *Every Thromde shall have its own multi-recreational complex with state of the art facilities, both indoor and outdoor, such as swimming pool, basketball and badminton courts, etc.*
- *We shall build an Expo Complex in Thimphu to host major expos and trade fairs.*
- *Each Thromde shall have a designated space for sale of local products such as handicraft and agricultural produce.*
- *We shall explore ways to ease the housing problems in Thromdes by constructing cheap housing through public-private partnership model and other viable models.*
- *We shall review the Tenancy Act to regulate house rents.*
- *To address the growing waste problem in Thromdes, we shall invest in waste management and recycling technologies and privatize waste collection and management services.*
- *We shall prioritize development and maintenance of chortens and lhakhangs within the Thromde area and ensure that there are adequate amenities for elderly citizens for religious and spiritual pursuits.*
- *We shall develop and promote tourist attraction sites in the Thromdes.*
- *One of the major problems in the Thromdes today is frequent digging up of roads to lay down power cables (by BPC), to install cables (by telecom companies) and maintain sewer networks (by Thromdes). This happens because of poor coordination and planning among service providing institutions. We shall prioritize to build strong coordination and interlinkage among services providing institutions within the Thromde.*
- *We shall prioritize to reduce crimes and make our Thromdes safer through enhanced investments in crime prevention and advocacy programs.*



- *We shall create additional parking spaces for motor vehicles in the Thromdes.*
- *We shall work to address traffic congestion in Thimphu and Phuetsholing throms by constructing additional roads, flyovers and pedestrian bridges.*
- *We shall ensure that roads within Thromde areas are of high quality and maintained properly throughout the year.*
- *We shall invest in construction and expansion of storm drainage system within Thromde areas.*
- *We shall expand amenities such as footpath, street lighting, sewer networks etc. to make the cities livable and resident friendly.*
- *We shall install Quick Charging Stations in Thromdes to facilitate easy charging of electric vehicles.*

Pledges: Thimphu Thromde

- *We shall ensure that all households in Thimphu Thromdes have 24x7 water supply.*
- *We shall repair and maintain all roads within Thimphu Thromde.*
- *We shall establish JDWNRH as 'Super Specialist' hospital.*
- *We shall establish second national referral hospital in Thimphu.*
- *We shall address traffic congestion in Thimphu Thromde by constructing additional roads, flyovers, pedestrian bridges and parking space.*
- *We shall construct a second vegetable market in Thimphu Thromde.*
- *We shall build a Mother and Child Hospital, Cancer Hospital and expand the Army Hospital in Thimphu.*
- *We shall expand the existing public library in Thimphu Thromde.*
- *To address the growing waste problem in the capital city, we shall enhance waste collection and waste management efforts.*
- *We shall build an Expo Complex in Thimphu to host major expos and trade fairs.*



6.2.3 Empowering Dzongkhags

The dzongkhag administration has to be strong and independent to ensure that benefits trickle down to the grassroots in an effective manner. We will strengthen dzongkhags by providing necessary infrastructure, resources and facilities. All dzongkhags will have a minimum set of infrastructure and amenities to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing

of the people. Each dzongkhag will make use of its unique resources to create a vibrant local economy. The PDP envisions each dzongkhag to be self-sufficient, for which, we will empower Dzongkhag administrations to develop an economic policy to guide its growth trajectory, identify and start commercial projects, and create a vibrant local economy.

Pledges:

- *We shall ensure that each dzongkhag comes up with its own economic plan to enhance the dzongkhag's productivity cutting across all sectors.*
- *We shall identify a unique tourism product for every dzongkhag, which will be packaged and marketed to attract tourists.*
- *We shall initiate One Dzongkhag One Project (ODOP) through which the Dzongkhag administration will identify one unique project (commercial or cooperative). A separate budget will be allocated for the project.*
- *We shall identify and develop a mini industrial area for every dzongkhag.*
- *We shall prioritize the establishment of SMEs and CSIs in the dzongkhags.*
- *We shall create 12,000 jobs in 20 dzongkhags over the next five years through targeted interventions.*
- *We shall promote agricultural cooperatives and groups in the Dzongkhags.*
- *We shall conduct a comprehensive study of dzongkhags with housing problems for civil servants and town residents and appropriate measures would be taken to address the issue.*
- *We shall establish Dzongkhag Information and Service Center to facilitate provision of integrated public service delivery.*



- *We shall build a cinema hall in every dzongkhag, which would also function as a multi-purpose town hall, to be used for screening of movies and hosting events.*
- *Every dzongkhag shall have a waste management unit or facility, either operated by the dzongkhag or private entities.*
- *Every dzongkhag shall have proper cremation facilities.*
- *Every district hospital shall have at least one Gynecologist and a medical specialist assisted by three doctors and adequate nurses and technicians.*
- *All district hospitals shall provide the following diagnostic facilities and treatment services: proper OT facilities, X-ray, ECG, Lab facilities, dental and blood bank etc.*
- *We shall establish emergency obstetrics and essential surgical trauma centers in every district hospital.*
- *Every district hospital shall have a mobile clinical unit that will periodically reach healthcare services to remote communities and offer home based healthcare services to immobile/bedridden patients.*
- *We shall introduce health program for people in retreat and meditation, which will be provided by dzongkhag mobile health teams periodically.*
- *We shall open satellite health clinics in populated thromdes to decongest district and referral hospitals.*
- *We shall invest in building more parks and open spaces to provide a breathing space for people to engage in physical activities, community get-togethers and for children's entertainment.*
- *We shall prioritize development and maintenance of chortens and lhakhangs and ensure that there are adequate amenities for elderly citizens for religious and spiritual pursuits.*
- *We shall build new public toilets and sanitary complex.*
- *We shall expand and build new terminals for public transport buses and parking space for taxis and trucks.*



- *We shall build Business Incubation infrastructure to facilitate development of business ideas and startups in the dzongkhags.*
- *We shall build warehouse and cold storage facilities in the dzongkhags.*
- *We shall ensure that at least one football ground in every dzongkhag has an artificial turf.*
- *We shall ensure all dzongkhag roads are properly maintained throughout the year.*
- *We shall install Quick Charging Station in the dzongkhags.*
- *We shall build a public library in every dzongkhag.*

6.3 An Effective Civil Service

Our Monarchs instituted, with utmost care, a bureaucracy that is honest, dedicated and that shares a common vision for the future. Our civil servants, across all levels, have proved to be one of the best, with the interest of the nation always as their priority. We have the brightest and the most efficient planners, engineers, economists, administrators that a nation can wish for. Despite challenges that have sometimes undermined their role and despite unreasonable expectations, they have kept their spirits up and contributed immensely in achieving the vision of Gross National Happiness.

