

**NA Elections  
2023-24**



**PUTTING NATION FIRST**

For People, Prosperity and Progress

**2023**



---

## Preamble

We, **Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa:**

**GUIDED** by the vision of His Majesty The King;

**BOUND** by the allegiance to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

**INSPIRED** by the desire to nurture and strengthen the principles of parliamentary democracy;

**COMMITTED** to serve the Tsa-wa-sum selflessly and ahead of political interest;

**SOLEMNLY** pledge ourselves to uphold the commitments we make in this manifesto and to work for prosperity, unity, security and political stability of Bhutan at all times.

---



## Table of CONTENT

Part one: 13 <sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan .....	11
Technology Driven Economy .....	13
Enhance Productivity .....	14
Enhance Markets .....	16
Ecological services/resources .....	17
Control and prevention of diseases .....	19
Quality and quantity of workforce .....	21
Access to quality services .....	21
Healthcare system.....	23
Technology for health system efficiency.....	24
Education sector .....	25
Learning environment & infrastructure .....	27
Curriculum and assessment system.....	28
Education resource mobilisation .....	30
Lifelong learning opportunities.....	31
Research and Development .....	32
Social Protection System.....	33
Social service delivery.....	34
Border Management.....	35
Air, surface, internet .....	35
Order and Security .....	36
Disaster resilience .....	36
Disaster governance.....	37
Disaster preparedness .....	38
Result-orient governance.....	41
Public sector management .....	42
Data and statistics .....	42
Digital ecosystem .....	43
Public oversight.....	44



Part two: 13 <sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan .....	46
Health Services – Protecting and promoting better health .....	47
Economic Development – Accelerating the Economy .....	52
Education Services – Transformative Education .....	59
Employment Opportunities – Creating more opportunities and meaningful jobs .....	64
Transport and Connectivity – Building durable and reliable transport and connection .....	68
Efficient Public Services – Responsive and Accountable .....	72
Agriculture Development – Zathung da Zeychoe Nyensung .....	76
Developing Energy Security – Powering our Future .....	82
Harnessing Water Security – Assuring adequate water for all and all purposes.....	87
Home Affairs – Promoting Tradition and Culture .....	91



## FOREWORD

We begin by offering our gratitude to the people of Bhutan for having given us the opportunity to serve the Tsa-Wa-Sum over the last five years which was marked with unprecedented events which will forever go down in the annals of history. As we come to the end of our term and offer our services once again for the people of Bhutan to choose as their representative, we would like to submit the following.

First and foremost, we humbly and with utmost patriotism, offer our heartfelt gratitude and dedication to His Majesty the King, who has always been our guiding light, unifying force and beacon of hope at all times. The immense sacrifices, difficulties endured and the unstinted support and compassion for the people during the COVID pandemic will forever be etched in the hearts and minds of every Bhutanese, inspiring us all to work hard to fulfil his noble vision. We have been guided by His Majesty's vision and benevolence throughout our tenure and most blessed to have got the opportunity to serve, observe and learn closely.

Second, His Holiness Je Khen Rimpoches, central monastic body, Lams, Lopens and the entire religious community offered prayers and kurims for the welfare of the people and the country, which contributed to our success against the COVID pandemic. Their continued offering and prayers for the well being of the country is acknowledged and entirely supported. We hold in high regard the role of the Zhung Dratshang in strengthening, thereby, securing our living spiritual and cultural faith, contributing to the wellness of not just the people, but all sentient beings in the country. Time and again, it has been aptly demonstrated of the power of our choe-chongs and protective deities to allow us to lead happy lives which makes us unique and truly fortunate to be a Bhutanese.

Third, our immense gratitude and respects to the armed forces, men who have sworn to guard our land and sovereignty, and maintaining continued peace that successive monarchs of the country have envisioned. For the first time in our history, national security was threatened by an invisible enemy in the form of the COVID virus. Our armed forces came out strong as ever and provided the much needed support to secure our borders, ensure smooth provision of services, help construct facilities at lightning speed and maintained law and order at a time when the world saw unprecedented violence.

The role played by the Dessups, the fourth arm of the services, was a boon for the entire country. As prophesied by His Majesty, the initiation of the Dessups bore its best fruits during the difficult period of COVID when the orange clad warriors took over all. The difficult aspects of managing the pandemic. From serving in remote locations to man the border, to delivery of food and medicine, ensuring continuity of public services and relieving the difficulties of the common people.



Fourth and importantly, the people of Bhutan - who have supported and contributed to all that we have been through in the last five years. The immense outpouring of support, volunteering and coming together as one family has seen us through the most difficult two and half years of the pandemic. Helping each other, following government directives even when it was difficult, enabled a unified response that showcased Bhutan's best to the world and has become an example and envy across the world.

When COVID struck the country and international borders had to be closed, immense problems arose, revealing immense vulnerabilities and neglect in the way we functioned and operated. There were no or very limited systems in place to address issues such as trade, connectivity, movement of goods and people, data of Bhutanese travelling abroad, payment and other financial transactions, illegal residents along the border and criminal activities.

The lack of coordination among agencies, duplication of work and responsibilities, working in silos, competing authority between agencies and the self-interest of various sectors and groups. His Majesty's repeated concerns on apathy, indifference by service providers and the need to insert 'ngar' in the way we do things has been the rallying cry for the major reforms and changes ushered in.

After nearly sixty decades and valuable lessons learnt, we took the major initiative to completely transform our governance structure so as to correct the deficiencies in our system, cover and amend our vulnerabilities, enhance efficiency and accountability in our work and improve the quality and promptness of our services. These reforms were also intended to provide better opportunities for our youth and secure their future, to create better work conditions and enumerations for our public servants and above all to change the trajectory of our development path - to grow faster and more sustainably.

Like so many of the major reforms, the impacts of these changes will be seen in the months and years ahead. The laws that have been impacted, policies that have been adopted and the programs that have been initiated have all been done in the best interest of the country and the people without an iota of political interest.

We have demonstrated that personal interests must be kept aside for the larger interest of the country and the future. For too long, political parties and politicians have maintained their self-interest, swayed to populist demands and stooped to the wrath of the powerful and the rich. Not DNT. Every decision was made keeping the welfare of the entire people and the long-term benefit



of the country. We are proud today of what we have achieved and what can be achieved in the years to come.

As in the past we have undertaken nation-wide consultation in drafting this manifesto. Led by our Vice President, Dasho Sonam Kinga and the hard work of all our candidates, every nook and corner of the country was covered and the wishes and hopes of the people have been reflected. We informed the people of the objectives of the major reforms and the importance of continuity to see that those objectives are achieved.

Despite the immense challenges of two and half years of COVID, during which saving lives became our number one priority, majority of our pledges and activities in the 12th FYP have been completed. In addition to that, we have also implemented additional projects such as water flagship program, GSB construction of major farm roads, provision of chain linked fencing, improving technology of schools, nation-wide stray dog neutering and vaccination, trade facilitation and health screening programs among others.

We have gained invaluable experience that spurred the major reforms and transformation in the country. Accordingly, we have drafted the 13th FYP to reflect the continuity of the programs to ensure that each of the program and projects lead to fruition. It is both a short term and long-term goal which has been drafted by sectoral professionals with inputs and approval from our cabinet. The manifesto reflects the aspirations of all our people across sectors, age groups and across our country.

The plan is to ensure continuity of the major reforms and see the fruition of the noble goals laid down with the grand vision to become a developed country by 2034. As documented in the 13 FYP, our manifesto also reveals a longer-term goal with a shorter-term outlook to align with governments tenure of five years.

Today, as we head towards the fourth parliamentary elections, DNT steps forward once more, with renewed faith in the leadership and trust in the people of Bhutan, as a choice for continuity and hope, to instil nation ahead of self, to sustain political peace and harmony and to better serve the King, country, and its people.

Our humble approach, willingness to listen and engage and above all, our accessibility and genuineness to serve sets us apart from our political adversaries. While all have stepped forward to serve, we are confident that we will be able to continue to serve you with humility and promptness. Thus, with reaffirmed conviction and genuine intentions, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa once again offers itself to the people of Bhutan for the 2023 Parliamentary elections.



---

## Our Manifesto - Putting Nation first

---

To deliver the plans, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa has gained the confidence and experience needed in governance, kept our political interest aside for national interests and further strengthened our team with renewed committed professionals with varying experiences, to offer a strong, stable, and trusted government for the people. Our Prime Minister has revealed that he is humble, straight forward and committed. As witnessed by the nation, he works day in, night out - as he has always done as a doctor and is willing to make tough decisions in the interest of the nation. Although lockdowns and economic decisions were tough, they were made in the best interest of the country and today we can all be proud of what we achieved during the most difficult period. His passion to continue providing surgical services even on weekends reflects his service to the country. As we have done in the last five years, we will serve the Tsa-wa-sum with utmost humility and dedication to realise this manifesto put together with the vision for a prosperous, secure, and happy Bhutan.

In our consultation with the people, their message is clear. DNT has been responsive and have demonstrated ability to govern. The successful management of COVID-19 pandemic was appreciated. They support the reforms and the changes made, knowing that it is in their best interest.

While any Party that forms the government will govern as per the plan documents and within the rules and regulations, they want a government that is humble and ready to listen. They want politicians to be accessible and to allow their voices to be heard. Rather than in demonstrating their power and authority, they want a government that remains rooted in the humble background of the people and to be always ready to hear them out. We are happy to know that the people are satisfied with our approach and humility.

In governance, the provision of block grants to the local governments provides ownership and independence for them to design projects that are of importance to the local community and that this should continue. For bigger projects and of national interest, the Dzongkhag, together with the relevant sectors should carry out the project. Towards this we have created the committee of four coordinating secretaries (C4CS) to ensure that there is better coordination and that agencies work together more efficiently.





The people strongly conveyed the message that they do not want populist handouts and short-term gifts from the central government. These are more self-centered than for greater good. They know very well that these short-term gimmicks have little impact on their longterm future and instead are very dangerous for Bhutan as they are unsustainable. Over the last five years it has become apparent that it is critical that we achieve Rang-go Rang-drup (Self Reliance) in sectors such as food security, home security and economic security. It is for this reason that we introduced and supported the passing of the historic Gyalsuung bill, and we excited to see its implementation. In addition to contributing to building youth for the future, it will ensure that we fulfil our overarching goals of self-sufficiency.

As we have demonstrated, we are not afraid of taking bold decision as long as it is in the interest of the nation. We cannot be held hostage by interest groups where the benefits are accrued only by a select few while the rest of the country suffers. People want strong policy decisions, fair and equal opportunities and government projects that are equitable. We have always kept the nation and people first ahead of our political interests.

As the country develops rapidly the lack of opportunities and the exodus of young people going abroad is one of the biggest concerns. Several policies and programs have been initiated to reverse this trend. His Majesty's bold decision to establish a special economic zone in Sarpang district is one of the grandest and ambitious of all. Instead of Bhutanese going abroad, we will bring those same opportunities here to Bhutan so that our young people can remain in the country.

As a government, despite the impediment of COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to save lives, complete the implementation of the 12th FYP with a budget nearly twice that of the 11th FYP and drawing lessons from COVID-19, introduce major reforms in the country to secure our future. Criticisms of these reforms have been made without understanding the reason for those reforms or the objectives and goals. Those who know and understand them are appreciative. Some understand them but don't want to accept while many in the rural areas may not have understood at all. All we can say is that no government would have been bold enough to take those decisions, especially when it comes as the cost of political interests. That is where we have demonstrated that we are different and place national interest ahead of our own. We had only about half our tenure to complete developmental activities, yet every gewog and Dzongkhag were given nearly double the budget compared to past plans and many programs were successfully implemented. We thank the local governments for their full support in carrying out their work despite the many challenges.

We are now more experienced, understand the details of the reforms and have charted a plan that places the nation first. For a country to progress smooth, there cannot be disruptions. Therefore, we place this manifesto before the people of Bhutan and ourselves to serve the Tsa-wa-sum with renewed spirit to return to governance in this election solely for the purpose of delivering the opportunity of taking our nation forward to become prosperous, secure, and happy country.



---

## Our vision

---

As we graduate from the list of Least Developed Country (LDC), we can all be proud of the immense progress we have made under the leadership of His Majesty the King and successive governments. However, we are far from achieving our goal as envisioned by His Majesty the King, which is to become a developed nation - latest by 2034.

As we have stated earlier, our vision is clear. It is for a stronger, healthy, secure, and prosperous Bhutan, united, self-reliant and a thriving developed country by 2034.

Time is short and we must collectively work harder and contribute towards achieving that vision. We have already started the work by undertaking major reforms and generating more efficiency in the workplace. All institutions, agencies and sectors have been tasked to provide faster and better services through customer friendly services. Digitization and adoption of technology in all sectors has been our endeavour and we have invested significantly in building the infrastructure. We have laid the foundation by adopting the National Digital Identity bill which will revolutionize all aspects of our lives and catapult us forward in achieving our vision.

Therefore, continuity is critical. These last few years, especially the impacts of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic have laid bare our weaknesses and vulnerabilities. We have had to make numerous corrective measures, amend, and implement several policies, enact new laws, and undertake major reforms in almost all sectors to put our country on the right path. Now that we have corrected our course, it is essential that we remain firmly on this path without deviating from our goal. Only DNT can steer us forward as we have the experience and understand the reforms and its purpose. Our vision and the goal of the country is clearly set, and substantial progress has been made. We cannot afford to change tracks and cause delay, as time is of the essence. We must achieve our vision in the next 10 years.



---

**WE ENVISION A HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS AND SECURE BHUTAN** where people are happy and content; Communities are prosperous and vibrant; everyone is healthy and secure.

**WE ENVISION A DEVELOPED COUNTRY BY 2034** - with a USD 5 billion economy by 2029 and USD 10 billion by 2034; GDP per capita of USD 4,256 by 2029 and more than USD 12000 by 2034.

**WE ENVISION A BHUTAN** where every Bhutanese plays a part in the development process and; where every Bhutanese can shape their own destiny.

**WE ENVISION A BHUTAN** where people live in harmony, pursuing contentment, not materialism; where *tha-damtshi* and *ley-jumdre* are a way of life and; where peace thrives amid unity and harmony.

**WE ENVISION A COUNTRY** where the government places the interest of the nation first and implements policies to make country and people stronger and self-reliant.

---

# Part one: 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan

---

## PUTTING NATION FIRST

---

### For People, Prosperity, and Progress

---

#### **Background**

Inspired by the ongoing visionary national transformation agenda, we have consulted widely and re-designed the five-year planning system that suits the future economic growth trajectory.

Unlike the traditional short-term five-year planning, the new system emphasizes on the longer-term mission with strong focus on sharper goals and means to boost economic prosperity and social security of the people of Bhutan. Besides planning for the next five years, overarching goals are set longer term for 10 years in keeping with our vision to attain developed country status by 2034.

People, prosperity, and security is the core focus of the new plan. To achieve the goals set in the plan, the strategic frame of the plan is built into four key clusters.

#### **Our commitment**

##### **1. Economic development:**

We will grow our economy by investing in infrastructure, education, and technology. We will also create a business-friendly environment that attracts investment and creates jobs.

##### **2. Social development:**

We will invest in our people by providing quality education and healthcare. We will also promote social justice and equality.

##### **3. Security enhancement:**

We will make our country a safe and secure place to live, by investing in law enforcement and intelligence. We will also work to address the root causes of crime and violence.



#### 4. Governance improvements:

We will improve governance by making our government agencies more transparent and accountable. We will also fight corruption and promote good governance practices.

Under each of these clusters, Outcomes, Key Performing Indicators (KPIs) and Outputs are developed for effective implementation.

## OUR PLAN OF ACTIONS

### Economic Growth

Under the economic growth cluster, we aspire to create Bhutan into a high-income country driven by innovation and sustainability. To achieve this goal, we will need to accelerate and drive economic growth. To stir growth, our plan is to enhance productivity, diversify production, and re-strengthen markets.

**We have identified the following key areas of intervention for the economic growth pathway:**

#### **We will improve the overall business ecosystem.**

We have learnt valuable lessons from COVID-19 when we have had to address many issues that were not foreseen earlier because of the informal nature in which many businesses were operating. This has stimulated the major reforms in all sectors to create more efficiency and to correct and amend major obstacles. Following these major reforms, we will undertake the following to accelerate the economy.

##### **1. Continue with policy and regulatory reforms for easing business.**

- Streamline the business registration process and reduce the number of permits and licenses required to start and operate a business.
- Make it easier for businesses to access credit and capital.
- Reduce the tax burden on businesses.
- Reform the labor laws to make it easier for businesses to hire and fire workers.
- Improve the protection of intellectual property rights.

##### **2. Support and invest in quality infrastructure.**

- Invest in roads, bridges, airports, cableways transportation infrastructure.
- Improve access to reliable and affordable electricity and water.
- Expand internet infrastructure.



### **3. Prioritize start-up ecosystem development.**

- Expand incubators and accelerators to help startups get started and grow.
- Provide funding for startups through grants, loans, and other financial instruments.
- Connect startups with mentors, investors, and other resources.
- Promote entrepreneurship education and training.

