

Election Commission of Bhutan



Charter for Network of Bhutanese for Electoral Democracy in Bhutan

(Network)

2. Objectives

The *Network* is an initiative to provide opportunity to the Bhutanese to contribute ideas and engage in academic, research and substantive discussions related to democracy and elections.

It shall encourage wide public participation of interested Bhutanese academicians and development practitioners in discussion with the Election Commission of Bhutan for deepening democracy and in particular promotion of higher electoral standards in the country.

It shall attempt for optimization of locally available resources, enhancing the sense of participation and active engagement in the democratic process towards building a responsible and concerned citizenry.

3. Membership

Membership shall be extended to a Bhutanese who is:

- 1) Interested to contribute to building a vibrant democratic culture and institutions;
- 2) Interested in research and development, study, debate on challenges facing Bhutanese Electoral Democracy; and
- 3) Not affiliated to a political party or required to remain above politics under the Constitution.

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“... I would like to seize the historic Trenchongling as the right venue to announce that we will work on two initiatives that is to form Volunteer-VOICE (Volunteers for Voter Information, Communication and Education) of all Bhutanese who are interested to carry out voter and civic education and a Network of Bhutanese for Electoral Democracy in Bhutan (Network). The latter will comprise of individuals who are bubbling with ideas to help Bhutan on the righteous democratic path through sharing of ideas.”

Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan at the 7th Batch of Desuung Training at the Military Training Centre, Trenchongling, Wangdue Phodrang on 17th of April 2013.

1. Introduction

The Election Commission of Bhutan is an independent Constitutional Body vested with the mandate to conduct free and fair elections in Bhutan. It is also charged with the responsibility for voter awareness and participation, electoral and civic education notwithstanding other stakeholders equally sharing this important responsibility towards a Vibrant Democracy.

The Commission, therefore, considers it essential to institute a mechanism to provide a forum offering opportunity for public participation in research and development, study, debate on challenges facing Bhutanese Electoral Democracy in the form of a network of Bhutanese to be known as the Network of Bhutanese for Electoral Democracy in Bhutan (*Network*).



4. Registration of Membership

The Electoral Education and Training Division (EETD) will regularly advertise, including placing on the ECB Website, the announcement for registration of members with open invitation to register with EETD of the Election Commission.

5. Membership Privilege

A Member will have:

- 1) The opportunity to freely express his/her own views and/or comment on views/thoughts of another member on a discussion topic as may be floated from time to time, subject to standard rules and responsibilities for any decent discussion; and
- 2) The privilege to attend international forums of the electoral and democratic associations such as AAEA, A-WEB and GEO as part of the ECB delegation.

6. Forums for Engagement

The EETD shall be responsible to draw up a Plan of Action on the various areas of interest and coordinate academic research initiatives by Bhutanese Citizens in the field of election and democracy.

The EETD shall organise an Annual Conference to enable the members to present and discuss new ideas and research works in the field of democracy and election covering both national and international best practices.

The EETD shall in conjunction with the ECB IT Unit set-up and maintain a dedicated online forum which shall be hosted on the ECB website where members can discuss and advice on issues related to democracy and elections.

A regular newsletter of the *Network* will keep the members connected together and made up-to-date on the ECB activities.

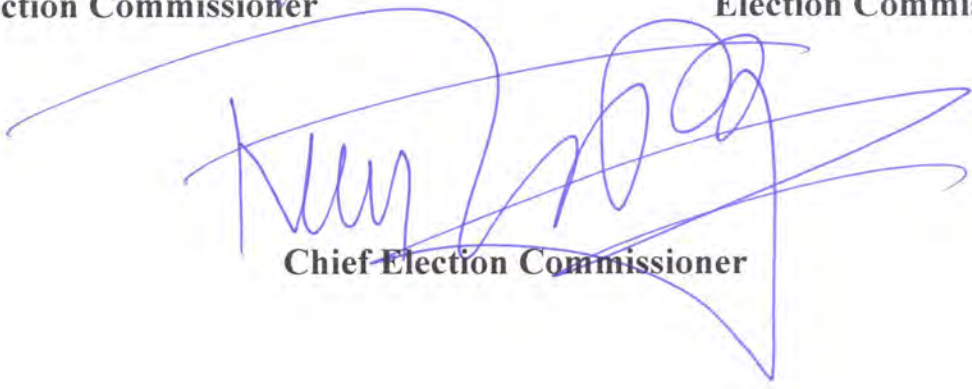
This Charter for the Network of Bhutanese for Electoral Democracy in Bhutan (*Network*) outlining its purpose, authority, key activities and membership is hereto adopted by the Election Commission on this day, the **13th of August 2013**.



Election Commissioner



Election Commissioner



Chief Election Commissioner