The civil service is the single biggest employer in the country with a total of 27,029 civil servants. The civil service continues to play a major role in implementing development plans and activities and in the delivery of critical

public services to the people. The PDP recognizes the important role of the civil service machinery and the contribution of the civil servants. We understand that much needs to be done to improve the working environment within the civil service to maximize outputs, with further investment in professional and capacity development and revision of civil service rules and regulations. In addition, we also need to reward hard working and performing civil servants based on meritocracy and review and revise salary and benefit structure.

Since it is the mandate of the Parliament to review and amend legislations, we will review and amend the RCSC Act to improve performance system, working and service conditions of our civil servants and to make the retirement age same for all categories of civil servants.



Pledges:

- *We shall initiate affordable housing leading up to homeownership for civil servants under the special flagship program. This program would enable civil servants to own a decent home.*
- *Since it is the mandate of the Parliament to review and amend legislations, we shall review and amend the RCSC Act to improve performance system, working and service conditions of our civil servants and to make the retirement age same for all categories of civil servants.*
- *We shall raise the vehicle quota from Nu. 800,000 to Nu 1,500,000.*
- *We shall provide a one-time vehicle quota of Nu. 1,500,000 to civil servants who are not eligible for vehicle quota and who have put in long years of service.*
- *We shall raise TA/DA and mileage substantially for civil servants in the lower category and make it equal across the board.*
- *We shall review LTC payment for all levels of civil servants.*
- *We shall introduce retirement benefits and pension and PF schemes for ESP/ GSP level civil servants.*
- *We shall raise the salaries of civil servants and ensure that the pay revision benefits mid and lower level civil servants the most.*
- *We will review and raise the salaries and benefits of the corporate sector.*
- *We shall establish crèche services in government offices to cater to the needs of parents with toddlers and babies.*
- *We shall develop affordable housing facilities for civil servants posted in rural dzongkhags and gewogs.*
- *We shall create examination centers in the dzongkhags to conduct Bhutan Civil Service Examinations in the dzongkhags.*



6.4 A Vibrant & Free Media

After the advent of private media in 2006, the Bhutanese media grew by leaps and bounds in the first few years. Besides informing the nation, the media have been crucial in advancing free speech through public debates, dialogues and discussions and dissemination of information. Despite grappling with sustainability issues, our young media continued to perform its

watchdog role, questioning the government and exposing corruption.

Media is an important democratic institution. We believe that for democracy to flourish, media must be strengthened. We shall come up with favorable policies to enable media houses to effectively fulfill their responsibilities.

Pledges:

- *We shall institute a Media Development Fund to facilitate access to financial assistance to ease the sustainability challenges faced by media houses.*
- *We shall provide financial incentives and tax holidays for media houses for the next five years.*
- *We shall subsidize printing of newspapers.*
- *We shall continue to invest in the professional development of journalists and media professionals through short-term and long-term trainings and internships in international news organizations.*
- *For greater and easier access to public information, every government agency shall have a media and information officer who will provide prompt information to the media and facilitate proactive sharing of information.*
- *We shall continue the monthly Meet-the-Press sessions to facilitate media's direct access to the cabinet to enable media to hold the government accountable and question the government on pertinent national issues.*
- *We shall support the Journalists Association of Bhutan through an annual sustainability fund.*



6.5 Rural Development

PDP's long term vision is to ensure holistic and equitable development and enable every Bhutanese to live a happy and meaningful life. Inspired by our ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel*, we are committed to taking development to all rural pockets in the country. The ultimate goal of development is to enhance the overall quality of life and that can only happen when people have access to roads, electricity, and safe drinking water, quality healthcare and education services, and economic opportunities to uplift living standards.

In our bid to bring rural areas into the national mainstream, we have focused on the development of our rural villages and far-flung settlements in the past five years. Rural development is at the heart



We shall fund a Nu. 20 million project in each gewog to be identified by the people.

of our agenda. We will continue to invest in rural development to make life easier and better for people living in rural areas. To this end, every gewog will have a bare minimum infrastructure to stimulate the development of rural economy, facilitate trade and business, and create conducive environment for community vitality and wellbeing.

Pledges:

- *We shall increase the Gewog Development Grant (GDG) to Nu. 5 million from Nu. 2 million.*
- *We shall initiate One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) program in all 205 gewogs.*
- *We shall fund a Nu. 20 million project in each gewog to be identified by the people.*
- *We shall construct a helipad in every gewog to facilitate emergency medical*



evacuation and for swift response during disaster emergencies.

- *We shall build a communal warehouse in every gewog to facilitate storage of agricultural produce and trade.*
- *We shall construct an integrated meeting hall in every chiwog to provide space for public gathering and community events and activities.*
- *We shall build an Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) center in every chiwog to provide a congenial learning environment for children.*
- *We shall ensure every gewog has a fuel depot and a farm shop.*
- *We shall introduce Guaranteed Buy-back Scheme of agricultural produce to purchase farm produce and facilitate agriculture trade and business.*
- *We shall establish a waste management unit in every gewog.*
- *We shall provide an additional power tiller to every chiwog to ensure a minimum of two power tillers in every chiwog.*
- *We shall establish an automobile workshop in every gewog to facilitate timely repair, maintenance and servicing of vehicles.*
- *We shall establish repair centers for power tillers and farm machineries in every gewog.*
- *In order to take financial and banking services to the rural doorstep, every gewog shall have a gewog bank.*
- *We shall ensure that all Gewog Center roads are properly maintained.*
- *We shall ensure all major farm roads at least have a base course (if not blacktopped) and proper drainage system to ensure the roads are pliable throughout the year.*
- *We shall connect all chiwogs with farm roads by end of 2023.*
- *We shall ensure that every BHU has one doctor, two nurses and suitable number of technicians.*
- *Every BHU shall have a minimum healthcare facility and treatment services such as OT facilities for minor operations, X-ray, ultra-sound, and blood-*



testing facilities.