### **4. Support access to skilled workforce.**

- Invest in education and training to improve the skills of the workforce.
- Attract overseas Bhutanese talent return to the country.
- Create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

### **5. Reform fiscal and monetary policies.**

- Maintain a stable macroeconomic environment with low inflation and interest rates.
- Invest in infrastructure and other productive assets.
- Provide R&D incentives for businesses to invest, expand and create jobs.

## **Technology Driven Economy**

---

### **We will accelerate innovation and create a technology driven economy:**

Technology has become an indispensable means of contemporary economic leap, and it is driving all sectors across the world. His Majesty the King has repeatedly commanded on strengthening STEM in our education system and to invest in technological advances. We must not be left behind. Several initiatives have already been taken during our tenure and this will be further accelerated in the 13 FYP. Several projects and activities will be undertaken with the aim to create an environment that encourages the development and adoption of new technologies, which can lead to economic growth and prosperity.

### **Adopt and invest in strengthening technology in all sectors.**

- Invest in research and development (R&D) to develop new technologies.
- Promote the adoption of new technologies by businesses and consumers.
- Create a supportive environment for innovation, such as tax breaks and funding for startups.
- Educate the public about the benefits of new technologies.

### **Invest in Deep tech development.**

- Invest in deep tech research, which is research that focuses on developing new technologies with the potential to solve major problems.



- Create a supportive environment for deep tech startups, such as incubators and accelerators.
- Connect deep tech startups with businesses and investors.
- Promote the commercialisation of deep tech innovations.

### **Encourage and support development of creative industry.**

- Invest in the creative industries, such as the arts, design, and media.
- Create a supportive environment for creative businesses, such as tax breaks and funding for projects.
- Connect creative businesses with businesses and investors.
- Promote the export of creative products and services.

## **Enhance Productivity**

---

We will diversify products and enhance production and productivity of key economic sectors.

**To create productive and competitive economic sectors, we will diversify products, upscale production and improve productivity through undertaking the following projects:**

### **Hydropower development**

- Invest in research and development to develop new and more efficient hydropower technologies.
- Promote the use of hydropower in conjunction with other renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power.
- Create a supportive regulatory environment for hydropower development.
- Improve the skills and training of the workforce involved in hydropower development.

### **Alternative renewable energy development**

- Invest in research and development to develop new and more efficient alternative renewable energy technologies.
- Promote the use of alternative renewable energy in conjunction with hydropower.
- Create a supportive regulatory environment for alternative renewable energy development.
- Improve the skills and training of the workforce involved in alternative renewable energy development.



### **Quality and resilient construction**

- Invest in research and development to develop new and more efficient construction materials and techniques.
- Promote the use of sustainable construction materials and practices.
- Create a supportive regulatory environment for quality and resilient construction.
- Improve the skills and training of the workforce involved in quality and resilient construction.

### **High-end tourism**

- Invest in marketing and promotion to attract high-end tourists.
- Develop high-quality tourism infrastructure and amenities.
- Train the workforce in high-end tourism services.
- Create a safe and secure environment for tourists.

### **High-value agriculture**

- Invest in research and development to develop new and more efficient agricultural practices.
- Promote the use of sustainable agricultural practices.
- Create a supportive regulatory environment for high-value agriculture.
- Improve the skills and training of the workforce involved in high-value agriculture.
- FDI promotion

### **Create a favourable investment climate for foreign investors.**

- Provide incentives for foreign investors.
- Facilitate the investment process for foreign investors.
- Promote the benefits of FDI to the local community.

### **PPP implementation**

- Develop a clear and transparent PPP framework.
- Select the right projects for PPP implementation.
- Build capacity for PPP implementation.
- Monitor and evaluate PPP projects.





# Enhance Markets

---

We will enhance market access and logistics.

We consider that enhanced access to market and well-coordinated logistical infrastructure are essential components of successful economic story. To achieve this, we will implement the following programs:

## **Promote export.**

- Provide information and training to exporters on international markets and trade regulations.
- Help exporters to develop and implement marketing plans.
- Provide financial assistance to exporters, such as export credits and guarantees.
- Organize trade fairs and exhibitions to promote exports.
- Facilitate the export process, such as by providing customs clearance assistance.

## **2. Strengthen and improve domestic market and supply chain.**

- Improve the efficiency of the domestic market, such as by reducing trade barriers and improving infrastructure.
- Strengthen the supply chain, such as by investing in transportation and logistics.
- Promote innovation and productivity in the domestic market.
- Develop a skilled workforce that is capable of producing high-quality goods and services.

## **3. Create favoured trading and investment destination by promoting external trade and investment initiatives such as:**

- Improve the investment climate: Bhutan can improve its investment climate by making it easier for businesses to operate in the country. This can be done by reducing bureaucracy, improving infrastructure, and providing tax incentives.
- Sign free trade agreements: Bhutan can sign free trade agreements with other countries to reduce tariffs and other trade barriers. This will make it easier for Bhutanese businesses to export their goods and services to other countries.
- Attract foreign direct investment (FDI): Bhutan can attract FDI by creating a favourable investment climate and providing incentives to foreign investors. This can be done by providing tax breaks, access to land, and other benefits.
- Promote tourism: Bhutan can promote tourism by highlighting its unique culture and natural beauty. This can be done through marketing campaigns and by improving infrastructure.



- Strengthen our institutions: Bhutan can strengthen its institutions by improving transparency and accountability. This will make Bhutan more attractive to investors and businesses.
- Become a regional hub: Bhutan can become a regional hub for trade and investment by improving its infrastructure and connectivity. This can be done by building roads, railways, and airports.

## Ecological services/resources

---

We will maximise ecological services/resources utilisation and strengthen climate resilience capacities.

We are a natural resources rich country. We have capacity to utilise our resources for economic gains. However, we must recognise the judicious use of resources for the reasons of posterity and topography. Considering these aspects, we will under the following initiatives to enhance ecological services and resources utilisation, including consistent effort to build climate resilient capabilities.

### **Prioritise water resource management.**

- Improve water efficiency in agriculture, industry, and households.
- Protect watersheds from deforestation and pollution.
- Build dams and reservoirs to store water for agriculture and tourism.
- Develop water conservation technologies.

### **Strengthen forest resource management.**

- Protect forests from deforestation and degradation.
- Promote sustainable forest management practices.
- Plant trees on degraded land.
- Develop non-timber forest products.
- Promote ecotourism in forests.

### **Initiate carbon market access and credit mechanism**

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable forest management.
- Sell carbon credits to businesses and governments that are looking to offset their emissions.
- Invest in projects that sequester carbon, such as planting trees and restoring wetlands.
- Promote the development of a robust carbon market that can help to price carbon and drive investment in climate-friendly projects.



### Our outcome targets:

Once we have done these economic projects, we will achieve the following outcomes for our country within the below timeframes:

By 2024 we will:	By 2029 we will:	By 2034 we will:
We will create 1,000 jobs in digital economy annually	Increase share of digital economy to GDP from < 1% to 10%	Increase private sector investment from 50% to over 60%
	Reduce trade balance deficit from 26% to under 20%	Increase annual average household income from USD 30,000 to USD 60,000.
	Increase share of manufacturing to GDP from currently 6% to 15%	Triple the share of existing sectors with growth potential to GDP.
	Increase FDI from Nu. 43.3 to Nu. 100 billion.	
	Increase private sector investment from 40% to above 50%	
	Increase annual average household income from USD 5,000 to USD 30,000.	
	Double the share of existing sectors with growth potential to GDP.	



## Social Development

Under the social development cluster, we aspire to create a healthy and productive society founded on equitable and high-quality health, education, and social protection. It is our intention to provide opportunities for Bhutanese to enjoy improved health and well-being outcomes. We will ensure that the Bhutanese people continue to receive equitable access and benefit from quality wholesome education and lifelong learning opportunities. We aspire to have a comprehensive social protection system that is shock-responsive and inclusive. For improved health services and wellbeing conditions, we will undertake the following:

## Control and prevention of diseases

---

### **We will promote healthy lifestyle along with control and prevention of diseases.**

As commanded by His Majesty the King at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number priority for the government was to safeguard every Bhutanese and not have any death. It was in this light that we prioritised health services exclusively that resulted in a very successful campaign against the COVID-19 and enabled the strengthening of our overall health care system. We will continue to safeguard the health of our people. We are best placed to deliver on this, and we will do it through the following:

### **Promote good health strengthen disease prevention.**

- Provide education and information about healthy living.
- Promote physical activity and exercise.
- Encourage healthy eating habits and change in dietary habit.
- Prevent tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Screening program for early detection of chronic diseases.
- Provide treatment and support for people with chronic diseases.

### **Provide access to recreational facilities and opportunities.**

- Build and maintain parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities.
- Offer a variety of recreational activities, such as sports, dance, mindfulness training, and yoga.
- Make it affordable for people to participate in recreational activities.
- Encourage employers to offer wellness programs that include physical activity and healthy eating.

### **Enhance utilization of safe and nutritious food**

- Ensure that people have access to affordable, healthy food.



- Promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Limit the consumption of processed foods, sugary drinks, and unhealthy fats.
- Educate people about the importance of food safety.
- Support the development of local food systems that provide fresh, healthy food.

### **Control and elimination priority public health diseases.**

We are facing the triple burden of disease even as we graduate into a lower middle-income country. This means that we carry the burden of infectious diseases faced by least developed countries while facing the burden of lifestyle diseases seen in developed countries along with maternal, nutritional, and climatic impacts on health. Towards controlling and eliminating these conditions, we will implement the following:

- Provide quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCH) services.
- Provide access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Improve access to quality antenatal care and childbirth services.
- Reduce newborn mortality interventions.
- Promote healthy growth and development in children and adolescents.
- Prevent, control, and eliminate infectious diseases.
- Vaccinate children against preventable diseases, such as measles, polio, and rubella.
- Provide access to safe water and sanitation.
- Control the spread of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue.
- Treat and prevent HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other chronic diseases.

### **Strengthen health emergency preparedness and response.**

- Develop and implement plans for responding to public health emergencies, such as pandemics and natural disasters.
- Strengthen surveillance and early warning systems to detect and respond to public health threats.
- Build capacity for rapid response to public health emergencies.



# Quality and quantity of workforce

---

## **We will strengthen quality and quantity of health sector workforce.**

Our health workers have demonstrated their abilities and commitments in the past as reflected in our progress in health indicators and recently during the pandemic. The level of care, compassion and dedication is seen daily. However, we need to do better to retain and motivate them. We need to prepare for future emergencies and for striving for world class health care. To take care of our health workers we will undertake the following:

### **Strengthen human resources for health.**

- Increase the number of health workers.
- Improve the quality of health worker training and education.
- Retain health workers in workforce by providing competitive salaries and benefits depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.
- Create a supportive work environment for health workers.

### **2. Improve management of teaching professionals**

- Provide training and education for management teaching professionals.
- Develop and implement curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the health sector.
- Promote research and innovation in management education.

# Access to quality services

---

## **We will continue to improve access to quality health and health-related services and products.**

We have invested immensely in the last five years to improve quality health services through initiation of several programs such as cancer screening, geriatric care, standardisation of services and introduction of new services across our hospitals. We will continue to invest through the following:

### **1. Improve national and international standards.**

- Develop and implement national standards for health and health-related services and products.
- Ratify and implement international conventions and agreements on health.
- Monitor and evaluate compliance with national and international standards.



**2. Strengthen a people-centered mental health care service.**

- Provide mental health care that is respectful of the individual's rights and preferences.
- Involve the individual and their family in the planning and delivery of care.
- Provide care that is tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.

**3. Promote Bhutanese Traditional Medicine (TM) as a center of excellence.**

- Invest in research and development of TM.
- Train health workers in TM.
- Promote the use of TM in the health system.

**4. Ensure timely access to essential medical products and services.**

- Ensure that essential medical products and services are available and affordable.
- Make it easy for people to access essential medical products and services.
- Remove barriers to access, such as cost and distance.

**5. Strengthen access and appropriate use of essential medical products.**

- Promote the use of essential medical products that are safe and effective.
- Prevent the misuse of essential medical products.
- Monitor the use of essential medical products to ensure that they are being used appropriately.

**6. Guarantee quality and safety of healthcare service delivery**

- Ensure that healthcare services are delivered in a safe and quality manner.
- Train health workers in quality improvement.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of healthcare service delivery.

**7. Provide safe water and sanitation.**

- Provide access to safe water and sanitation.
- Promote hygiene practices.
- Prevent waterborne diseases.

**8. Strengthen disability prevention and management.**

- Prevent disabilities by addressing the underlying causes.
- Provide rehabilitation services for people with disabilities.
- Promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

**9. Establish and enhance the reference center for disease control and prevention.**

- Establish a reference center for disease control and prevention.
- Train health workers in disease surveillance and control.
- Provide technical assistance to countries in need.



# Healthcare system

---

## **We will make our health care system sustainable.**

Bhutan has always provided free health care through voluntary village health workers and the outreach clinics right to referral abroad for tertiary care. One of the biggest concerns and risks faced by the health system in sustaining this model. While successive governments have come up with novel ideas, none have been taken at a whole of governance level. We have taken steps in that direction by enacting several legislations to increase domestic revenue and to ensure more health contribution. We will take this further and make health care sustainable through the following:

### **1. Strengthen sustainable health financing.**

- Increase domestic financing for health.
- Mobilize resources from international donors.
- Use innovative financing mechanisms, such as health insurance and user fees.
- Promote efficiency and equity in health financing.
- Encourage and support public-private partnerships.
- Consider private sector investment in select health services and institute robust regulations for monitoring quality and ethics.
- Share risks and responsibilities between the public and private sectors.
- Ensure that PPPs are aligned with public health goals.

## **We will strengthen regulatory and monitoring of health security systems.**

As seen with the spread of several epidemics among humans (Influenza, COVID-19, SARS etc.) and animals (lumpy skin disease, rabies, anthrax, African swine flu, Avian flu etc.) it is imperative that we strengthen our surveillance systems and institutes. Towards that the following will be undertaken:

### **1. Strengthen Food, drug, and biosecurity regulatory systems.**

- Establish and maintain effective food, drug, and biosecurity regulatory systems.
- Enforce regulations and standards consistently and transparently.

### **2. Adopt and implement international regulations and standards.**

- Ratify and implement international conventions and agreements on food, drugs, and biosecurity.
- Participate in international efforts to develop and harmonize regulations and standards.





### **3. Monitor and control pre-and post-market use of medical products**

- Conduct pre-market evaluation of medical products to ensure safety and efficacy.
- Conduct post-market surveillance of medical products to monitor for safety and efficacy concerns.
- Require manufacturers to report adverse events associated with their products.

### **4. Enhance sanitary and phytosanitary certification capacity.**

- Establish and maintain a system for sanitary and phytosanitary certification.
- Train inspectors on sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

### **5. Institute regulation of Sorig (traditional) wellness services**

- Establish a regulatory framework for Sorig (traditional) Wellness services.
- Register and license Sorig (traditional) Wellness practitioners.
- Set standards for the practice of Sorig (traditional) Wellness.

## **Technology for health system efficiency**

---

### **We will harness information and technology to enhance health systems efficiency.**

As seen in other sectors, technology is advancing delivery of health services rapidly. The development of mRNA vaccine to combat COVID-19 demonstrates how technology can be used in such a short time to control epidemics. Similarly remote robotic surgeries and development of synthetic drugs are revolutionising health care and systems. To harness these benefits, we will implement the following:

### **Invest in Research and Development**

- Invest in R&D to develop new technologies and interventions that can improve health outcomes.
- Promote the adoption of new technologies and interventions by health care providers.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of new technologies and interventions to ensure that they are effective and efficient.

### **2. Strengthen digital health.**

- Use digital technologies to improve the efficiency of health systems. This can include using electronic health records, telemedicine, and mobile health applications.
- Promote the use of digital technologies by health care providers and patients.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of digital technologies to ensure that they are effective and efficient.



### Our outcome targets:

By 2029, we will	By 2034, we will achieve
Increase the human capital index from 0.475 (2020) to 0.61.	Increase the human capital index from 0.61 to 0.71.
	Increase life expectancy to 75 years.

---

## Education sector

---

Under education sector, we have made much progress. Schools across the country have equitable share of resources, have access to nutritious meals and better digital access. The removal of the class 10 cut off has eased the burden on many of our rural families and enabled all to complete class 12. Training and skilling can begin from then and looking for employment is made easier. Introduction of coding in schools will ensure that our future generation is more prepared for the world they will engage in. The revision of the curriculum is taking place rapidly and in the next few years we will have one of the best in the world.

The overall goal for the education sector is to provide equitable access and benefit from quality and wholesome education and lifelong learning opportunities. Towards that we will implement the following:

### **We will strengthen education system with competent and motivated professionals.**

The teachers and professionals are the most important aspect of education. Good competent teachers are the backbone of providing quality education and therefore we will continue to invest in them through the following:

#### **Transform school teaching professionals.**

- Improve the quality of teacher training.
- Provide teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities.