- *We shall provide one ambulance to every gewog to enable timely evacuation and referral of patients.*
- *We shall expand the health Outreach Clinics (ORC) to chiwog and village level.*
- *We shall introduce public transport services in all gewogs.*
- *We shall enhance supply of electric fencing and improvise electric fencing to upscale our fight against wildlife encroachment and predation.*

6.6 Better Prepared for Disasters

Bhutan's location in the Himalayas and proximity to Seismic Zone IV makes the country vulnerable to earthquakes. Bhutan is also vulnerable to other natural disasters like glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF), windstorms, landslides, and flash floods. Man-made disasters such as fires also continue to pose threat to our forest resources, ancient heritage and properties. In addition, climate change induced disasters and transboundary epidemics are major concerns for Bhutan.

As a small country with limited resources, Bhutan must be prepared for large-scale disasters, which can otherwise cripple our nation, posing risks to stability and national security. His Majesty continues to strengthen the disaster response system and personally oversees the welfare of people affected during disasters. Inspired by His Majesty's benevolence, PDP has always put people's wellbeing first, and we will continue to strengthen the disaster response system to provide prompt response, rescue and rehabilitation.

Pledges:

- *We shall strengthen the Department of Disaster Management through capacity development and financing to ensure that we are prepared for any kind of disasters.*
- *We shall maintain a national database to analyze disaster risks and response*



mechanisms. Disaster mapping exercise will be periodically undertaken to assess risks and develop appropriate response mechanisms.

- *We shall establish the National Incident Command System to ensure proper coordination and communication during national disasters and emergencies.*
- *We shall appoint fulltime Disaster Management Officers in Dzongkhags to facilitate disaster preparedness and response.*
- *We shall strengthen the disaster response capacity of emergency service agencies at all levels through capacity development and provision of latest equipment and technology.*
- *We shall review and put in place strong guidelines to make our public institutions such as schools and hospitals safe.*
- *We shall allocate a separate contingency budget for recovery and reconstruction to enable communities affected by disasters to become resilient.*
- *We shall ensure that disaster mitigation and response are mainstreamed in policies across all sectors.*
- *We shall assess the risks associated with critical landslides around the country and implement appropriate measures.*
- *We shall assess the impacts of forest fires and enhance our efforts to reduce forest fires.*
- *We shall enhance and expand flood warning systems across all major river systems.*
- *We shall provide additional excavators to larger dzongkhags.*
- *We shall develop a modality to use helicopter services during disasters.*



6.7 Public Service Delivery

Providing easy, efficient and fast public service is a major priority for People's Democratic Party. Improving public service delivery has been at the heart of PDP government's agenda in the past five years. We have made huge progress in making public services easily available through automation, mobile apps and online platforms. Over hundred Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services can now be availed through different technology platforms and community centers in the gewogs. We have also made efforts in reducing the turn around time for service delivery. We also introduced the Government Performance Management System to make civil servants

and service providers accountable.

Building on this record, PDP will further enhance and streamline public service delivery through policy reforms, and creative, integrated service delivery solutions. We recognize that despite major reforms, there is still a lot of work to be done to change the way our public service providers function. This would require major re-engineering of service delivery processes and standards. The delivery of basic G2C services needs to be decentralized to improve access to public services. Our public service delivery system must be modeled on citizen-centric approach to meet the expectations of our people.

Pledges:

- *We shall empower Public Services & Grievances Redressal Division (erstwhile G2C Office) under the Cabinet Secretariat to take the lead role in streamlining public service processes.*
- *We shall reduce the turn around time for all G2C services.*
- *We shall establish Dzongkhag Information and Service Center to facilitate provision of integrated public service delivery.*
- *A major portion of public services shall be decentralized to the Local Governments mainly gewog administration to enhance easy access and fast delivery.*
- *We shall encourage all public service providers to set minimum standards and targets like waiting time. The service providers have to improve on this minimum standard over time.*



- *Community centers in the gewogs shall be equipped with necessary facilities to enable the gewog administration to deliver public services efficiently.*
- *We shall continue to automate and use technology platforms to improve public service delivery.*
- *All ministries, departments and government agencies providing G2C services shall have an integrated service window/desk.*
- *We shall set customer service standards for all public service providers and inculcate a citizen oriented work culture.*



7. Environment and Sustainable Development

Environment is one of the four pillars of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Bhutan has always prioritized conservation of the environment. Our Constitution, Article 5.3, mandates that “a minimum of sixty percent of Bhutan’s total land shall be maintained under forest cover for all time.” We still have 71% of our land area under forest cover of which 51.4%, accounting to 16,396 sq. km, as protected areas; 8.6% as ecological corridors; and the royal botanical parks constitute another 0.1%. Bhutan is also a biodiversity hotspot with over 6,000 species of plants and approximately 1,900 species of animals.

We shall give full priority to conserve our natural environment and ensure that the institutional capacities are strengthened to undertake systematic evaluation of development projects to ensure development with minimal impact on environment. Bhutan has ventured into innovative financing mechanisms with initiation of funds such as Bhutan for Life and Bhutan Trust Fund for Environment Conservation (BT FEC). The PDP will continue to invest in such programs to strengthen our efforts to conserve the environment.