- Create a more supportive work environment for teachers.
- Increase the salaries and benefits of teachers depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.

## **2. Transform higher education teaching professionals (RUB)**

- Improve the quality of faculty recruitment and selection.
- Provide faculty with ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Create a more supportive work environment for faculty.
- Increase the salaries and benefits of faculty depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.

## **3. Build visionary, competent and motivated TVET professionals.**

- Develop a national TVET strategy that is aligned with the country's development goals.
- Invest in TVET infrastructure and facilities.
- Train TVET teachers and trainers.
- Promote the relevance and quality of TVET programs.

## **4. Enhance medical and health teaching professionals (KGUMSB)**

- Improve the quality of medical and health education.
- Provide medical and health professionals with ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Create a more supportive work environment for medical and health professionals.
- Increase the salaries and benefits of medical and health professionals depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.

## **5. Strengthen law teaching professionals (JSW LAW)**

- Improve the quality of legal education.
- Provide law teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Create a more supportive work environment for law teachers.
- Increase the salaries and benefits of law teachers depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.

## **6. Strengthen management teaching professionals (RIM)**

- Improve the quality of management education.
- Provide management teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Create a more supportive work environment for management teachers.
- Increase the salaries and benefits of management teachers depending on the economic situation of the country and Government's fiscal position.



# Learning environment & infrastructure

---

**We will create a safe and enabling learning-environment with inclusive and equitable infrastructure and facilities and maximizing use of technology in educational institutions.**

Education has always received the highest share of the national budget reflecting the priority that government accords to the sector. No efforts should be spared to secure the future of our younger generation. In the next five years we will ensure that school campuses and facilities are further strengthened.

## **Modernize school infrastructure and facilities and make it inclusive.**

- Upgrade school infrastructure and facilities to be safe, accessible, and inclusive for all learners.
- Provide adequate space for learning, recreation, and other activities.
- Equip schools with the necessary facilities, such as libraries, laboratories, and computers.

## **2. Ensure the health and well-being of learners.**

- Promote a healthy environment in schools.
- Provide access to health care services for learners.
- Address the needs of learners with disabilities.

## **3. Maximize digital education and learning in schools, Colleges, and Institutes**

- Provide all learners with access to digital devices and the internet in the ICT labs.
- Integrate digital technologies into the teaching and learning process.
- Train teachers and faculty on how to use digital technologies effectively.

## **4. Improve Sport and recreation facilities in education.**

- Promote physical activity and sports in schools.
- Provide adequate space for physical activity and sports.
- Equip schools with the necessary facilities, such as sports equipment and playing fields.

## **5. Enhance Quality and fit-for-purpose infrastructure (RUB)**

- Develop and implement a plan to upgrade the infrastructure of RUB on need basis.
- Ensure that the infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and meets the needs of learners and staff.
- Make the infrastructure accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities.



## **6. Modernize medical education infrastructure (KGUMSB)**

- Upgrade the infrastructure of KGUMSB to meet international standards on need basis.
- Provide adequate space for teaching, learning, and research.
- Equip the facilities with the necessary equipment and technology.

## **7. Enable technology to improve TVET learning environment.**

- Provide TVET learners with access to digital devices and the internet.
- Integrate digital technologies into the TVET curriculum.
- Train TVET teachers on how to use digital technologies effectively.

## **8. Develop quality standards for HE and TVET**

- Develop and implement quality standards for HE and TVET.
- Ensure that the standards are aligned with international best practices.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the standards.

## **9. Introduce and enhance simulation based TVET learning environment.**

- Provide TVET learners with access to simulation-based learning environments.
- Use simulation-based learning to improve the skills and knowledge of TVET learners.
- Train TVET teachers on how to use simulation-based learning effectively.

# Curriculum and assessment system

---

**We will create a dynamic and relevant curricula and assessment system for all levels of education through:**

## **1. Assessment and curriculum in schools:**

- Align School curriculum and assessment for 5th Industrial revolution (IR)
- Develop a curriculum that is relevant to the 5th Industrial Revolution.
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that learners need for the 5th Industrial Revolution.
- Involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of the curriculum and assessment system.
- Accelerate uptake of STEM education
- Promote STEM education in schools and colleges.
- Provide scholarships and other incentives for students to study STEM subjects.
- Support STEM teachers and schools with resources and training.



## **2. Tertiary education sector**

- Future-ready tertiary graduates (RUB)
- Develop a curriculum that prepares graduates for the future of work.
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that graduates need for the future of work.
- Involve employers in the development and implementation of the curriculum and assessment system.
- World-class law graduates (JSW LAW)
- Develop a curriculum that is aligned with international standards.
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that law graduates need to practice law.
- Provide scholarships and other incentives for students to study law.
- Professionalize civil service (RIM)
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that civil servants need to be effective.

## **3. Tertiary health education sector (KGUMSB)**

- Develop a curriculum that is aligned with international standards.
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that health and medical graduates need to practice medicine.
- Provide scholarships and other incentives for students to study medicine.

## **4. TVET curriculum for skills and jobs**

- Develop a curriculum that is aligned with the needs of the labor market.
- Use assessment methods that measure the skills and knowledge that TVET graduates need for the workplace.
- Provide scholarships and other incentives for students to study TVET.

## **5. Transformed quality assurance system.**

- Develop a quality assurance system that is rigorous and effective.
- Use the quality assurance system to improve the quality of education at all levels.
- Involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of the quality assurance system.



# Education resource mobilisation

---

**We will institute and sustain an adequate and innovative resource mobilisation mechanism for education.**

## **1. Revamp education financing mechanisms**

- Increase government spending on education.
- Make education financing more efficient and equitable.
- Use innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and impact investing.
- Drive innovative revenue generation (RUB)
- Develop new sources of revenue for RUB.
- Make RUB more efficient and effective.
- Use innovative revenue generation methods, such as crowdfunding and corporate social responsibility for specific projects like provision of digital devices, ICT labs, and internet services.

## **2. Ensure dynamic and sustainable TVET financing.**

- Develop a sustainable financing mechanism for TVET.
- Make TVET more accessible and affordable.
- Use innovative financing methods, such as vouchers and scholarships.

## **3. Generate revenue from alternative sources.**

- Explore alternative sources of revenue for education, such as donations and grants.

## **4. Remodel business plan for KGUMSB**

- Develop a new business plan for KGUMSB that is aligned with the government's priorities.
- Make KGUMSB more efficient and effective.

# Lifelong learning opportunities

---

**We will increase opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development through:**

**1. Introduce life-long learning, digital learning, and skills development.**

- Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens.
- Make digital learning resources and tools accessible to all.
- Develop and implement a national skills development strategy.

**2. Develop Community skills.**

- Provide opportunities for community members to learn new skills.
- Promote the development of community-based learning programs.
- Support the work of community-based organisations that provide skills development.

**3. Strengthened continued medical education (CME)**

- Provide opportunities for medical professionals to continue their education.
- Promote the development of new and innovative medical education programs.
- Support the work of medical organisations that provide continuing education.

**4. Strengthen continued law education (CLE)**

- Provide opportunities for legal professionals to continue their education.
- Promote the development of new and innovative legal education programs.
- Support the work of legal organisations that provide continuing education.

**5. Enhance professional Diploma and MBA programme.**

- Provide opportunities for professionals to earn professional diplomas and MBAs.
- Make these programs accessible to all professionals, regardless of their background.
- Support the work of institutions that offer professional diplomas and MBAs.

**6. Provide alternate modes of learning for citizens.**

- Provide opportunities for citizens to learn in alternate modes, such as online and distance learning.
- Make these modes of learning accessible to all citizens, regardless of their location or circumstances.
- Support the work of institutions that offer alternate modes of learning.

**7. Build excellence in sporting culture.**

- Promote sporting activities and events.
- Provide opportunities for citizens to participate in sports.
- Support the work of organisations that promote sporting activities.





# Research and Development

---

**We will support tertiary education institutes to conduct research and inform policy development and innovation:**

## **1. Research and Development (RUB) support**

- Provide funding for research and development.
- Create a supportive environment for research.
- Promote the dissemination of research findings.

## **2. Medical and health research**

- Fund research in priority areas of health.
- Create a supportive environment for research.
- Promote the dissemination of research findings.

## **3. Legal and law-based research**

- Fund research in priority areas of law.
- Create a supportive environment for research.
- Promote the dissemination of research findings.

## **4. Management and development research**

- Fund research in priority areas of management and development.
- Create a supportive environment for research.
- Promote the dissemination of research findings.

## **5. Action research in school education**

- Support teachers in conducting action research.
- Provide training and resources for action research.
- Promote the dissemination of action research findings.



# Social Protection System

---

**For a shock-responsive, inclusive, and comprehensive social protection system, we will strengthen the social protection system through:**

**1. Set Social protection regulatory frameworks.**

- Develop a social protection law or policy.
- Set standards and guidelines for social protection programs.

**2. Support Social protection financing mechanisms.**

- Establish a social protection fund.
- Collect social protection contributions from employers and employees.
- Use government revenue to finance social protection programs – incur approximately 250 million as stipulated in the 13<sup>th</sup> FYP.
- Use international aid to finance social protection programs.

**We will further strengthen social protection programs and mechanisms through:**

**1. Introduction of social protection schemes.**

- Social insurance: Social insurance is a system of contributions made by employers and employees that provides benefits to members in case of unemployment, sickness, disability, or retirement.
- Public services: Public services, such as education and healthcare, can also be considered social protection schemes. They provide essential services to all citizens, regardless of their income or employment status.

**2. Establish innovative social protection financing mechanisms.**

- Public-private partnerships: Public-private partnerships can be used to finance social protection programs. The government can partner with businesses to provide social protection benefits, such as healthcare or pensions.
- Impact investing: Impact investing is an investment made with the intention of generating a financial return and positive social impact. Impact investors can invest in social protection programs that have the potential to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable people.
- Micro-insurance: Micro-insurance is a type of insurance that is designed for low-income people. It can be used to provide protection against risks such as illness, disability, and death.



# Social service delivery

---

**We will institute quality social assistance and welfare services delivery for vulnerable citizens through:**

**Introduce interoperable welfare info management system.**

- Develop a system that allows for the sharing of welfare information between different agencies.
- Ensure that the system is secure and confidential.
- Make the system accessible to all stakeholders.

**Our outcome targets:**

By 2029, we will	By 2034, we will
Increase the human capital index from 0.47 (2020) to 0.61	Increase the human capital index from 0.61 to 0.71
	Increase life expectancy to 75 years.
Have all people in low-income groups (the bottom 20% of the population determined by the annual income assessment) access to affordable housing.	Maintain low-income groups (the bottom 20% of the population determined by the annual income assessment) access to affordable housing.
	Have all Bhutanese access to comprehensive social protection mechanism and services across the life cycle, particularly for the most vulnerable.

## Security enhancement

Under the security cluster, we aspire to mitigate and manage safety and security threats and disaster risks to the country, its economy, infrastructure, institutions, and people. We will implement the following to achieve the goals.

# Border Management

---

### **We will further strengthen effective and efficient border management.**

- Strengthen border infrastructure and security: This includes building physical barriers, such as fences and walls, and deploying technology, such as drones and cameras, to monitor borders.
- Increase cooperation with neighbouring countries: This can help to prevent illegal cross-border activities and to track down criminals.
- Modernise border management systems: This includes using technology to automate border clearance processes and to improve data sharing.
- Train border security personnel: This includes providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively detect and deter illegal cross-border activities.

# Air, surface, internet

---

### **We will enhance air, surface, and internet connectivity. Provide safe and reliable internet connectivity.**

- Invest in infrastructure: This includes building new telecommunications towers and laying new fibre-optic cables.

### **Improve surface and air connectivity.**

- Explore new roads and railways: This can help to improve the flow of traffic and make it easier to move people and goods around the country.
- Explore air transportation: This can help to connect remote areas and make it easier for people to travel.
- Improve port facilities: This can help to facilitate trade and commerce and reduce safety risks.



# Order and Security

---

**We will maintain law and order, safety, and security.**

**Reduce crime rates. Make Bhutan a substance-abuse-free society.**

- Invest in law enforcement: This includes providing law enforcement agencies with the resources they need to effectively prevent and investigate crime.
- Enact laws to foster a substance abuse free society and deter criminal acts and behaviours.
- Promote social programs: This includes programs that address the root causes of crime, such as poverty and unemployment.
- Educate the public: This can help to raise awareness about crime and drug abuse and to encourage people to report suspicious activity.
- Work with communities: This can help to build trust between law enforcement and the community and to create a sense of shared responsibility for crime prevention.

**Enhance public safety.**

- Improve infrastructure: This includes building safe and well-lit streets and providing adequate public transportation.
- Conduct community-based programs: This includes programs that provide crime prevention education and support to at-risk youth.
- Invest in technology to combat and monitor crime.
- Raise public awareness: This can help to raise awareness about crime and to encourage people to report suspicious activity.

# Disaster resilience

---

**We will build disaster-resilient infrastructure that are also environmentally friendly.**

**Strengthen resilience of critical physical infrastructure**

- Design infrastructure to withstand extreme events: This includes using materials that are resistant to damage from wind, rain, and other natural disasters.
- Build redundancy into infrastructure: This means having multiple systems in place so that if one system fails, the others can still function.
- Locate infrastructure in safe areas: This means avoiding areas that are prone to flooding, earthquakes, or other natural disasters.
- Use sustainable materials: This means using materials that are less harmful to the environment.
- Plans for future: This means anticipating future climate change and other challenges and designing infrastructure that can adapt to them.



### **Protect Critical Information Infrastructure (CII)**

- Identify critical information infrastructure: This means identifying the systems and networks that are essential for the functioning of a country or organisation.
- Protect CII from physical and cyber threats: This means using security measures to protect CII from both physical and cyber attacks.
- Back up CII data: This means having copies of CII data stored in a safe location so that it can be restored if it is lost or damaged.
- Train staff on CII security: This means ensuring that staff are aware of the risks to CII and how to protect it.
- Regularly test CII security: This means regularly testing CII security measures to ensure that they are effective.

## **Disaster governance**

---

### **We will enhance disaster risk governance and institutional capacity. Strengthen disaster management system.**

- Establish a clear and comprehensive disaster management framework: This includes laws, policies, and procedures that define roles and responsibilities, allocate resources, and coordinate disaster response efforts.
- Build capacity of disaster management institutions: This includes training and equipping staff, developing contingency plans, and conducting drills and exercises.
- Foster public participation: This includes involving communities in disaster risk reduction and management activities.
- Promote knowledge sharing: This includes sharing information and best practices about disaster risk reduction and management.
- Support research and development: This includes funding research on disaster risk reduction and management and promoting the use of innovative technologies.

### **Build disaster response capacities.**

- Stockpile essential supplies: This includes food, water, medicine, and other essential supplies that will be needed in the event of a disaster.
- Establish early warning systems: This includes systems that can detect and warn of impending disasters.
- Develop evacuation plans: This includes plans for evacuating people to safe areas in the event of a disaster.
- Train first responders: This includes training firefighters, police officers, and other first responders on how to respond to disasters.



- Establish partnerships: This includes building partnerships with other organisations, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector, to enhance disaster response capabilities.

## Disaster preparedness

---

### **We will ensure community disaster preparedness and resilience. Share risk information for disaster resilience.**

- Identify and assess risks: This includes identifying the hazards that a community faces, as well as the vulnerabilities that make it susceptible to those hazards.
- Communicate risk information: This includes sharing information about risks with communities in a way that they can understand and use.
- Build awareness: This includes raising awareness about risks and how to mitigate them.
- Encourage participation: This includes encouraging communities to participate in disaster risk reduction and management activities.

### **Strengthen community preparedness and local capacities.**

- Develop community disaster plans: This includes plans for how communities will respond to disasters.
- Train community members: This includes training community members on how to prepare for and respond to disasters.
- Build community resilience: This includes building community resilience through social, economic, and environmental means.
- Establish partnerships: This includes building partnerships with other organizations, such as NGOs and the private sector, to support community disaster preparedness and resilience.

### **Our plan to enhance security and safety of the Bhutanese people also includes strengthening Bhutan's identity, culture, and values.**

We will ensure that these are preserved and promoted, and that our position in the international community is maintained. Towards that we will implement the following programs.

### **We will build Bhutan's global cultural credibility.**

Engage in international cultural expo: Bhutan can participate in international organisations and agreements to build relationships and credibility.

Promote peace and security: Bhutan can contribute to peace and security efforts around the world, such as peacekeeping missions and disaster relief.



Protect the environment: Bhutan can demonstrate its commitment to environmental protection by signing and ratifying international agreements and taking action to reduce its environmental impact.

Promote sustainable development: Bhutan can share its experience of sustainable development with other countries and help them to achieve their own development goals.

Support and uphold human rights: Bhutan can uphold its own commitment to human rights and promote human rights around the world.

Foster good governance: Bhutan can demonstrate its commitment to good governance by promoting transparency and accountability in its own institutions.