Pledges:

- *We shall ensure that Bhutan’s forest cover is over 60% for all times to come.*
- *We shall initiate a major reforestation program over the next five years.*
- *We shall initiate a special program called Livelihood Choices for Marginalized Farmers.*
- *We shall promote Climate Resilient Livestock Farming.*
- *We shall adopt Climate Smart irrigation and water efficient technologies.*
- *We shall prioritize the development of community seed bank.*
- *We shall explore forest fire incidence reduction options.*
- *We shall update the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) on Climate change.*
- *To encourage community based adaptation plans to address climate change, we shall come up with the Urban Ecosystem Based Adaptation plans.*



- *We shall ensure the implementation of Ozone Depleting Substance (ODS) phase-out project.*
- *We shall establish new air quality monitoring stations in different parts of the country.*

7.1 Water for Every Household 24x7 in Bhutan

Forests are a valuable source of many gifts, the most important of which is the abundant supply. Our mighty forests sustain most of the springs, lakes, brooks and rivers that we see throughout the length and breadth of the country. As such, water should not be an issue in Bhutan. But the fact is that it is.

Today we are grappling with the issue of drinking water shortage. Climate change, rapid urbanization and unprecedented development have caught up with us. Even a country like Bhutan, endowed with a rich natural environment, is not spared the brunt of climate change and its consequences. Our water sources are drying up. And deforestation is making matters worse. The inevitable construction of farm roads across the country has also damaged many water sources. Severe water shortages are common in urban Bhutan too. Poor design and execution of works, and the ever-increasing population pressure in urban centers have caused water scarcity.

This is why we have prioritized water security as a flagship program for the next five years. The goal of the flagship program is straightforward – to ensure that each and every house in Bhutan has access to safe drinking water, 24x7. This would mean connecting all our houses – from those on the lofty mountains to those in the lush valleys below, and from those in the remote corners of our country to those in our bustling cities – with continuous safe drinking water 24x7.



Pledges:

- *We shall provide safe drinking water 24x7 to every household.*
- *We shall prioritize access to alternative drinking water sources. Top priority shall be accorded to rainwater harvesting and groundwater development.*
- *We shall rehabilitate and build infrastructure to ensure quality and reliable water supply.*
- *We shall review and improve the rural water supply scheme (RWSS) program.*
- *We shall maintain existing irrigation channels and construct 700kms of new irrigation channels to irrigate about 50,000 acres of land.*
- *We shall adopt new irrigation and water efficient technologies.*
- *We shall ensure the protection and management of catchment areas and water sources.*
- *We shall carry out timely and regular monitoring of critical glacial lakes and risk assessment.*
- *Towards this end, we shall establish the National Water Commission.*

7.2 National Water Commission

We shall establish the National Water Commission Secretariat directly reporting to the Prime Minister's Office. The National Water Commission (NWC) shall be an agency for water in Bhutan akin to what the National Land Commission (NLC) is for all land issues. Over the years, His Majesty has granted land to landless people. But without water, the land would not be put to effective use. Currently, water management and related issues are under the purview of the National Environment

Commission (NEC). The establishment of the NWC would mean that it would take over the mandate of water from the NEC.

In terms of legislation, Bhutan has the Bhutan Water Vision 2025, Bhutan Water Policy and the Water Act of Bhutan 2011. Article 4 of the Water Act enforces it 'to establish suitable institutions' to manage water in the country giving the government the tooth to establish the NWC. The 'Bhutan Water Vision 2025' document explains the water vision of Bhutan:



“Water is the most important natural, economic and life-sustaining resource and we must ensure that it is available in abundance to meet the increasing demands. Present and future generations will have assured access to adequate, safe and affordable water to maintain and enhance the quality of their lives and the integrity of natural ecosystems.”

The NWC would be responsible for formulating a National Water Master Plan. Bhutan has an arable land of only 7.8% of its total land area. Of the total arable land, only a meager 12.5% is irrigated which shows the extent of the need to manage water. Bhutan has a rich river system but the main source of drinking water is water catchment areas or the natural watersheds many of which are drying up. So there is an urgent need to have a water master plan and to implement it.

7.3 Bhutan for Life

The PDP shall strengthen the Bhutan for Life Initiative. It is a partnership project between Bhutan and WWF, on Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) model. PFP is an innovative approach to sustainably finance the long-term protection of important ecosystems around the world. Borrowing tactics from private finance, one of its trademarks is a single closing deal in which all partners come together to sign and agree to full funding. It offers

governments of developing countries a transition fund over an agreed time frame, giving them time to build up capacity and organize internal funding sources to manage protected areas in perpetuity. Bhutan for Life initiative will provide the Bhutanese government with a US\$ 40 million transition fund until 2030 to build up and effectively manage a robust network of protected areas and wildlife corridors, covering 51% of the country. This network will protect and restore wildlife—including endangered elephants, tigers, elusive snow leopards, and critically endangered white-bellied herons; contribute to rural economic development and the wellbeing of the Bhutanese people. It will support robust climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The impacts will extend far beyond Bhutan’s borders to the millions of people who rely on the region’s rivers, and will elevate Bhutan across the world as an example of permanent forest protection and climate resilience.

7.4 Green Bhutan

The PDP shall upscale and enhance the Green Bhutan Initiative. In June 2014, the PDP government launched the project, Green Bhutan. This national project focuses in beautifying towns all over Bhutan. The project also focuses on inculcating the culture of growing trees among the general populace. As a global environmental leader, it falls on Bhutan to



champion all ‘green’ initiatives and the PDP shall ensure that this national program gets its due importance and recognition.

7.5 Clean Bhutan

The PDP shall expand and implement the Clean Bhutan initiative. Clean Bhutan

is a national program initiated in 2014 with the aim to have ‘Zero Waste Bhutan by 2030’. It works with a mission to change the mindset of every Bhutanese to be responsible citizens and practice sustainable consumption by using available resources more effectively.



8. Culture and Heritage

Bhutan's unique culture and rich heritage are characteristics of Bhutan's distinct national identity. Our sovereignty as a nation depends on our cultural identity that sets us apart from rest of the world. It is therefore imperative that we continue to preserve our distinct culture, tradition, languages, customs and way of life. Modernization, fueled by technological advancement, is a powerful force, shaping new cultures and values and disintegrating old, traditional systems. We will have to carefully navigate this period of great

transition and preserve and promote our traditional and indigenous way of life to ensure our survival into posterity.