**We will promote Bhutanese identity, values, cultures in-country and overseas. Engage younger generation as custodians of cultural heritage.**

- Inculcate a sense of pride in Bhutanese culture and heritage: This will be done through education, cultural events, and exposure to traditional arts and crafts.
- Encourage young people to participate in cultural activities: This will be done by providing opportunities for them to learn about and practice traditional arts and crafts, music, and dance.
- Make cultural heritage relevant to the lives of young people: This will be done by connecting to their experiences and interests, such as through music, fashion, and technology.
- Empower young people to be leaders in cultural preservation by providing them with opportunities to take on leadership roles in cultural organisations and events.

**Involving Bhutanese living overseas to preserve and promote Bhutan's language, culture, and identity.**

- Create a sense of connection with Bhutan through social media, online platforms, and cultural events.
- Provide opportunities for Bhutanese living overseas to contribute to Bhutan's cultural preservation by providing them with opportunities to volunteer in cultural organisations and events, or to donate to cultural preservation projects.
- Recognise the contributions of Bhutanese living overseas to Bhutan's cultural preservation by honouring them at cultural events or by acknowledging their contributions in the media.

**Enhance social cohesion and community vitality.**

- Promote a sense of belonging by creating opportunities for people to connect with each other and to participate in community activities.
- Build trust and respect by fostering open communication and by resolving conflicts peacefully.
- Celebrate diversity recognising the different cultures and traditions that make-up the community.





Our outcome targets:

By 2025, we will	By 2029, we will
Operationalise national emergency management and contingency plans.	Ensure internal and external air, surface, and internet connectivity.
	Reduce Bhutan's crime rate to less than 30 crimes per 10,000 population.
	Ensure Bhutan ranks among the top 20 countries on trust, credibility, and integrity Indices.
	Ensure Bhutan ranks among the Top 10 – 15 countries on global peace index.

## Governance

Governance provides the framework to develop Bhutan's resources and opportunities for our people. Good governance ensures that the government is accountable to its citizens, that the rule of law is upheld, and that there is transparency and efficiency in the delivery of public services.

We consider Bhutan's public sector need to be more dynamic result-oriented agent of transformation, demonstrating effectiveness, accountability, and robust management of the economy. Towards achieving this goal, we will undertake the following.

## Result-orient governance

---

**We will further strengthen and consolidate the dynamic, responsive, and resultsoriented government policy reforms.**

**Manage better the monetary policy and general reserve.**

- Use a variety of tools to manage the money supply and interest rates. This will include open market operations, changes in the reserve requirement, and changes in the discount rate.
- Set inflation targets and use monetary policy to achieve them. This will help to keep prices stable and promote economic growth.
- Build up reserves to protect the country against financial shocks. This will be done by buying foreign currency or by investing in other assets and allowing better remittance.

**Introduce better fiscal policy reforms and enhance resource mobilization.**

- Broaden the tax base through effective implementation of the property tax
- Improve tax collection through digitisation and introduction of Bhutan integrated tax system (BITS)
- Reduce government spending by cutting back on unnecessary programs and by improving efficiency.
- Institute a good loan appraisal system and enable banks accept rural lands as mortgage for commercial lending.

**Strengthen effectiveness of local governance and civic engagement**

- Decentralise power to local governments so that they have greater autonomy to make decisions and improve service delivery.
- Increase transparency and accountability of local governments by making public financial records and by holding local officials accountable for their actions.



- Promote civic engagement by encouraging citizens to participate in local government and by providing them with opportunities to hold their elected officials accountable.

#### **Whole-of-government integrated public policies.**

- Coordinate policies across different government agencies to ensure that policies are complementary and that they are implemented effectively.
- Use evidence-based decision-making to ensure that policies are based on the best available evidence and that they are likely to be effective.
- Be flexible and adaptable to be able to respond to changing circumstances.

## **Public sector management**

---

**We will improve the public sector further and make them more responsive, agile, and result oriented.**

**Ensure an agile, high-performing, fit-for-purpose world-class public service.**

- Recruit and retain the best and brightest talent by further offering competitive salaries and benefits, as well as opportunities for professional development - in support of a performance-based incentive (PBI) system planned and detailed out by the RCSC.
- Create a culture of innovation and collaboration by encouraging employees to take risks and to share ideas.
- Provide clear goals and objectives to help employees to focus their efforts and to measure their progress.
- Provide regular feedback and coaching to improve their performance.
- Celebrate successes so as to encourage and motivate employees and create a positive work environment.

## **Data and statistics**

---

**We will set-up data and statistics for foresight-oriented policy, planning, and service delivery.**

**Evidence-informed decision-making and service delivery**

- Collect data and statistics on a regular basis to track progress and to identify emerging trends.
- Analyse data and statistics to identify patterns and relationships so as to understand the underlying causes of problems and to develop effective solutions.
- Disseminate data and statistics to decision-makers and service providers to enable them to make informed decisions and to deliver services more effectively.
- Use data and statistics to evaluate the impact of policies and programs.



# Digital ecosystem

---

**We will create digital ecosystem that is capable to drive transformation. Strengthen digital ecosystem.**

- Invest in infrastructure. This includes building or upgrading telecommunications networks, data centres, and other essential infrastructure.
- Foster Innovation by supporting startups and other small businesses that are developing digital products and services.
- Create a skilled workforce by investing in education and training programs that teach people the skills they need to work in the digital economy.
- Promote digital literacy by educating people about the benefits of digital technologies and how to use them safely and effectively.

## **2. Digital transformation of the government**

- Digitise government services by making government services available online and through mobile devices.
- Automate government processes to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Make government more transparent and accountable by publishing data and information online and by making it easier for citizens to participate in government decision-making.

## **3. Digital payment system**

- Develop a national digital payment system and make it easier for people to make and receive payments electronically.
- Promote the use of digital payments by educating people about the benefits of digital payments and by making them more convenient and affordable.
- Protect consumers by implementing strong regulations that protect consumers from fraud and other risks.

## **4. World-class digitalised civil registration and vital statistics system (CRVS)**

- Digitise the CRVS to make it easier to collect, store, and manage vital records.
- Make the CRVS interoperable so as to allow different government agencies to share vital records.
- Make the CRVS accessible to citizens by making it available online and through mobile devices.
- Protect the security and privacy of vital records by implementing strong security measures.



# Public oversight

---

**We will make Bhutan's state institutions inclusive, effective, and accessible to justice, transparent rule of law and enhance the effectiveness of public oversight.**

## **1. Strengthen the infrastructure of the justice systems and support capacity building through funds, scholarships etc.**

- Strengthening judiciary institutions by investing in the training and professional development of judges, lawyers, and other justice sector officials. This also includes improving the infrastructure of the justice system, such as courtrooms and prisons.
- Modernise procedures using technology to streamline processes and make it easier for people to access justice. This will also entail simplifying legal language so that it is more accessible to the public.
- Increasing transparency and accountability by making information about the justice system more accessible to the public and ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to hold justice sector officials accountable for their actions.
- Promoting access to justice by providing legal aid to people who cannot afford to pay for legal services.

## **2. Enhance justice and efficiency through law and policy reform:**

- We will continue to harmonise and amend inconsistent and conflicting laws, acts, and rules.

**We will support enhancing ability and effectiveness capability for parliamentarians and oversight bodies to discharge their functions. Enhance oversight institutions.**

- Increase the independence of oversight institutions by giving them more autonomy.
- Provide oversight institutions with the necessary resources such as financial, human, and technical resources.
- Strengthen the capacity of oversight institutions by providing them with training and support.
- Promote cooperation and coordination among oversight institutions by establishing mechanisms for sharing information and coordinating activities.

## **2. Strengthen public sector performance.**

- Improve the quality of public service delivery by recruiting and retaining qualified staff, providing training and development opportunities, and creating a culture of accountability.
- Eliminate corruption and waste by strengthening anti-corruption laws and regulations, improving transparency and accountability, and creating a culture of integrity.



- Promote efficiency and effectiveness by streamlining processes, using technology, and eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy.

### 3. Strengthen national integrity and anti-corruption system.

- Adopt and implement a national anti-corruption strategy to prevent corruption, investigate and prosecute corruption cases quickly. and recover stolen assets.
- Strengthen the rule of law by ensuring that laws are just and impartial, by upholding the independence of the judiciary, and by ensuring that there is accountability for corruption.
- Promote transparency and accountability by making information about government spending and procurement more accessible to the public, by strengthening whistleblowing laws, and by creating a culture of integrity.

#### Our outcome targets:

- We will increase public sector annual performance for each agency by 95%.
- We will smoothen the debt to GDP ratio.
- We will increase external foreign currency reserves.
- We will increase public trust and perception of justice services.
- We will bring GovTech maturity index to higher levels.
- We will enhance cybersecurity maturity index to high levels.
- We will improve corruption perception index scores.
- We will uphold and enhance rule of law scores.
- We will improve voice and accountability scores.
- We will improve national credibility and integrity scores.

## **Part two: 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan**

---

**Continuity...**

---

**For Peace. Prosperity. Security.**

---



## Health Services

### Protecting and promoting better health

### Expanding better and quality health services across the Nation

Health has been a priority for us, and we have delivered on our pledge to make specialist services available in cluster hospitals and to provide diagnostic services (Endoscopy, ultrasound, cancer screening and vaccination) at the BHU level. Besides protecting precious lives during COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to enhance and strengthen health services across the country. The satisfaction expressed by all sections of the society in safeguarding the health of the people have encouraged us to deliver more. Our desire to establish a multidisciplinary super-specialist hospital so that referrals abroad can be stopped has been delayed, although the detailed project report has been finalised and funds of Nu. 5.6 billion secured. We would therefore want to continue with our plan to further strengthen the delivery of quality health care and make it convenient for every Bhutanese to access all levels of care.

We want to ensure that you and your family receive the best health care and that your health is always secured.

### Our commitment

---

- To complete the construction of a multi-disciplinary super specialty hospital and provide services in-country without requiring referral abroad.
- Expand electronic patient information system (ePIS) to all hospitals.
- Upgrade hospitals across the country with more equipment and doctors to provide more services at the gewog and district level.
- Continue and enhance delivery of specialist and diagnostic services at the gewog level especially for screening program.
- Take preventive and delivery of medicines at your doorstep for vulnerable and at-risk population.
- Control and eliminate priority public health diseases such as mental health, substance abuse, lifestyle diseases etc.
- Improve working condition of health workers through better incentives, allowances, and recognition of service.





- Promote our indigenous medicine system as a center of regional and global excellence.

The dedication and commitment to serve and deliver health services by our hard-working health workers has been aptly demonstrated during the global pandemic and we are immensely proud of the honour and recognition bestowed on the health fraternity by His Majesty The King. Their selfless service offered around the clock, across the country often at the cost of their own wellbeing and the immense sacrifices made is acknowledged and applauded. That is why we have enhanced their incentives and improved the work environment. We will continue to take care of our health workers so that they may in turn take care of you and your family.

Although free health care is provided, most people often must wait for long periods to access services. Our provision of specialist services in the cluster hospitals has largely eased this. However more needs to be done. We need to reduce waiting time and provide more prompt services.

Non communicable disease and lifestyle diseases such as cancers, kidney diseases, cardiovascular accidents, mental health, and ageing population continue to be major disease burden and it is only expected to increase. Global climate change has led to greater disasters which again takes a toll on the health of people. To make our health system more resilient and world class we will implement the following activities:

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will complete the construction of the multi-disciplinary super specialty hospital.**

The promised hospital could not be built despite having secured funds for it because of the COVID-19. Despite that we have already instituted the services such as cardiac Cath lab for heart ailments and arranged all necessary facilities for Kidney transplant. Many of the cancer patients can be treated here in the country after initial induction of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. The plans and architectural drawings have been completed and a detailed project report has been submitted to GoI. The new hospital will lead to reduced referral and all Bhutanese will be able to be treated within the country with the care of near and dear ones.

### **2. We will make accessing health care convenient and easy for you.**

- We want you to have access to quality health care wherever and whenever you need it and with the ease such as buying grocery. Towards that the following will be taken up as priority.
- We will further strengthen the cluster hospitals to provide specialist services. Evert two districts should have one hospital with specialist doctors so that they don't have to travel long distances.



- We will review staff strength in all health centers and reassign health workers according to the need. The department of medical services now being placed under the guidance of the JDWNRH will make this more efficient as respective clinical departments know where to send additional staff.
- We will reduce waiting time in hospitals by having more chambers and operating off hour clinics.
- Dedicated lines and procedures will be implemented to provide preferential attention to senior citizens, monks, retired armed force personnel and people with special needs.

### **3. We will expand the ePIS system across the country, thereby eliminating the need to carry papers.**

As pledged in our last manifesto we have developed and implemented the electronic patient information system in JDWNRH. This will further be expanded across the country. Patients will no longer require carrying bundles of papers and books as each case file will be held in the data system. Hospitals across the country will be ride on this and therefore wherever you go, your health information will be available at the click of a button.

### **4. We will continue to protect you and your family stay healthy.**

As we have demonstrated, DNT is best placed to take care of your health needs. We were able to make tough decisions during the COVID-19, keep track of medical developments and reach out in a timely manner for vaccines and above all safeguard lives and health of the people. Therefore, going forward, future pandemics is inevitable, and this is compounded by rising lifestyle diseases and climate related health conditions. Therefore, to protect you and your family, we will take the following steps.

- Ensure provision of timely vaccines to prevent communicable diseases including flu and COVID-19
- Implement harm reduction and detox center to reduce alcohol and drug related condition.
- Strengthen the Pema center to provide much needed help for mental health patients and for safeguarding women and children.  
Strengthen the Non communicable disease prevention program to address the epidemic of Diabetes, Hypertension, Strokes, Heart ailments and other chronic diseases.
- Implement a healthy ageing program that caters to reducing morbidity among senior citizens.
- Continue to provide screening program for common cancers right to the chiwog level.

### **5. We will further strengthen the number and capacity of health workers.**

Our health workers are one of the best in the world, however they are burdened because of the large number of cases and the limited number of workers. Our health workers in the gewogs must



walk for days to ensure that all services reach to the remotest of villages. With many health workers leaving the service and going abroad, we need to incentivise them to stay and build their capacity. Towards this we will:

- Further strengthen the MBBS college with capacity to take up more students.
- Coordinate and streamline working mechanism between JDWNRH and KGUMSB to improve teaching and research facilities and to share resources.
- We will start consolidating the BHUs and these will be manned by doctors in phases.
- We will continue to enhance the frequency of providing a specialist diagnostic facility such as Upper Gastro- intestinal endoscopy, Pap smear, mammography, and ultrasound on a regular basis in the gewogs.
- We will upgrade skills and category of health workers in district hospitals and BHUs.
- We will train, recruit, and send doctors specialised in general practice and family health to the districts.
- We will review and revise the curriculum taught in KGUMSB to train nurse practitioners in several clinical branches so that their capacity can be enhanced and will support the work of the doctors.
- We will work closely with KGUMSB to design and introduce courses that build skills critical in our health services.

**6. We will continue to promote and strengthen the indigenous medicine system as a center of regional excellence.**

Our indigenous medicine system has benefitted our people immensely by providing an alternative source of healing based on ancient Buddhist knowledge and skills. Our country has always been hailed as a rich source of medicinal herbs. We will continue to invest in our existing indigenous medical system, strengthen and promote it into a world-class institute to make it into a regional center of excellence in traditional medicine. To that effect we will:



- Continue to invest in building the capacity of the faculty of traditional medicine and improve teaching and research skills to raise them to international standards.
- We will work closely with KGUMSB to revise the curriculum of indigenous medicine to make it into an international center of excellence with foreign students also able to study here.
- Work closely with our indigenous hospital centre to establish linkages with international brand names to provide wellness and healing centers.
- We will continue to strengthen collaboration between traditional medicine and allopathic medicine by designing internship and placement programs among professionals across disciplines.
- We will institute research grants to encourage research and learning on subjects and themes that interlink between these two disciplines.

**7. We will encourage and support establishment of home-based health care services to cater to those that need such services.**

Many have expressed their frustration of hiring nurses for caring for a bed ridden person at home, or inconvenience of standing in long queues for blood test and having to go to hospital for simple things as dressing of wounds etc. Requests have been made in the past for establishment of private home health care service to cater to these needs. After careful analysis, the benefits far outweigh the risks and therefore we will implement this program through the following mechanism.

- We will initiate home health care services in partnership with the private sector, initially on a pilot phase and then roll out based on its evaluation.
- We will develop close monitoring and ensure that standards are maintained.
- The prices will be worked out to ensure that is affordable for the clients while it is viable for the provider.

**8. We will control and eliminate priority public health diseases.**

Lessons from COVID-19 are fresh in our minds and to protect our people from future such events we have upgraded and strengthened all our border hospitals with specialist doctors and adequate equipment. Samtse, Phuntsholing, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar hospitals have been upgraded to provide services for these large, populated Throms but also to prepare for future pandemics. At the same time there is an ongoing epidemic of lifestyle diseases, infectious diseases and those related to maternal health problems. We will control and eliminate these public health issues through:

- Targeted interventions to address public health issues such as non-communicable diseases, drugs, alcohol, maternal mortality and other nutritional and climate sensitive disease.
- Continuing to Invest in public health measures and to prevent diseases while at the same time promoting good health.
- Strengthen the Royal centre for diseases control with additional manpower and equipment.