8.1 Language and Literature

Although a small country, Bhutan has a great diversity of local dialects including the national language, Dzongkha. Language is not only a medium of communication but also a carrier of culture and values. We shall therefore continue to preserve, protect and promote our national language and native dialects. We will promote our rich oral tradition and local literature.

Pledges:

- *We shall support projects and initiatives to promote Dzongkha language.*
- *We shall invest in developing Dzongkha literary resources by documenting oral literature, folk tales and stories.*
- *We shall ensure that all public services are provided both in Dzongkha and English to improve efficient and effective delivery of public services.*
- *We shall support all online services, App services, websites, and over-the-counter services to be provided equally in Dzongkha.*
- *We shall initiate multimedia documentation of all the indigenous languages native to Bhutan.*
- *We shall invest in Dzongkha ICTization to promote national language by developing tools, applications and systems.*
- *We shall create digital content such as cartoons and animations on local literature, folk tales, and songs.*
- *We shall appoint Dzongkha language teachers in missions abroad and in places where there is high concentration of Bhutanese.*



8.2 Arts and Crafts

The 13 traditional arts and crafts are our priceless cultural heritage, passed down the generation in its most authentic form. We shall continue to preserve and promote this rich heritage. In addition, we have also seen the emergence of contemporary arts, inspiring a new generation of young artists. It is this blend of two cultural worlds that define our transition into the 21st century.

Therefore, it is imperative that we preserve our rich traditional arts and crafts and also invest in contemporary arts.

Local arts and crafts industry is also a source of livelihood for many Bhutanese artists and craftsmen. Recognizing the industry's potential in alleviating poverty, creating jobs, and improving living standards of people, we shall prioritize the development of the arts and crafts sector.

Pledges:

- *We shall continue to support the Vocational Training Institutes and Zorig Chusum Institutes to offer high quality training and skilling programs on arts and crafts.*
- *We shall enable the Rigney College to offer more courses on arts and crafts.*
- *We shall promote SMEs in the crafts sector through easy access to finance and low interest loans to enable individuals and groups to start businesses.*
- *We shall establish clusters in rural communities to harness the potential of local crafts industry and achieve economy of scale.*
- *We shall facilitate market linkages and promotion of local art and craft products for local and international markets.*
- *We shall empower the Agency for Indigenous Crafts (APIC) to initiate local crafts development and clustering in rural communities.*
- *We shall support contemporary arts development in the country by establishing a Center for Contemporary Arts.*
- *We shall support CSOs to promote contemporary arts, positive engagement of young people, and gainful employment.*
- *We shall promote festivals on local arts and crafts.*
- *We shall promote local arts and crafts industry as a major tourist attraction.*





8.3 Creative Industry

The creative industries such as cinema, visual art, advertising and performing arts among others interweave culture and economy, with immense potential in promoting our culture and tradition,

in creating jobs for our young people, and contributing to economic growth. We shall create favorable conditions for the development of creative industries and enhance its competitiveness in the international market.



Pledges:

- *We shall establish an Art Incubation Center, which will provide facilities and resources to artists while developing creative products.*
- *We shall support local audio-visual production houses through fair competition policies, tax incentives and capacity development to enhance their contribution to the economy and to create more jobs.*
- *We shall establish the National Film Commission that will oversee the overall development and growth of the film industry.*
- *We shall support independent and art films, animation, publishing and design services.*
- *We shall organize international art fairs and film festivals to provide platform for young filmmakers and artists and to promote Bhutan as a credible arts and crafts destination.*

8.4 Heritage Sites and Monuments

Our heritage sites and monuments such as dzongs, lhakhangs, chortens and spiritual sites (nyes) are integral part of our spiritual

culture. We will continue to preserve these heritage sites and monuments into posterity.

Pledges:

- *We shall continue our support for the reconstruction of the Wangduephodrang Dzong and Drukgyel Dzong and ensure timely completion of both the projects.*
- *We shall restore and maintain dzongs, lhakangs and chortens across the country.*
- *We shall enhance library services on traditional language and literature.*
- *We shall encourage pilgrimage tourism within the country.*



PART IV

9. PDP FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

The PDP understands that realizing sustainable economic development is a culmination of prioritizing development activities. While there is a need to take a calculated approach to enhance all sectors, it has to be balanced by prioritizing developmental activities. Towards this end, the PDP has identified 11 flagship programs, which would go a long way in transforming the Bhutanese economy and ensure Bhutan's graduation from the list of LDC countries. The Flagship Programs would also ensure that Bhutan achieves its developmental goals in a sustainable manner.

The Flagship Programs are high priority multi-sector interventions to address specific national issues. The programs will undertake end-to-end intervention with multiple agencies and dzongkhags to work together under one program. It will be implemented alongside regular central and Local Government programs.



9.1 National Homeownership Program

The PDP understands that owning a home is the dream of every Bhutanese. In rural areas, most of the people live in their own house. But owning a house is a distant dream for a majority of people living in urban areas, which include civil servants, corporate and private sector employees. Today, our civil servants spend their entire lifetime serving in the civil service and when they retire, they have hardly enough saving to build a decent house. The story echoes with our corporate and private sector employees.

The PDP strongly believes in empowering our people at all fronts and it has to begin with the basics. Having a decent home is the birthright of every Bhutanese. The social and economic benefit of a stable homeownership across all levels of the population is fundamental in building an empowered nation. Towards this, the PDP will accord top priority to institute a system to dedicatedly work to ensure a credible national homeownership plan. The program would initially target Bhutanese living in urban areas.

Pledges:

- *We shall establish a national agency to spearhead the National Homeownership Program and formulate a National Homeownership Policy.*
- *The National Agency shall work closely with the National Pension and Provident Fund (NPPF) and/or financial institutions to offer the homeownership package to the civil service and the corporate sector.*
- *For the private sector, the national agency shall come up with different homeownership packages in collaboration with financial institutions.*
- *The National Agency shall identify locations in all 20 districts and in both urban and rural areas to implement the program.*
- *We shall initiate homeownership through construction of affordable housing, cheap and accessible loan schemes and land lease schemes.*
- *We shall provide financial subsidies and loan schemes for people in the rural areas without homes.*
- *We shall ensure all Bhutanese living across the border (Jaigaon) shall be provided affordable housing within Bhutan.*



9.2 Water for Every Household 24x7 in Bhutan

Forests are a valuable source of many gifts, the most important of which is the abundant supply of water. Our mighty forests sustain lakes, brooks and rivers we see throughout the length and breadth of the country. As such, water should not be an issue in Bhutan. But the fact is that it is.

Today we are grappling with the issue of drinking water shortage. Climate change, rapid urbanization and unprecedented development have caught up with us. Even a country like Bhutan, endowed with a rich natural environment, is not spared the brunt of climate change and its consequences.

Our water sources are drying up. And deforestation is making matters worse. The inevitable construction of farm roads

across the country has also damaged many water sources. Severe water shortages are common in urban Bhutan too. Poor design and execution of works, and the ever-increasing population pressure in urban centers have caused water scarcity.

This is why we have prioritized water security as a flagship program for the next five years. The goal of the flagship program is straightforward – to ensure that each and every house in Bhutan has access to safe drinking water, 24x7. This would mean connecting all our houses – from those on the lofty mountains to those in the lush valleys below, and from those in the remote corners of our country to those in our bustling cities – with continuous safe drinking water 24x7.

Pledges:

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- *Towards this end, we shall establish the National Water Commission.*

National Water Commission

We shall establish the National Water Commission Secretariat directly reporting to the Prime Minister's Office. The National Water Commission (NWC) shall be an agency for water in Bhutan akin to what the National Land Commission (NLC) is for all land issues. Over the years, His Majesty has granted land to landless people. But without water, the land would not be put to effective use. Currently, water management and related issues are under the purview of the National Environment Commission (NEC). The establishment of the NWC would mean that it would take over the mandate of water from the NEC.

In terms of legislation, Bhutan has the Bhutan Water Vision 2025, the Bhutan Water Policy and the Water Act of Bhutan

2011. Article 4 of the Water Act enforces it 'to establish suitable institutions' to manage water in the country giving the government the tooth to establish the NWC.

The 'Bhutan Water Vision 2025' document explains the water vision of Bhutan: "Water is the most important natural, economic and life-sustaining resource and we must ensure that it is available in abundance to meet the increasing demands. Present and future generations will have assured access to adequate, safe and affordable water to maintain and enhance the quality of their lives and the integrity of natural ecosystems." The NWC would be responsible for formulating a national water master plan.

Bhutan has an arable land of only 7.8% of



its total land area. Of the total arable land, only a meager 12.5% is irrigated which shows the extent of the need to manage water. Bhutan has a rich river system but the main source of drinking water is water

catchment areas or the natural watersheds many of which are drying up. So there is an urgent need to have a water master plan and to implement it.





9.3 National Highland Development Program

With the objective to create socioeconomically vibrant highland communities with sustainable livelihood, the PDP shall work to empower the people in the highlands with the basic infrastructure and facilities. This program is a long-term initiative that will work

towards transforming the lives of highland communities. There are a total of 12 Highland Dzongkhags and this long-term program will eventually cater to all the highland communities in the country.

Pledges:

- *We shall initiate highland specific policy exceptions.*
- *Targeted and customized interventions shall be developed based on the specific needs of the highland communities.*
- *We shall ensure that the highlands get quality education and health facilities.*
- *We shall ensure access to ICT and recreational facilities in the highlands.*
- *We shall ensure that the highlanders have access to proper housing and shelter.*
- *We shall explore and initiate sources of additional income for the highland communities.*



9.4 Startup Bhutan

We recognize the importance of entrepreneurship and with the sole objective to promote and facilitate entrepreneurial development in the country, the PDP government already initiated works to kick-start Startup Bhutan. The national program will serve as a single window providing a platform

to transform business ideas into reality. With a head office in Thimphu, Startup Bhutan will be a semi-autonomous agency reporting to a Board or a Steering Committee. The office shall serve as a single point of contact for the entire startup ecosystem and one-stop-shop for all startups.

Pledges:

- *We shall establish a dedicated startup Office that would serve as a single point of contact for the entire Startup ecosystem and one-stop-shop for the startups.*
- *We shall organize recruitment campaign to attract aspiring entrepreneurs.*
- *We shall establish an incubation to provide facilities for idea generation and provide logistical support for startup like office space, equipment etc.*
- *We shall work towards nurturing a culture of creativity and innovation among the youth and students in schools and colleges and organize entrepreneurship idea competitions.*
- *We shall organize entrepreneurial events and conduct trainings.*
- *We shall support startups in accessing finance, loans, obtaining clearances, license, intellectual property rights etc.*
- *We shall facilitate international networking, networking events with investors and experience sharing, etc.*
- *We shall help entrepreneurs before the start up, in the process of the startup and after the startup to ensure startup businesses grow.*



9.5 One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) Program

Despite notable improvements in the agriculture sector, there are still a lot of challenges. A lot needs to be done to create effective and efficient linkages between the farmers and the market. Agriculture is plagued with poor quality, low volume, poor market network and non-use of

technology. This calls for development of value chain systems for products of small-scale farmers. Today, 80 gewogs in the country have OGOP products. The PDP will upscale it and take it to all the 205 gewogs in the country.

Pledges:

- *We shall ensure every gewog to come up with a product that can be marketed within and outside the country.*
- *We shall introduce buy-back schemes in rural areas to encourage and enhance agricultural productivity, and trade and business.*
- *We shall focus on creating value chain enterprises and improve diversification, marketing and distribution of agricultural produce and products.*
- *We shall provide support for production, processing, packaging and labeling, standard setting and marketing of products.*
- *We shall prioritize capacity development of producers to enable them to develop products for both the national and the international markets.*
- *We shall provide technology support in production and post-production of agricultural products.*
- *We shall support existing agriculture groups and cooperatives and promote new groups and cooperatives.*



9.6 Digital Drukyul

The PDP strongly believes that e-governance is the future. In today's world, ICT offers the tools to make public service delivery effective and efficient. But challenges remain. The absence of quality data on citizens and services hinder the decision making process. Inadequate

capacity to effectively implement ICT projects is a major concern. Lack of coordination among the government agencies hamper the delivery of digitized services. As such, Digital Drukyul will adopt ICT to improve public service delivery.