# Economic Development

## Accelerating the Economy

### An economy with progressive & inclusive growth.

We want to ensure that macroeconomic parameters are addressed to develop economic agility and resilience as we position ourselves on the path to progressive recovery. Given the vulnerability of our economy, it is imperative that we address the basic economic fundamentals on priority basis; in this regard, we pledge to diversify the economic activities through empowerment and inclusion of the private sector. The fundamental issue with our economy is the lack of economic diversity and widening trade deficit; hence, we pledge to promote economic diversity and promote export. Private sector development and formulation of business-friendly policies will be the cornerstone of Bhutan's economic development. We will strive to bring major structural reforms for sustainable and progressive economic growth and realise high income status, hence transcending to prosperity of every Bhutanese citizen.

Private sector development, public-private partnership and promotion of capital market will form the core basis for economic development in short to medium term. We pledge to create economic vibrancy by committing to fulfil the following.

## Our commitment

---

Short-to-medium term:

- Exempt BIT for small and micro businesses including start-ups that have annual turnover of less than Nu. 300,000.
- Establish 'National Economic development Board' under the chairmanship of Prime Minister.
- Generate additional 3000 MW of Hydropower and harness 500 MW of solar power (details covered under Energy security)
- Revise taxation policy/law to make Bhutan's export more competitive in regional and international market especially for minerals and fruits.
- Reduce the business TAT (turn-around-time) by at-least 50%.
- Increase FDI investment to Nu 100 billion.



- Provide easy access to credit and with collateral.  
Reduce interest rates for loans in identified sectors (such as Agro products, minerals, forest products, handicrafts, textiles, also for those products that reduces imports such as steel, cement, bricks, furniture houses etc. by 2 -3%.

Long-term:

- Develop strategic vision document capturing the priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Develop capital market and explore regional market for domestic listed companies.
- Explore offshore investment avenues.
- Develop future reserve fund for any contingency event in the future.
- Develop theme based economic opportunities in different Dzongkhags.
- Bring transformative change in the management of revenues and resources at Dzongkhag level and make them self-sustaining.
- Develop agile CSI and start-up ecosystem and design subsidy package for the same.
- Diligently pursue food & nutrition security mission through improved agriculture productivity, better market linkages and value addition.

## ECONOMIC SCENARIO

### Performance and Transition (1980-2019)- Pre COVID-19

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Bhutan had achieved unprecedented economic growth during the past 4 decades recording an average annual growth of 7.5 percent. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from Nu.1.031 billion in 1980 to Nu.178.562 billion in 2019 as economic base gradually shifted from primary sector to industry and tertiary sectors. GDP per capita also increased substantially during the period reaching USD 3,418 in 2019, which was amongst the highest in the region and compared with some of the world's small and developing economies. During the past 4 decades of growth and progress, the economy also transitioned from an agrarian society to a hydro-based and service led economy.

As a resource-based economy, the economy was largely driven by construction and generation of hydroelectricity. Spikes in GDP occurred when a new hydropower project is commissioned indicating the predominant role of hydropower in the economy rather than actual structural transformation. Tourism has been another significant contributor to the economy, with Bhutan's pristine landscape and rich culture heritage attracting traveler's seeking unique and sustainable experience. Agriculture, mainly subsistence farming, also played a crucial role in the livelihoods of many Bhutanese.



### COVID-19 Period (2020 - 2022)

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Bhutan like many other nations, faced numerous challenges. The government swiftly implemented measures to contain the spread of the virus, including lockdowns, travel restrictions and strong emphasis on health and safety.

However, these measures had economic consequences. The tourism sector which contributed significantly (10% of GDP), came to a standstill as international travel grounded to a halt. Service sector experienced the steepest decline as demand in consumer-driven sectors like retail, accommodation, and transport were affected. Industries that relied on foreign labour and raw materials declined in industrial output, aggravated by a fall in demand, both in the international and domestic market. As a result, the economy entered a brief recessionary period in 2020, with growth at an all time low of negative 10.08 %.

The grant of Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu (DGRK) by His Majesty in the form of income and interest payment support, alleviated the economic difficulties faced by people and boosted the morale and enhanced psychological resilience. Additionally, the government also rolled out various relief packages to support businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic, but these efforts were constrained by Bhutan's relatively small economy.

Despite these challenges, Bhutan's economy displayed resilience during the pandemic. The country's strong sense of community, coupled with GNH philosophy, helped maintain social cohesion. Moreover, the focus on sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency in food production minimised the immediate impact of supply chain disruptions.

### Recovery Period (2022 onwards)

As the world gradually moved past the acute phase of the pandemic, Bhutan set its sight on a post-COVID-19 recovery that aligns with the GNH values. As a part of the recovery plan, the government pursued expansionary fiscal stance and allocated highest capital outlay to stimulate economic activities by investing in the priority areas of export promotion, import substitution, and employment generation. The government continued to invest in healthcare and education, recognising that human capital development was essential for long-term resilience. Bhutan also accelerated digitalisation efforts, enhancing connectivity and access to online services to facilitate e-commerce.

For the first time, the Government also provided capital budget without ceiling at the agency level. Such reform facilitated the agencies in receiving adequate budget for supporting priority activities for a resilient economic recovery. Furthermore, the government established the National Credit Guarantee Scheme (NCGS) as a counter cyclical policy measure to promote cottage and small industries by enhancing access to credit and boost private sector engagement.



In the tourism sector, the government adopted a cautious approach, focusing on high-value, low-volume tourism with a new tag line “Bhutan Believe”. This approach sought to attract travellers who appreciated Bhutan’s unique culture and natural beauty while minimising negative impacts on the environment and local communities.

Through the execution of diverse economic recovery initiatives, economic operation returned to their usual state, and as supply chain regained stability, a comprehensive recuperation was evident in most economic domains. The economy recorded a growth of 4.4 percent in 2021 and 5.2 percent in 2022. The monetary relief measures and accelerated public expenditure drove the growth. Notably, the primary drivers of the economic upturn included sectors such as Hotels and Restaurants, Construction, and Wholesale and Retail Trade, among other sectors. The service sector displayed noteworthy expansion and continued to be the largest contributor to the growth. In the medium term, economic growth will follow a positive trajectory supported by multiple transformative shifts such as commissioning of various hydro power projects, and the gradual recovery of the tourism sector.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will address the macroeconomic imbalance primarily through leveraging of export and curtailing imports.**

For last fifteen years, we have been experiencing widening trade deficit leading to current account deficit. We will continue to enhance export by liberalising our export policy such as reducing tariffs, easing restriction on certain exports (such as timber, CBD, minerals etc) and reduce imports, by incentivising import substitution products.

### **2. We will adopt inclusive, agile, and targeted monetary & fiscal policy and incentives to ensure end-to-end policy coordination and coherence.**

Fiscal and monetary policies have been implemented to tide over the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact. They will further be amended to recover and grow the economy. Some of the incentives that will be implemented is to provide tax breaks to allow access to affordable financing both within and outside the country.

- Do away with double taxation.
- Provide further tax incentives for industries that reduce imports and enhance exports.
- Reduce interest rates for select businesses.





### **3. We will ease access to credit and make it convenient for availing loans.**

Access to credit is critical for stimulating economic activity either at household level or for commercial purposes. Majority of our people are unable to access credit, because of high interest rates and need for collateral that is deemed valuable by the banks such as urban land and property. Recognising this difficulty, we established the CSI bank with reduced interest rates and offered the National Credit guarantee scheme, with government standing as guarantor for those without required collaterals. These were beneficial for many. We will further strengthen access to credit by implementing the following:

- Enable rural land and property to be placed as collateral and acquire minimum loan in consultation with the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA).
- Access to credit with reduced interest rates of 4-5% for rural housing, agriculture (machines, equipment, land development etc.) and in select projects that contribute to reducing import and enhancing export.
- Establish minimum turn around for decision on availing loan services.
- Enable more agencies to operate micro-loan and micro credit services in different parts of the country. The management and monitoring will be stringently regulated.

### **4. We will establish an ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.**

An Economic Development board will be established that will guide and develop economic road map of the country. This will ensure better coordination and focused attention to charting out economic activities without fragmentation and with one national goal.

The private sector has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the several reforms in the country. In addition, the war in Europe has led to increase in fuel costs thereby leading to inflation. The monetary policies were also not favourable given the very serious concern of NPL. Therefore, in the next five years, to boost the private sector and provide more opportunities, we will undertake the following:

- Increase private sector investment from current 40% to 50%.
- Strengthen the function of BCCI through legislation of private sector development Bill.
- Strengthen the One stop shop window for all business-related issues.
- Continue to expand various sectors for private partnership such as energy (wind and solar), timber, medicinal cannabis, forest resources, mining and charcoal production which were otherwise restricted.
- Consider lower interest rates for export oriented and import substitution industries.



- Establish the Economic Development Board to enhance industries particularly in manufacturing and technology.
- Remove obstacles that hinder business by annual review of the progress of the private sector.

#### **5. We will improve and create more CSI products for export purposes.**

Bhutanese products are popular and much sought after in many countries. We facilitated marketing of Bhutanese products in several countries such as Australia, Singapore, Thailand, Kuwait, USA, Bangladesh, and India which were very successful. There is lots of demand and therefore to build on this opportunity, we will implement the following:

- Support the CSI industry to create more and better products by providing concessional loans, bridging connection and collaboration with partners abroad, sought new technology for faster design and production.
- Establish integrated centers that provide packaging, standardisation, certification, and labelling.
- Assist in establishing CSI stores in identified cities around the world.
- Conduct outreach and marketing of products by our missions abroad and participation in trade fairs and using all forms of media.
- Support skilling and training of CSI manufacturers and workers.

#### **6. We will bring in NU 100 billion worth FDI in the next five years.**

We will increase the FDI investment from Nu 43 billion currently to Nu 100 billion in the next five years. We have reviewed the bottlenecks and instituted several changes following the reforms. Towards this the following activities will need implemented.

- Ease regulations so that starting businesses in the country will be swifter and more efficient.
- Provide more incentives and expand the sectors for investment.
- Invest in skilling of manpower so that FDI companies are supported with the right skills people.
- Conduct more investment fairs and pitching in more countries with the assistance of our Missions abroad.
- Create conducive conditions for supporting employment of locals and transfer of technology and skills.

#### **9. We will create and support GIG economy and digital jobs.**

Actively support and create conducive platform for GIG economy and digital jobs, by establishing centers with common facilities, co-working spaces, high internet bandwidth via fibre connection,



digital tools, and applications for supporting the digital jobs, support and encourage digital nomads, and enhance and improve inward online remittance for digital workforce.

- We will induct leading private sector people on short term special contract to work as secretariat/advisor to the economic development board.
- We will allow individuals (those that generate or earn in foreign currency) to hold foreign currency accounts with Banks in Bhutan.
- We will support the Banks to build their capital base by allowing access to credit from multilateral development Banks.
- We will rationalise the relevance of State Enterprises and we will forge to develop private listed companies. We will also divest many of our state enterprises for business efficiency.
- We will explore investment avenues in Australia, so that our Bhutanese people in Australia gets to work for the Royal Government project.
- We will design attractive packages for tourism sector through concession and discounts.

#### **10. We will support the Tourism industry to become more vibrant.**

There is no doubt that the tourism industry has been greatly impacted, first from the pandemic, the war in Europe and then the increase in the SDF. As promised, we reviewed the SDF and brought it down to USD 100 per day which we hope will lead to higher numbers in the next season. We have undertaken major marketing campaigns and above all have rebranded ourselves as a nation with “BHUTAN - BELIEVE”. To support the tourism industry to rebound and to thrive, we will institute the following:

- Continue to provide fiscal incentives for the industry players till they have bounced back.
- Monitor the numbers of tourist, the income and the quality of services and support their success.
- Continue to invest part of the income from the SDF to be ploughed back into the tourism sector in terms of marketing, training, beautification, and improvement of amenities.
- Improve the payment gateway by strengthening financial services and enhancing the use of credit and debit cards more easily.

We will recognise and support innovative start-ups.

#### **11. We will recognise and support innovative start-ups.**

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key to establishing industries and boosting private sector. While several programs have been initiated such as the startup center in Thimphu, “Jabchor” program by RMA and other crowd sourcing and angel investment schemes, we will expand this further to cover other districts in Bhutan.



## Education Services

### Transformative Education

#### Imparting 21st century education and for the world of work

Education has always been a priority of the royal government of Bhutan and where we have invested the most in terms of budget allocation. We have taken some bold measures during our tenure that have benefitted the parent and children the most. The removal of the cut off points to enter government schools after the 10 standards has ensured that all students in Bhutan now study till class 12. This move has contributed to the enrolment of youth after 18 years or class 12 to the Gyalsuung program. We amended the inequitable central school policy of the previous government and made it more equitable by ensuring that all schools across the country provide free and nutritious breakfast and lunch. The diets of our children have been greatly improved with rice fortification and increase in the stipend. The acceleration of the ICTization of schools starting from the remote schools has ensured that the neediest have access to ICT and that children learn the use of modern technology in their learning. By making the teacher profession the highest paid public servants, we have led to the most talented of our students to take up teaching as a profession. Under the leadership and guidance of His Majesty the King, the new curriculum - Bhutan Baccalaureate is already being implemented in few schools and over the next few years it will be expanded to all schools across the country.

### Our Commitment

---

Imparting education must keep transforming to make it relevant and useful for the students so that the knowledge and skills they acquire help them to lead meaningful lives and to become contributory citizens. In this 21st century with rapid advances in technology, it has become necessary for us to reform and transform our education sector. In addition to all that we have done in the last five years, we will further consolidate and improve our education through the following commitments.

- Provide housing for all teachers within school campus in a phased manner through PPP financing model.



- Introduce boarding facilities in select few schools in Thimphu to cater to lower income families and urban poor and other.
- Strengthen and support school feeding program by increasing student stipend to 2040 as per international standard (WFP)
- Strengthen ICT labs for all students starting from Middle secondary schools.
- Support ICTization of all schools further and equip them with modern teaching facilities and adequately trained human resources.
- Strengthen online teaching and tutoring and make it accessible.
- Review teacher posting and improve teachers work environment.
- Support teachers with more administrative and support staff to ease teacher workload.
- Institute more scholarships available and transparent.

A whole year of education was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it also provided us with an opportunity to introduce new forms of learning such as online classes, remote learning, and introducing a dedicated channel on BBS for educational purposes. Realizing the need to reform the education sector, we supported change in curriculum and Bhutan Baccalaureate has been introduced in several schools across the country and near ready for rolling out nationally. We have prioritised STEM subjects to align with the needs and future opportunities in the 21st century. As stated in the past we continue to believe that our children and youth must graduate from schools and colleges with knowledge and skills that respond to the job market in the country and internationally. It has become even more urgent to inculcate in our students the importance of imbibing our shared heritage and culture. While Bhutanese have gained a good reputation abroad as being honest, law abiding, hardworking etc., we do it when we are abroad. The same sense of commitment must be practiced here in the country and that is why our children need to adopt age-old values of tha-damtshi and ley-jumdrey, driglam namzha and respect for parent and elders. This will all contribute to a happy society and place an additional advantage for our children as they go out in the world of work. We will take forward our education agenda through the following actions.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will provide housing for all teachers within the school campus.**

One important lesson learnt during the pandemic was that teachers are an integral part of the school and not being able to be in school led to disruptions during lock downs. With inevitability of global pandemics becoming more common, we need to prepare for such events and enable better facilities for our teachers who often must reside on distant locations from their place of work. Therefore, to further enhance better learning in schools and for convenience, we will implement the following:



- Construct adequate housing so that all teachers are housed within the school campus (if not enough land, then as close to schools)
- Review the minimum standard of infrastructure for the schools.
- Make houses affordable for the teachers.

## **2. We will establish boarding facilities in select few schools in Thimphu and other thromdes where there are no boarding provisions.**

Without any boarding facilities in the schools in the major thromdes including the capital, many urban poor and those from low socio-economic grounds face difficulty in the educating their children and earning their livelihood. They have conveyed their desire to have such facilities and therefore we will establish boarding facilities in select schools in Thimphu and other thromdes and have boarding facilities.

## **3. In addition to providing free breakfast and lunch in all schools we will further improve the diet and nutrition of these meals to ensure the health of our children.**

We introduced free breakfast and lunch in all our schools and improved the quality of their diet by introducing fortified rice. The health and learning abilities are already greatly improved. However more needs to be done and in the next five years, we will further improve the diet by:

- Increasing the stipend for all students so that the money is able to procure adequate proteins, fats and fruits to meet the international nutritional requirement of 500 calories per day.
- Continue to provide more vegetables, fruits and whole grains, appropriate amounts of proteins and carbohydrates and limit levels of sodium, saturated fat, and trans-fat.
- Promote good eating habits, encourage physical activity, and advance the nutritional education of Bhutanese children.
- Support purchase of local products for the school by lining farmers groups with school kitchen so that it benefits both financially and nutritionally.
- Train all the cooks in healthy cooking and in food safety.

**4. We will continue to make teaching the most attractive profession in the country.** We have raised the incentives for teachers and encouraged the best to join the profession by enabling College of education to be the first to take in students from among the colleges and also increased the stipend compared to other colleges. We will continue to make teaching



an attractive option so that the best will take care of our children and ensure the future of our country. Towards that we will implement the following:

- Provide continuous in-service training programs that is relevant, equitable and updated.
- Continue to explore and provide scholarships for Master level teacher training courses in prestigious universities.
- Review the remuneration, incentives and other allowances on a regular basis and revise them in keeping with living standards in consultation with RMA.
- Strengthen the human resource division so that transfers, placements, and teaching assignments are relevant, fair, practical and in the best interest of the school and the education sector.
- Decrease teacher workload by recruiting and outsourcing administrative work and extracurricular activities to those trained to deliver them.
- Institute annual recognition and award systems that will further motivate teachers to be the best.
- Consider delinking teachers from the civil service and remove hassles for teachers in fulfilling RCSC mandates.

#### **5. We will strengthen ICT labs for students.**

Strengthened ICT labs that will not only allow faster learning but reduce the need for traditional teaching-learning materials such as use of paper and note-books. Knowing the difficulties faced by our children we will do the following:

- Strengthening ICT labs in schools.
- Have adequate printing and scanning facilities in the schools that will be subsidised.
- Negotiate with telecom providers to offer discounts for students on internet and data charges.

#### **6. We will improve learning by enhancing facilities in classrooms.**

Although ICTization of schools has seen remarkable improvement in terms of commuters and peripherals, there are still many that we could have accelerated. In our quest to improve learning in the schools using the most modern technology we will further carry out the following activities:

- Ensure adequate number of computers in the school and reliable high-speed internet services.
- Equip classrooms a projector and smart blackboards to enhance teaching and learning.
- Continue to accelerate the provision of heating and cooling facilities wherever necessary to make learning comfortable for students.



**7. We will expand enterprise, technical and vocational skills development program that have been started in schools.**

During our tenure, we have taken a realistic approach to skilling and training, acknowledging that there was a big mismatch between jobs available and qualification of applicants. Our education system focused more on awarding degrees, many of which were not suitable for jobs in demand while there was high demand for people with specific skills. We undertook a comprehensive reform of the TVET system and drafted a strategy. The Dessup skilling program with skilling in various disciplines showed that with proper planned programs including master trainers, we can impart skills that facilitates our youth to take up jobs and start a business. The Gyalsuung program will further expand this. The introduction of TVET curriculum in some schools has already shown immense benefit, there this will be further expanded.

- Expand and improve the vocational and skilling training program in high schools.
- Support school with adequate machines, training material and master trainers.
- Link TVET institutes with private sector and corporates
- Encourage institutes to take up contracts and utilise the TVET students in learning firsthand business skills.
- Encourage and partner with private institutes in providing TVET programs.
- Recruit world class master trainers to train and skill out youth.

**8. We will priorities and support children with disabilities to continue education and skill building.**

- Enable children with learning disabilities and special needs to continue education.
- Improve the facilities in special needs schools with teaching equipment.
- Introduce dedicated training program for teachers to specialise in teaching and caring for children with special needs (such as sign language, brail, physiotherapy, counselling etc.)
- Support CSO that work with children with special needs to enhance their services and to link them with educational institutes.





# Employment Opportunities

## Creating more opportunities and meaningful jobs

### Better opportunities, assured employment

---

Creating jobs have become critical given the exodus of young people going abroad due to limited opportunities at home. While several FDIs and industrial parks were established, the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the downturn in tourism resulted in the negative impact on the economy. As elsewhere in the world, we too were impacted, and this led to the increase in the number of unemployed among the youth. His Majesty's generous Kidu during the pandemic and subsequent Dessung skilling program have immensely helped young people see through the pandemic and to gain useful skills, it is imperative that actual jobs are created.

## Our commitment

---

- Create full employment (97.5%) with quality jobs.
- Enhance the income of the bottom 40% by fourfold.
- Certify 50 % of the workforce in technical and vocational skills.
- Create 5000 Jobs in Digital Economy.
- Encourage careers in Sports and build job opportunities.
- Standardise and support the informal sector.
- Create enough policies to bring 150000 dollar paying tourist and 20000 Indian tourists.
- Support one economic project per household, for those without anyone earning income in a household.

It is time that we realised full engagement in economic activities, which will generate income for livelihood and provide meaningful employment opportunities for all. Over the last few years, we have seen many young Bhutanese going abroad for work be it in middle East, Australia, Canada, or the UK. What we need to do is create those same opportunities here in the country so that they don't need to go abroad but can stay closer to home and reap in the same economic opportunities. It is our endeavour create a conducive environment for diverse economic sectors to cater to needs



of all, the young, the middle aged and old aged, that will gainfully engage all spheres of population, and engage each and every one from each household in some form of economic activities with enabling policies, rules, technology and ensuring financial gains for each and everyone.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will implement lifelong learning curriculum to impart skills.**

Several skill-based training program will be established so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire skills to earn a livelihood. Options to choose the type of skill training will be given and lifelong learning, picking up different skills will be encouraged and supported. This will allow one to remain engaged and assist in income generating economic activities. Towards this the following activities will be taken up:

- Number of skills trainings established - some through PPP model.
- Adequate funds will be provided for skills in business management, for older people and for youth.

### **2. We will provide skills certification and ensure quality craftsmanship.**

It is important that clients receive quality work and are not cheated. Towards that we will issue certification to those that acquire skills in various fields. However, to support those that already have experience and knowledge such as traditional construction - we will implement the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and certify them based on an assessment.

### **3. We will standardise and support the informal sector.**

Majority of the economic activity carried out across the country is in the form of informal sector such as selling goods on the roadside, selling thuep and momo around the city, making home-made food, weaving clothes, selling dairy products etc. Over the last few years, we have supported them to continue their business and built convenient sheds across the country. However more needs to be done. We will standardise the informal sector and assist them in the following manner so that they not only earn their livelihood but also become a major contributor to the economy.

- Identify locations around the main cities where they can conduct their activities and provide sanitation and ensure safety.
- Support access to concessional loans to expand and upgrade their business.
- Provide training to ensure hygiene and quality.



- For farmers coming to sell their products in the cities and main towns, we will identify convenient locations to do business without facing harassment.

#### **4. We will support careers in sports.**

Bhutan Olympic Committee has been instrumental in enhancing sports in the country and several Bhutanese sportsmen have achieved international and regional success. We will continue to support BOC and the federations to enhance sports in the country. Towards building opportunities in sporting industry, we will carry out the following:

- Establish additional sporting academies.
- Conduct and participate in more national and international sporting events.
- Build partnership with sporting academies and have exchange programs.
- Support training activities
- Renew our commitment to build a high-altitude training center in the country and make economically viable.
- Support institutes in building more sporting facilities in the country

#### **5. We will support the most vulnerable households to start one economic activity.**

Targeted interventions at household level to provide support, towards starting and sustaining at least one economic activity in any sector, with support from skilling, mentoring, and others, by bringing the economic project from strategy till introduction to market, for those identified households without any economic activities for any sort of income generations, would be initiated and supported, to ensure engagement in the economic activities and source of livelihood income.

**6. We will introduce new technology in the market to enhance productivity.** Explore and bring new technology, in the fields of construction, green and sustainable projects, deep tech in the new fields of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, create economic sectors in the fields of carbon trading, renewable energy, value and promote wellness and wellbeing economic sectors, position Bhutan for green, clean, and value-based economy for sustainable development, and ensure addition of job creation and livelihood opportunities.

#### **7. We will continue to explore well-paying jobs for our youth abroad.**

Building on the success of our student visa for Bhutanese in Australia, we will continue to pursue earn and learn programs overseas, which provides good income and acquire skills. We will partner only with government and reported companies so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. We will ensure that there is no exploitation and proper labor laws of the host countries are applied and our overseas youth are protected and not discriminated with proper coordination with the Royal Bhutanese Embassies and consular offices.



**8. We will strengthen the integrated youth facilitation service centers (IYFSC) to provide one-stop-shop services to youth for all their needs.**

One of the greatest difficulties faced by youth is starting a business, researching for scholarship, or looking for employment and opportunities. While we started the process off strengthening these facilities in the four major Thromdes to begin with, the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to any further actions. We will retake up the initiative and strengthen the facilities to provide a range of services for youth.

- The renters will provide all business-related information and assist in filling forms and completing requirements.
- Look for mentors who will provide the necessary handholding for the business to take forward.
- Conduct entrepreneurial courses for youth in batches.
- Assist youth in finding jobs and matching employers with employees.
- Support youth with substance abuse and mental health problems and provide counselling and referral.

**9. We will allow foreign workers to be employed in commercial farms.**

There is acute shortage of farm workers in particular because of rural - urban migration and success of education. Our youth are unable to work on farms because of no experience and because of the intensity of work. Therefore, to secure food security and to enable large tracts of land to be farmed with adequate manpower, we will allow recruitment of foreign workers for commercial farming purposes. Careful and stringent regulations will be put in place with strict monitoring.



## Transport and Connectivity

### Building durable and reliable transport and connection

### The lifeline for economy

---

Connectivity is crucial to the economic development of a country. It fosters trade, tourism, employment, agricultural growth, infrastructure development, and social progress. DNT strongly advocates for an interconnected Bhutan with modern roads that are safe and convenient. We have improved all the major highways and have undertaken GSB laying for majority of our farm roads. Recognising the importance of having all our towns and dzongkhags connected we have built many new roads. The lessons from COVID-19 have led to the construction of and near completion of the Southern East- west highway. We shall build upon the work that was started in the last 5 years and ensure that connectivity issues are resolved by 2029.

## Our commitment

---

- Complete the Southern East-west highway.
- Further improve and construct new North - South highways and have them pliable throughout the year.
- Shorten routes by building tunnels in select location.
- Implement efficient green public transportation in all major thromdes.
- Support alternative forms of transportation.
- Continue and further improve digital connectivity.

It has become apparent that as we graduate and the economy progresses, the lifeline is connectivity and transportation. While roads and air travel are important, it is equally important other alternatives and explored and adopted. Routes must be made shorter so that goods can be transported more efficiently thereby bringing down prices of essential goods. Over the last five years, our farmers have benefited immensely from our pledge and successful implementation of GSB of all major farm roads. The quality of road construction has improved tremendously as demonstrated by the Gyalposhing connectivity road. We seek to bridge the geographical, social,



and economic divides that hinder progress. We will ensure equitable distribution of road infrastructure, so that every region, regardless of its size or remoteness, has access to safe, reliable, and well-maintained roads. No community should be left isolated or disadvantaged due to inadequate connectivity. In the next five years to improve connectivity the following is our pledge.

## Our plan of action

---

**1. We will complete the Southern national East-West highway (20 billion).** The southern east - west highway has become a priority given the vulnerability we face when events such as COVID-19 hit us. It is also important from security and safety aspects. Towards completing this project the following highways will be improved and constructed.

- Construction of Dewathang - Nganglam Highway
- Construction of Lhamoizingkha - Sarpang Highway
- Improve Samtse – Phuntsholing Highway
- Improve Dewathang – Samrang Highway
- Improve Gelephu -Taraythang Highway
- Improve Samtse- Norbugang Road
- Improve Yongkola-Lingmethang (Northern)

**2. We will construct, upgrade, and improve the national North-South highways (20 billion).**

The lifeline of most of our dzongkhags are the north-south national highways and these have been improved over the last five years. By connecting the Northern districts to the South, it will enable faster travel and help economy by reducing travel time and bringing price of commodities down. The following Highways will be undertaken over the next five years.

- New construction of Lhamoizingkha - Dalbari
- New construction of Kurigongri-Serichu
- New construction of bypass at Box cut on Trongsa-Gelephu highway.
- New construction of Gelephu – Panbang highway
- Upgrade Khothakpa – Tshobaley
- Upgrade Trongsa-Gelephu highway
- Upgrade Wangdue to Gelephu
- Upgrade Gyelposhing to Nganglam
- Improve Nganglam-Panbang
- Improve Haa-Samtse Highway



- Improve Samdrupcholing-Border Road

**3. We will invest 5 billion to enhance connectivity between the following places as priority:**

- Upgrade Chazam to Trashiyangtse
- Upgrade Gangola to Lhuentse
- Upgrade Punakha to Gasa
- Trashiang-Rangjung
- Complete the Laya GC road
- Complete the Lingzhi GC road
- Complete the Soe GC road

**4. We will construct new roads to that will shorten the distance between two important locations such as between Dzongkhags, Gewogs and Villages.**

**5. We will explore tunnelling projects in select locations to shorted routes.**

**6. We will lay GSB on all the remaining farm roads in the country.**

GSB road in all the gewogs has greatly benefitted our rural people and it has helped them boost their income. It has also become cheaper to maintain it. We believe that road connectivity should empower local communities, providing them with opportunities for economic growth, social interaction, and cultural exchange. We will take up infrastructure projects that involve local participation, create employment opportunities, and promote the preservation of cultural heritage.

GSB project will be expanded across the country to ensure that all roads are pliable thought the year within the 13 FYP.

**7. We will blacktop and cement select farm roads including Lhakhangs and institutes - phase wise.**

**8. We will take forward the implementation of alternate forms of transport.** Multimodal Connectivity and transport is critical for movement of people and goods. We recognise that road connectivity does not exist in isolation. We have been working towards the integration of various modes of transportation, such as railways, waterways, and air travel, to create a seamless and efficient multimodal transportation network. This will enhance interconnectivity between different regions, promote trade, and support sustainable urbanisation. In line with this principle of connectivity, we will implement the following connection of regions with different modes.

**9. Railway Connectivity Projects**

- Hashimara – Phuntsholing.
- Kokrajar – Gelephu
- Patshala – Nganglam
- Rangia - Samdrup Jongkhar
- Banarhat – Samtse



#### **10. Light gauged railway between Paro – Thimphu**

#### **11. Access Airport Up gradation**

- Paro international Airport
- Bumthang Airport
- Yonphula Airport
- Gelephu international Airport
- Identification and Development of alternative airport to Yonphula in the east

#### **12. Development of Water ways from Gelephu and Lhamoizingkha to India and Bangladesh**

#### **13. We will construct new and improve existing bridges across the country.**

Being a mountainous country with many rivers and streams, connecting different places have been limited because of lack of bridges. Bridges play an important role both for highways and farm roads. They facilitate the transportation of goods, connect markets, and open up new trade routes. We have identified all the places that need bridges and in the next five years the following will be implemented.

- 150 bridges (including Bailey bridges in farm roads) will be built in next 5 years – 5 billion projects.
- Support the production of bridge manufacturing plant within the country.
- All bridges required for connecting chiwogs and villages will be completed.

#### **14. We will continue and further improve digital connectivity.**

One of the pledges that we were unable to complete was the establishment of Free Wi-fi access points to allow free hosting of LOCAL contents. It was not because of want of technology or resources but entirely because of competing priorities for funds. In its place were able to increase the number of free Wi-fi access points in schools, hospitals, and other public spaces. We have carried out a detailed analysis of cost and benefit and am fully convinced of its immense potentials. We are confident on delivering on this process this time round and therefore al pledging the same once more.

- Allow free access to IN-COUNTRY intranet online educational content.
- Establish free Wi-fi access points.
- Promote online businesses.

## **Good Governance**





## Efficient Public services

## Responsive and Accountable

---

It has been our endeavour to improve public services to meet the expectation of all our people. As we have said in the past, you should not have to look for someone you know to avail services fast, it should be part of the system. Towards that we have reformed the entire civil service so that they are made more responsive and accountable. We passed the Civil Liability Act which places greater accountability on service providers and empowered our people to claim your rights. As pledged, we have taken an intensive campaign against stray dogs and the entire country has been covered. Public toilets have been constructed along highways and management handed over to youth and community groups. We have achieved 100 % sanitation for all. All of these will reap in dividends in better health and decrease on communicable diseases. As we have done in the past, we are committed to making public services more fair, efficient, and uniform for all.

## Our commitment

---

- Implement minimum turnaround time for all public services and place greater accountability.
- Reduce crime and make Bhutan a drug free society.
- Build and establish modern crematoriums in all dzongkhags.
- Strengthen community centers in the gewogs to provide one stop shop for all public services.
- Accelerate the waste management flagship program across the country.