Pledges:

- *We shall simplify and streamline public service delivery by using ICT platforms.*
- *We shall upscale e-governance and streamline efforts to go paperless.*
- *We shall enhance access, reliability and security of ICT systems and infrastructure.*
- *We shall establish one Digital Identity for all online services.*
- *We shall establish Integrated Business Licensing System.*
- *We shall prioritize Digital schools to improve teaching learning outcomes with the use of multimedia content and digital textbooks.*
- *We shall establish Digital Health system and introduce e-patient record management system.*
- *We shall introduce vehicle tracking system to track vehicles to address vehicular crimes and maintain vehicle statistics.*
- *We shall provide one laptop to every teacher.*
- *We shall connect every school with high-speed Internet connectivity.*
- *We shall enhance Digital Literacy.*



9.7 Tourism

Tourism is the biggest service industry in Bhutan and it generates significant volume of foreign currency and contributes immensely to national revenue. It provides employment to a significant number of people and its benefits are cross sectional from tour operators to farmhouse owners to people engaged in providing trekking services. The policy of 'high value, low impact' tourism has been inspired by our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which positively highlights our national culture.

The tourism industry also offers a wonderful opportunity to brand Bhutan as a credible and premier tourist destination

in the world. The PDP is fully aware of the opportunities of the tourism sector and is committed to capitalize from the industry.

However, there are major challenges in the industry. The districts of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Wangdue and Bumthang are the major beneficiaries of the industry. Seasonality is another major issue, with tourist arrivals concentrated in Spring and Autumn. Moreover, 80% of the tourists visit Bhutan on cultural tours, amplifying the need to diversify tourism products. There is also a need to build tourism infrastructure in the eastern, northern and southern parts of the country to promote tourism in these parts of the country.

Pledges:

- *We shall designate industry status to tourism sector to facilitate access to business finances and business promotion.*
- *We shall work towards enacting a Tourism Act in close consultation with all stakeholders.*
- *We shall develop and promote tourism assets such as tangible and intangible heritages.*
- *We shall open up all dzongkhags to tourism.*
- *We shall open the southern gateways to facilitate arrival and departure of tourists.*



- *We shall create 5,000 new jobs in the tourism sector in the next five years.*
- *We shall explore the possibilities of constructing additional domestic airports in eastern Bhutan to encourage tourism in the east.*
- *We shall develop and expand the Gelephu Domestic Airport infrastructure as an emergency landing airport to handle landing of Airbus aircrafts in situations when landing is not possible in Paro. This would be the first step towards expanding the Gelephu Airport into an international one.*
- *We shall buy additional helicopters to enhance domestic helicopter services and tourism.*
- *We shall identify every dzongkhag as tourist destination for special product or services, and brand and promote each dzongkhag accordingly.*
- *We shall promote eastern, southern and central dzongkhags as attractive tourism destinations to diversify benefit from the tourism industry.*
- *We shall promote Bhutan as a unique destination for adventure sports.*
- *We shall promote linkages between tourism and other sectors like agriculture, handicraft, businesses and other creative industries.*
- *We shall also promote domestic tourism by developing and advocating pilgrimage and spiritual tourism sites for Bhutanese.*
- *We shall promote Bhutan as a unique Meeting Incentive Convention and Events (MICE) tourism destination.*
- *We shall facilitate capacity enhancement of our tour guides through various training programs both within the country and abroad.*
- *We shall facilitate the establishment of training centers and tertiary institutes in the hospitality sector.*
- *We shall continue providing economic incentives to promote eco-tourism.*
- *We shall extend the incentives already enjoyed by high-end hotels to all tourist standard hotels.*
- *We shall facilitate and promote the handicrafts sector through various incentives.*



9.8 Organic Bhutan

Bhutan has a geographically challenged landscape with only 2.93% of its total land area under cultivation. But agriculture is still the primary sector in Bhutan supporting majority of the population. The traditional farm practices are largely subsistence in nature and efforts toward commercialization of agriculture have begun very recently. However, Bhutan remains largely organic. Of the total area under cultivation, only 6% uses chemical fertilizer in Bhutan. This is primarily because Bhutan has always prioritized organic agriculture.

Taking Bhutan's commitment to go organic onto the global stage, Bhutan pledged to the world to go 100% organic by 2020 and

this declaration was made at the Rio+20 Sustainable Development conference in 2012 in Brazil. Bhutan followed up on its commitment by coming up with appropriate legislations and strategic policies. The Economic Development Policy 2016 recognizes agriculture as one of the five jewels for economic development.

We strongly believe that Bhutan has huge potential to go completely organic which will complement objectives to enhance food security and livelihood by creating opportunities in the agriculture sector. Thus, the PDP has underscored Organic Bhutan as a flagship program for the next five years.

Pledges:

- *We shall ensure that the entire country goes fully organic.*
- *Each dzongkhag shall identify priority organic produce or products and the dzongkhags will pursue commercial farming of the identified products/produce.*
- *We shall support local organic production through access and availability to organic farm inputs.*
- *We shall improve access and availability to organic seeds, bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers, feed and fodder and replace pesticides with bio pesticides.*
- *We shall upscale the Bhutan Organic Regulation and Certification System.*
- *We shall facilitate the certification of products at the local, national and*



international level.

- *We shall promote and conserve important traditional crops, animals and plants under the banner of organic biodiversity promotion program.*
- *We shall ensure capacity development of the organic sector.*
- *We shall upscale Brand Bhutan Initiative, which prioritizes the organic sector.*

9.9 Central Schools

The quality of education in our schools has been the most debated issue. Despite concerted efforts made by the government, quality of education still remains a national concern. With globalization, the education system is expected to produce internationally competent graduates. There was an urgent need to revisit the education model in the country and it led the PDP government to institute the new system of central schools in 2015 in the country. The central schools aim to consolidate schools by pooling in resources to ensure that our students get the best education by providing them the most conducive atmosphere to learn and by providing

teachers the best platform to teach.

The central schools have been instituted to address the issue of informal boarding, maintaining right class size and efficient deployment of teachers. An independent review carried out by the School Planning and Coordination Division for central and autonomous schools say that central and autonomous schools have instilled significant good practices compared to non-central schools. The study found that these schools have a strategy in place to strengthen pedagogy and monitoring and support programs with specialized learning programs. As such, the PDP will further expand central schools in the country.

Pledges:

- *We shall establish a central school in every gewog. Currently there are 63 central schools.*
- *We shall not close down any school. Instead, we shall provide central school facilities to all primary schools.*
- *We shall establish Early Childcare and Development (ECCD) Center in every*



chiwog. There are 1,044 chiwogs in the country.

- *We shall establish one Special Education Needs school in every dzongkhag to provide equal access to education for children with learning difficulties and special needs. .*
- *We shall promote autonomous schools to empower our school authorities for greater creativity and innovation in education practices.*
- *We shall establish three schools specialized in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).*
- *We shall establish two schools specialized in promotion of performing arts.*
- *We shall establish three sports academies to promote sports.*
- *We shall set up smart classrooms and intensify ICT in teaching-learning process and ICT integrated teaching pedagogy.*
- *We shall connect all schools with high-speed Internet connectivity.*
- *We shall ensure that schools remain closed on Saturdays.*
- *We shall provide day meals in all schools in the country.*
- *We shall provide safe sanitary pads for every girl student who cannot afford it.*
- *We shall establish two scout centers, one national and one regional, to boost the scouting program.*
- *We shall construct three youth centers in different parts of the country.*
- *We shall install air conditioning facilities in schools in southern Bhutan and those located in warmer climatic zones. And we shall install heating system in classrooms for schools located in higher altitudes.*
- *We shall continue providing loan scheme for tertiary education with special focus on students from economically disadvantaged families.*



9.10 Rural Enterprise Program

PDP's ideology of *Wangtse Chhirpel* is to empower people and the party's commitment is to empower people economically, politically, and socially. For economic empowerment, the PDP strongly believes in creating opportunities for our rural people. It is with this objective that the PDP has identified rural enterprise as a flagship program. The flagship program is a multifaceted initiative that will promote and create opportunities for rural enterprises. It shall include cottage and small industries and all areas in the primary sector, which comprises the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) sector, Agricultural sector, and Livestock and Forestry sectors.

The Rural Enterprise Program would be crucial to uplift the lives of 69% of the Bhutanese population living in rural areas that depend mainly on agriculture for livelihood. Our rural enterprises face new challenges due to increasing imports because of globalization and free trade. Limited access to modern technology and inadequate capital and resources compounded with the realities of limited capacity, low skill and low production volume have stifled the competitiveness of our agriculture produce and products. But with modern amenities reaching rural communities, there are also opportunities that need to be tapped.

Pledges:

- *We shall initiate the RNR Enterprise Development Program (RNR-EDP) to facilitate all enterprises engaged in RNR-related business.*
- *The RNR-EDP shall facilitate greater investment and more private sector participation to create a vibrant agro-industry in the country.*
- *Priority shall be given to agro-businesses that are involved in value addition.*
- *We shall provide financial support to all the enterprises that will be established under the aegis of this flagship program.*
- *We shall set up a Division called RNR Agri-Business Development Division under*



the agriculture ministry to play the lead role to promote and support agri-business development in the country.

- *We shall establish selected RNR Enterprises in different dzongkhags around the country, based on market dynamics and availability of raw materials. The enterprises will be based on PPP model.*
- *We shall organize dzongkhag level competitions to set up the most viable RNR enterprises.*

9.11 Poverty alleviation

Poverty alleviation remains a major priority for the People's Democratic Party. In the past five years, the poverty rate declined to single digit at 8.2% in 2017 from 12% in 2012. Rural poverty was reduced from 16.7% in 2012 to 11.9% in 2017. We also significantly reduced urban poverty to 0.7% in 2017 from 2% in 2012. The PDP will target to bring down poverty

levels below 5% in the next five years. This will be achieved through multi-pronged poverty reduction strategies and targeted interventions at the poorest communities in the country. We shall also upscale interventions in regions where poverty is more pronounced and speed up growth through various rural development programs.

Pledges:

- *We shall bring down poverty level below 5% in the next five years.*
- *We shall introduce buy-back schemes in rural areas to encourage and enhance agricultural productivity and agriculture trade and business.*
- *We shall upscale poverty reduction interventions in dzongkhags with high prevalence of poverty.*
- *We shall develop specific livelihood interventions targeted at the poorest communities in the country.*



- *We shall enhance food availability and sufficiency for the poor by providing easy access to cheap farm machinery, quality seeds, and regular monitoring and guidance.*
- *We shall promote SMEs and CSIs in rural areas with a focus on valued added agri-businesses.*
- *We shall initiate One-Gewog-One-Product (OGOP) program under a special flagship program.*
- *We shall facilitate access to finance for businesses that promote local economy, jobs creation and value addition.*
- *We shall prioritize the integration of local enterprises and communities in the tourism industry.*
- *We shall enhance Priority Sector Lending (PSL) program for youth, farmers' groups and community based organizations.*
- *We shall establish a bank in every gewog to take financial and banking services to the rural doorstep.*
- *We shall expand the already existing subsidies and support schemes available to farmers in the agricultural sector.*
- *We shall ensure that all Gewog Center roads are properly maintained and all major farm roads at least have a base course (if not blacktopped) to ensure the roads are pliable throughout the year.*
- *We shall expand and diversify loan schemes of REDCL to promote entrepreneurship.*





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