We have made enormous strides in providing public services and ensuring that our living spaces are cleaner, safer, and vibrant. Under His Majesty guidance, our towns and cities have undergone major transformation through projects such as national flower show, construction of Kaja Throm and establishment of the Royal Commission for urban development. After COVID-19 we have ensured that security is enhanced and streamlined the public hotline. The incidence of substance abuse in the country is on the rise. Every measure will be taken to eliminate this from our society. The National COVID-19 task force is now the National Drug Task force and with the establishment



of the Pema Secretariat, many activities are being implemented to secure the health and lives of our youth and the safety of our daughters and sisters.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will continue to make public service delivery professional, convenient and faster.**

The national digital identity will revolutionise the way public services are delivered going forward. Not only will public services be more efficient, but it will make [carrying papers and documents] obsolete. We will strengthen public services through the following:

- Support and facilitate all public service delivery agencies to ride on the National digital identity platform to ensure that public services are available at the pressing of a button.
- Implement minimal turn-around time for all public services and provide grievance cell for the public.
- Continue to institute regular monitoring of public service delivery by G2C office under the Prime Minister's Office.
- Rigorously implement the civil liability act so that there are greater accountability and responsibility by service providers.
- Strengthen and improve the one stop shop established by us for all business related services.

### **2. We will further strengthen the community centers in every gewog to provide a range of public services using the national digital identity platform.**

The community centers in every gewog will be further strengthened to ride on the national digital identity platform and to help people access range of services. The management has already been strengthened through the reforms and we will now consolidate the centers to make it more sustainable. Towards this the following will be implemented:

- All community centers will be provided with good internet connection so that online services will be faster.
- Community centers will continue to receive adequate resources to assist citizens to process all G2C services starting from applications.
- The managers will be trained and their capacity enhanced.
- The centers will serve as one stop shop for all services for the people in the gewogs.

### **3. We will reduce crime and make Bhutan a drug free society.**



The greatest threat to the wellbeing of family and community is the menace of drugs. Crime has also seen a drastic reduction and we will continue to implement measures to reduce crime especially against our women and girls. Towards this we will:

- Strengthen the RBP with manpower and resources so that modern technology can be used.
- Establish regimented school and training center to rehabilitate drug users.
- Encourage and support the establishment of private rehabilitation and detox centers.
- Expand community policing services across the country.
- Strengthen the fire services with vehicles and manpower.
- Rigorously monitor and combat forest fires.

#### **4. We will build convenient modern crematorium in all dzongkhags in phases and improve facilities such as sanitation and hygiene.**

One of the most important services required are crematoriums that use modern technology while providing traditional facilities which are convenient and clean. The cremation ground should have basic amenities like adequate parking, clean toilets, running water, kitchen facilities and sufficient rooms for families and visitors. We will ensure that you can complete the final rites conveniently by:

- Introducing and expanding modern technology such as thermodynamics across dzongkhags in phases
- Relocate and build cremation grounds that are convenient with modern facilities.
- Encourage public private partnership to manage cremation grounds to create efficiency and sustainability.

#### **5. We will manage waste efficiently and more stringently.**

The waste flagship program could not be completed because of competing interests during COVID-19. Although many policies and efforts were made to build waste drop in renters and provide a fleet of waste management vehicles, the fundamental management of waste itself is still one of the biggest priorities. We have completed a survey of the type of waste and have designed innovative mechanisms to manage waste more efficiently. We will ensure that Bhutan lives up to this image and become a waste free nation by end of 2029 through the following pledges:

- Implement modern waste management technology such as incineration in partnership with bilateral and multilateral partners.
- Distribute waste collection vehicles in all dzongkhags.
- Support the establishment of private companies to manage wet waste and turn it into compost and general biogas.



- Adopt and implement polluter pay program in partnership with relevant agencies and improve the Zero waste Bhutan app.
- Implement the three-bin waste strategy and strengthen the complete chain of services.
- Continue to partner with CSOs and private business in establishing recycling plants, making fertilizers, and generating energy through PPP model.
- We will introduce subsidies and fiscal incentives for such ventures and encourage small industries.

**6. We will further strengthen our senior citizen program in Health and work closely with partner agencies to ensure security and care.**

- Continue to work closely with the His Majesty's secretariat and the Royal Society of Senior Citizens to establish a social security system that ensures the welfare of all senior citizens in need of social support.
- Work is already in progress to reform the pension scheme to ensure that retired workers have a reliable income.
- The elderly health care program will be further strengthened to provide regular health check at home, deliver medicines at your doorstep and refer for early treatment. More programs and awareness for a healthy ageing will be developed and implemented.
- We will support establishment of senior citizens clubs and initiate programs such as meditation, exercise, reading and games for their benefit.

**7. We will further expand the recruitment of foreign domestic workers to support working families in agriculture sector for commercial purposes.**

As pledged, we have introduced the recruitment of foreign child careers and domestic workers initially as pilot phase with strict regulations. This has greatly eased working families and now it is being expanded. We will continue to monitor and support good working conditions for the workers as well as ensuring safety and quality of the services provided for the family.



# Agriculture Development

## Food and Nutrition Security (Zathung da Zeychoe Nyensung)

### Ensuring self-sufficiency in food and reaping economic opportunities

---

Ever since COVID-19 hit us, it has become apparent that we need to become self-sufficient in food and nutrition. While most of our families are still farmers, over the years, import in food grains and essentials have skyrocketed. Our education system did not encourage youth to return to farming and past governments have used educated farmer to mean, a person who went to formal school to go back to farming, rather than to have youth trained in agricultural practices and doing farming. During the last five years, despite the immense challenges we have focused our attention on water, chain linked fencing, buying back produce from the farmers and finding markets.

### Our commitment

---

- In addition to the baseline, contribute 7-8 percent annual growth rate to GDP (Nu 30 billion in 2021 to Nu 50 billion in 2029 and Nu 70 billion by 2034) by focusing on high value agriculture and livestock production, processing, and marketing.
- Improve all farm roads with GSB so that access and transport are available throughout the year.
- Provide adequate irrigation water for all by adopting better and enhanced technology.
- Install chain-linked fencing in all chiwogs to protect crops and enable higher yield.
- Enhance Enterprise in Value chain eco-hub, packaging, storage, market connectivity and transport for Agri and livestock produce,
- Allow landowners the right to determine the type of land use in areas with difficulties, such as no access to water, disaster prone etc.



For agriculture to thrive and attain self-sufficiency, there are few lessons that we have learnt. These are:

- Not necessary to producing everything ourselves.
- Prioritise high value nutritious crops and livestock products that will make our farmers and our country rich.
- Continue import of essentials where we are better off importing (rice, cooking oil).
- for selected commodity (rice) set some self-sufficiency rate beyond that import
- Domestic production of essential commodities if pursued must be subsidised (rice, cooking oil); invest in storage facilities to store essentials in times of emergency.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will review and amend our policies in harnessing the rich resources of our forest so that while economic opportunities will be exploited, the forest cover will continue to be maintained as per our constitution.**

There are many economic opportunities that we can harness from our rich forest without compromising on our pledge to have 60 % of forest coverage for all time to come. Some of these have already been initiated and others will be implemented. These are:

- Allow export of timber in raw form after obtaining all permits and certification
- Legalise medical cannabis and allow for export high end medical products such as CBD and other related products. These will be strictly monitored and in keeping with national and international laws.
- Expand production of high value wood products such as agar, pine nuts and medicinal plants.

### **2. We will ensure adequate water for agriculture using newer technology.** We started with the water flagship program and will now ensure that these water projects are expanded to irrigation and across the country.

We will have to survey new water sources which are more reliable and adopt newer technology and make bigger investments to ensure that they are more sustainable.

### **3. We will build on buying back program and complete the establishment of a network of agriculture marketing centers through outlets.**

To enable better access to markets, we facilitated the buy scheme that greatly benefitted the farmers especially during the COVID-19 years. Temporary outlets to buy back produce were set up in Damji, Sorchen, Phuntsholing etc., which we will now establish as permanent centers. The role of FCBL has



already been changed and a new mandate to work closely with the farmers will be further consolidated.

**4. We will support with marketing of highly valued agricultural products which are in demand in the neighbourhood both within and outside the country.**

Linkages have already been established with importers and supermarket chains abroad. Packaging and certification need to be strengthened so that our products are competitive with others. To make these implementable the following activities will be undertaken:

- Strengthen Farmer Groups, Cooperatives and RNR Enterprises,
- Initiate grand Challenge Initiatives for developing Premium Quality Products for high-end International Markets,
- Establish RNR-Economic Hub (RNR-EH) at Regional and Dzongkhag clusters.
- Enhance transportation and storage systems.

**5. We will establish more cold storages and warehouses in addition to the seven that were built during our tenure.**

This will take care of better storage and helps to sell produce when they are in high demand and fetch better prices.

**6. We will expand chain linked fencing to cover all chiwogs and subsidise them for the farmers.**

Chain linked fencing has come as a boon for the farmers. Not only is it more secure but also provides farmers to sleep in peace and ensure higher yield.

**7. We will encourage the Manufacturing of the fences to be done within the country so that we are not held hostage to global supply challenges as we have seen in the past.**

**8. The government will provide chain linked fencing in phases across the country and will subsidise the cost for those that want it at the individual home level.**

**9. We will ensure better and cheaper access to farm machines and equipment including seeds and fertilisers.**

One of the biggest challenges was to sustain the freebies provided by past governments without any accountability and plan for repair and maintenance. As a result, majority of the farm machines broke down and were left as scrap. Technicians were not trained to repair them, and parts were difficult to procure. FMCL and AMC, the two agencies tasked to take care were challenged with insufficient funds and manpower.

We have reviewed the work of these agencies and have put in a plan for making farm machines more sustainable, cheaper, and accessible. We will work closely with local governments to support



training youth and farmers in every chiwog to repair, maintain and build a business around farm machines. Spare parts will be better coordinated and ensure that manufacturers of farm machines set up regular supply to repair shops coordinated by central agency such as FMCL.

**10. We will revise the hiring rates to ensure that farmers are able to afford farm machines.**

**11. We will introduce new loan schemes to enable farmers to purchase machines at better rates.**

**12. We will encourage Private sector enterprises to establish machinery and equipment rental services. We will proactively support interested entities to identify, source and import farm machineries, equipment, tools, and spare parts.**

**13. We will invest in technology and make agriculture and livestock a major contributor to the economy in line with the theme of Food security under the Gyalsuung program.**

The integration of technology into agriculture and livestock farming, agritech or "agricultural technology," has the potential to revolutionise traditional farming practices. By leveraging innovative technologies, data-driven solutions, and smart automation, we will aim to enhance productivity, sustainability, and profitability in agriculture and livestock farming.

**14. Vertical farms, using both hydroponics and aeroponics will be tested and upscaled to produce high quality produce on a year-round basis.**

Furthermore, automated systems that allow for maximising water and energy use efficiency will be employed. Banking on IoT, farmers will be empowered to use real time data collection technologies. Smart and widely available farm sensors will be deployed to monitor farm conditions related to soil and animal health, temperature, moisture, and prevalence of pests and diseases. These sensors can be supplemented with drones equipped with advanced sensor technology to assess crop yield, and spot potential weed and diseased problems from the sky. An agri-food digital platform which will incorporate and facilitate the use of an ensemble of digital tools ranging from apps which provide crop advisory services to early warning on weather, and incidences of pests and diseases will be launched.

**15. We will allow landowners to determine the use of land in certain areas such as no access to water, disaster prone etc.**

There are many farmers and landowners who are unable to maintain their wet land because of lack of access to water, disaster prone or some other difficulty. Despite this, they are unable to convert it into some other use. We will develop criteria and undertake a comprehensive study of all such land in the country and allow them to be converted according to the will of the landowner.





**16. We will strengthen agriculture land development with technical advice and machines so that farmers are better able to use their land.**

There are many places in the country where farmers are interested to farm their land, however because of terrain or other natural problems are unable to make use of their land efficiently. We will work closely with local governments to identify those land that requires development and will subsidise machines and equipment for land development.

**17. We will implement the following activities in the agriculture sector:**

Continue to implement the Million Fruit Tree Project (MFTP) to enhance the production of high-value fruits and nuts for food and nutrition security and income generation for our farmers.

- Commercial production of high-value vegetables and niche products such as asparagus, broccoli, potatoes, strawberry, mushrooms, nutriceals (quinoa, buckwheat, maize), black pepper, adzuki beans all through strategic production input supports, certification, and packaging.
- Enhance the production of betel leaf so that dependence on import is minimised and that we become self-sufficient.
- Strive to enhance self-sufficiency in grains such as rice, maize, wheat, and other cereals. This will be done through better irrigation, human-wildlife conflict management, land development, mechanisation, input subsidy, research, and production support services. At the same time, we will provide adequate nutrition advice and information to minimise high carbohydrate intake and reduce the risk of non communicable diseases.
- Invest to attain Self-sufficiency in essential vegetables (Chilli, tomato, onion, beans, and cauliflower) through protected cultivation and other production input services.
- Strengthen Agro-meteorology services and institute index-based crop insurance to enhance adaptation to climate change impacts.

**18. We will implement the following activities for achieving our goals in the livestock sector:**

- Initiate farm to Global Market project by unleashing the potential of high value livestock products such as Rainbow Trout, Royal jelly and/or Propolis, Comb honey, Yak cheese, red caviar, Cage free eggs, Yagyu Beef, Pot honey (Putka), Caviar, Yak fiber etc., to boost GDP and revolutionise the livestock sector.
- Revolutionise Livestock Production in Bhutan through adoption of advanced and innovative technologies.
  - a. Intensify dairy breed improvement through improved genetics, enhanced breeding, targeted AI, digitisation, and intensify community-based heifer production scheme,
  - b. Strengthen dairy value chains for new and improved products through adoption of emerging dairy technologies and investment,
  - c. Promote resilient and Smart dairy farming practices,
  - d. Optimise dairy productivity through adoption of promising and advanced technologies in animal nutrition services,



- Secure and Sustain 100 % of total egg and 50 % chicken consumption through domestic production.
  - a. Enhance production of eggs and chicken through supply of quality inputs establishment of commercial farms, improved M&E through digitisation of poultry farms for better farm management, and strengthen poultry research, health, and nutrition,
  - b. Strengthen value chain through establishment of processing plants, product development, chilling facilities, and institution of poultry federations (farm to fork),
- Increase local production of meat products using better breeds and strengthening processing units and maintaining hygiene and safety. Together we have already initiated the establishment of two processing units for meat production and we will continue to work with BLDC to ensure that our goals are achieved.
- Further enhance and increase Highland and apiculture blossom honey yield from 43.19 MT (2021) to 72.45 MT (2029) and 81.65 MT (2034); This will be done by:
  - a. Expanding and strengthening of managed beekeeping across the country to enhance blossom honey production,
  - b. Strengthening the institutional capacity and vital infrastructure to improve the honey value chain development,
- Strengthen clinical veterinary service delivery, institute cost-recovery program for clinical veterinary services, and facilitate sale of predetermined list of veterinary medicines. There have been unprecedented incidents of animal and other zoonotic diseases. We will continue to invest in our veterinary services and ensure that surveillance systems are the best with outbreaks picked up at the earliest and eliminated. Diseases such as Rabies, PPR, and Bovine Brucellosis will be eliminated.

## Natural Resources and Energy



# Developing Energy Security

## Powering our future

---

The total electricity generation in the country stands at 2,344 MW that will increase to 3586 MW by 2024. Also, 6 projects totalling to 2442 MW are under various stages of construction, and those are – PHPA-1, PHPA-II, Nikachhu, and 3 small hydros.

Hydropower is considered as a critical resource and a backbone of the national economy. It has helped to reduce poverty, steer economic growth, and ensured long-term sustainable development. Acknowledging the importance, energy resource development, predominantly hydropower, has been at the top of the development agenda. Since then, the energy sector has been one of the largest contributors to the national economy with the GDP share from the hydropower sector accounting for 15% in 2021. For the last four decades, hydropower has assumed the stature of national strategic importance, and it is pursued as a strategic resource for enhancing energy security and enabling economic development.

Further, the rapid increase in domestic energy demand in recent years with demand surpassing the firm power capacity during the lean seasons, which is projected to continue into the foreseeable future, is a major concern. Therefore, there is a need for re-strategising energy resource development besides development of hydropower. To this end, energy security needs to be enhanced through development of energy storage systems such as reservoir and pumped storage projects and batteries, if need be, while integrating other renewables such as solar, wind, geothermal and biomass. Concurrently, there is also a need for a National Energy policy to set the direction for enhancing energy security, driving the economy, and maintaining carbon neutrality and which will emphasise the adoption of evolving energy technologies, digital transformation, and enhancing the entire energy value chain.

## Our commitment

---



- Ensured secure and affordable energy: Increase GDP contribution by the energy sector through the export and domestic sale of electricity, as well as the construction of hydropower and solar plants.
- Diversify energy sources: Diversify energy sources through the completion of solar, wind, and biomass projects, as well as the piloting of new technologies including energy storage.
- Productivity enhanced through energy efficiency and demand-side management: Promote energy efficiency in buildings, appliances, transport, and industries, reduce energy imports, and explore alternative energy solutions like electric vehicles and green hydrogen.
- Power supply reliability enhanced: Improve power supply reliability through infrastructure development, adoption of evolving technologies, implementation of smart grids technologies, and establishment of ATS for planned hydro and solar plants, including hybrid systems of hydro, solar, wind and storage.

To achieve these desired results, a range of programs have already been identified and each specific projects and activities have been aligned into the 13th FYP. These programs include construction of hydropower projects, development of alternative renewable energy projects, promotion of energy efficiency, augmentation and enhancement of transmission and distribution networks, policy and regulatory reforms, and job creation in the energy sector.

The progress on these projects were slow because of financial constraints as they require substantial investment. We have had dialogue with several bilateral and multilateral agencies and secured the necessary funds through concessional loans and commitments. Three small hydropower projects have begun construction and four more are scheduled to begin. Further, to reduce the public debt burden and mitigate other risk and liabilities, we will support private sector investments in the renewable energy sector (e.g., solar). To diversify and leverage on raising green capital resources, we will further pursue other ecofriendly means of power generation and to harness the opportunity to access Climate Funds and Green Bonds.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will ensure that secure and affordable energy is generated and contribution to the economy by Nu. 65 billion by 2029**

Our partnership with India will continue to be cornerstone of our hydropower and energy sector. In addition, the projects to build small hydropower projects on our own will be further expanded to cover all districts in phase wise. The excess energy will secure more reliable energy during the lean winter months and help set up power intensive industries. Towards that the following will be implemented.

**We will complete and initiate the following hydropower projects:**



- Complete the 118 MW Nikachhu,
- Complete the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II,
- Complete the 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I,
- Accelerate the construction of 600 MW Kholongchhu,
- Initiate the 1125 MW Dorjilung,
- Initiate the 404 MW Nyera Amari,
- Initiate 180 MW Bunakha,
- Initiate the 2585 MW Sankosh
- Conduct feasibility study for 1800MW Gongri-Jerichhu pumped storage project and imitate the construction.

**2. We will continue to construct and expand small hydropower projects across the country to generate more energy.**

Phase-I

- 18MW Suchhu in Haa
- 32 MW Yungichhu in Lhuentse
- 54 MW Burgangchhu in Zhemgang

Phase -II

- 90 MW Jomori in Samdrup Jongkhar
- 45 MW Gamri-I in Trashigang
- 26 MW Bindu I and II in Samtse
- 25 MW Begana in Thimphu

Phase -III

**Complete the feasibility study and initiate of one mini hydropower project in every Dzongkhag: revive economy and reduce disparity.**

**3. We will diversify the source of energy from hydropower to other sources.** With the impact of climate change and the rapid melting of the glaciers, it has become imperative that we secure other sources of energy. The 7 MW wind energy generated at Rubisa and the recent establishment of the Solar projects in Thimphu (CFM and Dechencholing) have already started providing energy to the grid. In addition to this we will undertake the following:

- Complete the 17.35 MW Sephu solar project by 2025.
- Start the work on the 23 MW Gaselo Wind power project (the feasibility has already been completed)
- Support and Establish 400 MW Utility scale solar facilities in a PPP model.



- Establish 50 MW Solar rooftops in public institutions.
- Build 30 MW Wind power projects.
- Set up Solar Thermal projects.
- Implement Bio Energy projects.

#### **4. We will pilot new technologies that will further contribute to energy security.**

- Initiate the 915 kW for 305 households Pilot-Test Solar Prosumer Concept.
- Implement the pilot Green Hydrogen project.
- Carrying out pre-feasibility studies for new technologies and Piloting projects using new technologies.

#### **5. We will enhance productivity through energy efficiency and demand-side management:**

Promote energy efficiency in buildings, appliances, transport, and industries, reduce energy imports, and explore alternative energy solutions like electric vehicles and green hydrogen.

- We will reduce energy import by 10% by 2028 that includes electricity and fossil fuel through adoption of EV.

#### **6. We will enhance power supply reliability.**

This will be done through infrastructure development, adoption of evolving technologies, implementation of smart grids technologies, and establishment of ATS for planned hydro and solar plants, including hybrid systems of hydro, solar, wind and storage.

#### **7. We will encourage alternative sources of energy and reduce fossil fuel dependence.**

As promised the cabinet ministers including the Prime Minister have driven electrical vehicles during our tenure. Expenditure on fossil fuel was significantly reduced. We also implemented the electric vehicle flagship program, through which 300 electric taxis were introduced. Recharging stations have been established across dzongkhags.

- We continue to import more than Nu 9 billion worth of fossil fuel every year impacting on our overall revenues. We remain grateful for the generous subsidy offered by bilateral partners which otherwise would have been more expensive. Nevertheless, we must continue to pursue clearer energy and reduce fossil fuels. Towards that will take following actions to reduce dependence on fossil fuel:
- We will continue to advocate and encourage electric vehicles for all official vehicles. The cabinet will lead by example and drive electric/hybrid cars. Charging stations
- Continue to provide fiscal incentives for electric vehicles.
- Support and implement the use of electric mass transport systems especially in urban areas of Thimphu, Phuntsholing and Gelephu.



- As already begun, we will continue to invest in strengthening public transport system in Thimphu and Phuentsholing and encourage private sector participation by providing incentives. The single lane system will be reviewed and further strengthened if successful.
- We will continue to partner with private sector in installing infrastructure required for up-scaling use of electric/hybrid cars by building convenient recharge stations and building capacity for repair and maintenance.
- The strategy to introduce other means of cooking such as induction and electrical appliances has led to reduced use of LPG and traditional wood ovens. We will continue to provide incentives and subsidies to encourage green energy for cooking purposes of alternative sources such as induction cooktops and stoves.
- Biogas plants will be further encouraged with more incentives and support for rural residents to switch to this sustainable source of energy for domestic use.

#### **8. We will allow private participation in solar and connect to power grid.**

There is growing interest for Bhutanese to invest and be part of the energy sector growth. We have already piloted and am confident that this is a win-win situation for the government and the citizens. Therefor we will allow the following.

- Private participation in solar and renewable energy.
- Connect them to the grid and purchase excess power at set rates.
- Consider subsidies for import of solar and renewable equipment and machines.



# Harnessing Water Security

## Assuring adequate water for all and for all purposes

---

Bhutan's freshwater system is mostly sourced from monsoon contributing about 72 percent of the feed and the rest are supplemented by glaciers and snow melts, wetlands, and springs. Overall average flow is 2,238 m<sup>3</sup>/s, which generates 70,576 million cubic meters per annum, translating to 94,500 m<sup>3</sup> per person per year. Despite being one of the highest per capita water countries in the region and globally, seasonal domestic water shortages have been persistent over the years. Although, accessibility has always been identified as the major issue, yet climate change effect is envisaged as the emerging threat as per the recent assessment and mapping of water sources from the user's end. The Hindu Kush Himalayas that host our country is witnessing rapid climate change, biodiversity loss, increased disaster risk, and risk of poverty and inequality. We must act now and work towards a water strategy to address these challenges and achieve a greener, sustainable, inclusive, environment friendly and climate resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya.

The Water Act of Bhutan 2011 states that "every individual shall have access to safe, affordable and sufficient water for basic human needs." During the last 5 years we have delivered on our pledges despite the enormous challenges. We have set up a dedicated agency - the department of water under the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR). We implemented the water flagship program with a total expenditure of Nu. 4.6 billion to enhance access to safe drinking water and irrigation in partnership with the Dessups. A total of 497 water projects have been completed in the country, of which 42 have been carried out by Dessups. A total of 38687 numbers of households have benefited from safe drinking water schemes, and 6960 households have benefited from Irrigation. Currently an additional 15 irrigation and drinking water projects are ongoing.

## Our commitment

---

- We will strengthen the department of water to manage water resources and its distribution throughout the country.
- We will revise and implement the National integrated water resource management plan.
- We will coordinate with all relevant agencies to resolve issues related to wet land.





- We will harness new technology and satellite information to forecast and monitor water resources.

Over the last five years, we were able to address many of the drinking water problems faced in several communities through the water flagship program. Every Dzongkhag benefitted from this program and a substantial amount of money was spent despite the economic hardships. While Dessups came forward to construct these projects, it was a win-win situation with young people benefitting from the remuneration during COVID-19 and the project benefiting community after COVID-19. Several irrigation channels were also built to support agriculture and farming. Major reforms within the government organogram have allowed to establish a dedicated water department that will be responsible for managing all water resources in the country. The fragmentation of responsibilities and lack of accountability has been addressed. Therefore, to fulfil our commitment the following activities will be carried out.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will ensure safe drinking water throughout the country by 2028.**

The water flagship program will be expanded across all chiwogs and a budget of Nu 5 billion will be kept for implementation. It is expected that more than 200 water projects shall be developed that is integrated, water treatments, isolated safe drinking water, and benefits irrigation as well. The activities towards achieving this are the following:

- Ensure that all thromdes receive 100 % potable drinking water.
- Guarantee the safety of drinking water by regular monitoring and testing of water supply.
- Invest additional funds (above those budgeted in the 13 FYP) to achieve the goal of having water security.
- In places with drying water sources, we will support exploration of ground water utilisation, stream shed management and rainwater harvesting.

### **2. We will ensure sustainable and adequate irrigation water supply to agricultural farms.**

As already explained in the agriculture section, we will ensure that all land is able to be farmed with adequate irrigation water. Those lands that have the maximum potential will be prioritised for major irrigation projects. In addition, innovative ideas, and technologies such as drip irrigation and better seed quality (that is less water intense) will be adopted and encouraged.



### **3. We will modernize water management and introduce revenue and non-revenue water management that will take care of tariff, inventory, and water master plan.**

Managing water requires that all programs are sustainable and that services are uninterrupted. Towards this we will introduce both revenue and non-revenue water management schemes. Technologies that analyse water availability and distribute them through automation systems will be adopted to manage water more efficiently. Wastage through leakage will be minimised by using modern technology to monitor flow patterns and leaks. Water users' committees will be expanded and trained to manage their own resources.

We will adopt Water 4.0 which puts digitisation at the forefront of the strategy for resource productivity, efficiency, and transparency. Digitisation tools such as Internet of Things, Big Data, Artificial Intelligent and blockchain technology are playing a revolutionary role in elevating the standards to water 4.0. Cyber Physical Systems are drivers of the optimal networking of virtual and real water systems with planning, construction and operation largely being done by software.

### **4. We will support the establishment of more industrial use of water.**

With abundance of water resources, we have a huge potential of establishing water-based industries such as brewery and carbonated beverage water, pulp and paper mills and other such industries besides bottled drinking water for export.

**5. We will become a world leader in the management of water resources.** We will collaborate with national and international agencies in the field of water resources management, stream shed, rainwater harvest and glaciers management to become a world leader in water resource management. Our far-sighted leaders have already shown us the way and we will not invest in capacity building of our own water specialist and environmentalist who will lead in restoring and improving the Hindu-Kush mountains.

In addition, we will also explore better financing for water management through accessing green climate funds.

### **6. We will initiate and transit to hydrogen economy.**

Over the recent years, global interest towards a hydrogen economy has risen remarkably as it is considered one of the key paths to energy transition and decarbonisation. Many countries have announced national roadmaps and strategies to develop hydrogen, essentially to replace fossil fuels in 'hard-to-abate' areas such as in heavy industry (iron, steel, cement, and fertilizers) and transport. We will not be left behind and will invest along with interested partners (FDI) to set up green hydrogen plants.



## **7. We will continue to ensure conservation, protection, and management of water catchment areas.**

In 2019, a survey conducted by the Department of forest and park services (DoFPS) found that 35% of the 6,555 water sources surveyed were drying up. In 2021, DoFPS again reported that 25.1% of 7399 sources surveyed had already dried and these are extremely worrying. Therefore, to reverse the trend and protect catchment areas the following strategies will be adopted.

- Focus on recharge areas to maintain adequate water levels in underground water reservoirs so that streams and springs have continuous source of water.
- Safeguard critical water supply catchments by demarcating them as protected areas and limiting disturbance and development activities in these areas.
- Gather and review important site-specific hydro-geological data to balance vegetation, tree plantation and reviving drying water sources.
- Create data and knowledge repository for long term planning.



## Home Affairs

### Promoting Tradition and Culture

#### Securing the future of Bhutanese tradition and culture

---

Our tradition and culture continue to be vibrant because of the strong policies initiated by Their Majesties the Kings and continuous support from the Zhung Dratshang and Department of culture. With rapid development, addiction to social media and access to foreign media has a risk for our younger generation to stray away from our age-old traditions and to forget our values. Therefore, the visionary program such as the Dessung and Gyalsuung programs are intended to instil those values and to encourage practice of our unique tradition and culture that have been passed down from generation to generation. DNT is committed to promoting our tradition and culture and to ensure these for future generation. Towards this goal we make the following commitments.

#### Our commitment

---

- Support and assist indigenous communities and vulnerable populations in preserving their culture while supporting their unique livelihood.
- Encourage and support communities to continue practicing their local festivals and rituals.
- Promote national language Dzongkha - Review curriculum of Dzongkha and pedagogy to make it easier to study Dzongkha language.
- Support and promote the film, music, and entertainment industry.
- Promote traditional Bhutanese crafts and take it to the international market.

DNT was privileged and honoured to have completed the construction of several of our Dzongs and to be part of the consecration programs. We also had immense blessing from the Zhung Dratshang, in further renovating and preserving sacred lhakhangs and contributing towards the performance of annual rituals, festival and kurims. While our focus was to overcome the challenges of COVID-19, oversee major reforms, ensure smooth transition after graduation by pursuing an economic agenda, we continued to strive for GNH. Our festivals and traditional offerings were supported



throughout our tenure although we had to adjust during the COVID-19 period. Despite all the challenges we were able to perform those festival and maintain our culture. There is a need to further protect and promote our rich cultural and traditional heritage. To achieve the commitments we make, the following plan of action will be implemented.

## Our plan of action

---

### **1. We will support and assist indigenous and vulnerable communities in promoting their culture and supporting their livelihood.**

There are several indigenous communities which are faced with declining of their tradition and culture because of migration, influence of modern culture, limited funds to continue conducting festivals and rituals etc. It is critical that we support the revival and preservation of our age-old traditions and culture. Towards that the following will be implemented.

- Support the Highlander people with improved technology to produce their traditional goods and find markets outside the country.
- Provide fiscal incentives and financial support to maintain their traditional way of life such as yak herding, weaving of traditional costumes and construction of homes.
- Provide financial support for community festival and rituals in partnership with local governments.
- Provide modern amenities such as health care, education, power, and energy (solar, biogas, Water etc.) to these communities.
- Support and further improve national festival such as the Highland festival, snow man race, eco-tourism.
- Work together with the CSI sector to market the products produced by indigenous communities.

### **2. We will support local communities in conducting their age-old festival and rituals.**

Together with the local governments we will support local communities in performing their regular festivals. One of the strategies we will adopt is to set up trust funds with contribution from the local community and matching funds from government for each community so that they are sustainable. The government will further provide subsidies and other incentives when purchasing items or replacing old ones for such festivals.

### **3. We will further promote Dzongkha language.**



We have made enormous strides to make Dzongkha language popular and more user friendly. However, more needs to be done and provide more opportunities for those who study Dzongkha, graduate with degree Dzongkha language courses and those that teach Dzongkha. Towards that the following activities are being committed.

- We will review the curriculum of Dzongkha being taught in our schools and pedagogy. Will work closely with Zhung Dratshang to incorporate some of their curriculum and techniques so that learning Dzongkha is easier, more fun, and practical.
- Encourage more agencies to communicate in Dzongkha.
- Identify professions and jobs where Dzongkha is required and ensure that graduates with such degrees are given priority. In addition, we will continue to send Dzongkha teachers to teach Dzongkha in our missions and further strengthen the preservation of culture among our diasporas.
- We will invest more funds in Dzongkha research, in digitisation of documents and historical records and in developing software for Dzongkha.
- Consider management and coordination of all Dzongkha related activities and Human resources to be managed by Ministry of Home and department of Culture.

**4. We will support and promote our film, music, and entertainment industry.** Our films, songs and other entertainment have gained immense popularity among our youth and in our neighbourhood. Bhutanese film has even reached the Oscars revealing that with opportunities anything is possible. Towards further promoting our culture and the Arts, we will implement the following:

- Establishing a film, music and documentary promotion fund that will be used to promote Bhutanese films and music nationally and internationally.
- Building a modern state-of-the-art film and music studio on a PPP model.
- Encouraging and partnering in production of films and documentaries that showcase our unique tradition and culture to the international audience. We will work closely with the Film Association of Bhutan to build capacity and enhance technology.

**5. We will promote traditional Bhutanese crafts both nationally and internationally.** Bhutanese crafts have the potential to grow and become well known in-country and abroad. We have assisted in making it easier for foreigners to purchase crafts and get certification without the need of long delays and inconveniences of coming to the culture office. While we have not been able to invest in this sector in the past, save the work of some CSOs, we will take this as a priority in the next five years and conduct the following:

- Provide training and upgrade skills to improve the quality and production of our crafts.



- Provide support to improve and enhance technology.
- Support and assist in marketing of our crafts abroad.
- Further improve the certification and monitoring so that while customers can take their purchases out of the country without hassles, we also prevent the loss of our genuine antiques.

**6. We will improve and strengthen immigration services to enhance trade, investment, tourism and movement of goods and people across international borders.**



**NA Elections  
2023-24**

