



Druk Chirwang Tshogpa
MANIFESTO
2013



Lily Wangchhuk



Dhurba Chhetri



Hem Kumar
Ghalley



Tenzin Lhamo



Pushpa Raj



Rinzin Lhamo



Saraswati Chhetri



Sonam Yangzom



Dorji Dema



Khem Raj



Nima Dukpa



Pema Lhamo



Samten Lepcha



S.B. Ghalley



Sherab Choden



Sonam Choden



Kezang Dorji



Kinzang Choden



Kuenga Tenzin



Sonam Tshering



Tej Bahadur Rai



Tenzin Jamtsho



Tenzin Thinley



Kinga Dorji



Jigme Norbu



Kezang Norbu



Namgay Dorji



Ngwang Choden



Pema Wangchuk



Pema Yangzom



Sangay Tamang



Kinley Choden



Yehsey Dorji



Chador Namgyal



Kezang Choden



Norbu Gyeltshen



Pema Wangchug



Sonam Penjor



Tashi Phuntsho



Tsagay Dorji



Tshewang Tobjai



Sonam Tenzin



Jigme Wangchuk



Tej Bhadur Chhetri



Kinley Dem



Tshering Dorji



Ugyen Tshering



The **CHANGE** we need
The **VOICE** we deserve

OUR VISION

A just, more prosperous, happier and stronger Bhutan founded on the wisdom and values of social democracy.

OUR MISSION

- A strengthened democracy
- A transparent and accountable government
- A politically conscious, united, and active citizenry
- An inclusive, stronger and vibrant economy
- A sustainable and people-centric development
- A culturally enriched, socially vibrant and harmonious society

OUR POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa's philosophy and political ideology is based on the wisdom, principles and values of social democracy. We believe in liberty, equality, and solidarity. We believe in strengthening democracy by upholding the sanctity of the Constitution, protecting civil rights, and ensuring a just, united, prosperous, and harmonious society. Our approach to development is people-centric with citizens' interest as the central theme of our objective. We believe in inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development with high priority on environmental conservation.

OUR VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa is founded on the universal values of humility, altruism, honesty, and loyalty. We value hard work, integrity and selfless service to the people. For us, citizens always come first above all else. We believe in the ideals and principles of democracy: free speech, freedom of media, right to information, and fundamental civic rights of the people. We strongly believe in responsibility, accountability and transparency. Above all, we believe in equality, justice, and freedom.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- Serve the Tsa Wa Sum with unconditional loyalty, dedication, commitment and integrity
- Protect and uphold the Constitution in letter and spirit
- Safeguard the independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Bhutan
- Ensure that every citizen enjoys liberty, equality and solidarity
- Respect democratic ideals, institutions and the rule of law
- Protect civil and democratic rights of citizens
- Create a transparent, accountable, and responsive government
- Promote inclusive growth with people-centric development approach
- Preserve and promote our rich traditional, cultural, religious and spiritual heritage as the essential basis of our national identity
- Build a stronger and better Bhutan for the present and future generations

OUR ELECTION SYMBOL

The elegant Swan represents the rising glory of Bhutan with unity, equity, harmony and positive transformation. The composure of the Swan with its wings spread high represents DCT's commitment to protect every citizen and ensure equality, social justice and happiness for all. The sharp lines of the Wings signify our clear vision, clarity and determination to serve the people and safe guard the nation's sovereignty.

As a source of life, the Water represents the essence of our commitment to sustain the continuity of our values, culture and tradition. The Lotus symbolizes purity and harmony, and reflects DCT's resolve to create a peaceful and progressive society. The Norbu, or the precious gem, represents DCT's unwavering loyalty to Tsa Wa Sum and our genuine aspiration to spread prosperity and happiness across Bhutan.



The CHANGE we need
The VOICE we deserve



FOREWORD

BY THE PRESIDENT

Five years have gone by and we are again at the threshold of yet another important election. This election offers us, rich and poor, young and old, the opportunity to make a difference, the power to decide for ourselves, and the possibility to redirect our efforts in shaping a bright future for our children and generations that will come after them.

This election must redefine political leadership, our national vision, and the way forward for our future endeavours. The apprehension about the uncertain vagaries of embracing a democratic system that pervaded in 2008 has today given way to a profound understanding of our democratic rights, even as we learn more about the nuances of democracy each day.

All of us have learned a great deal from the experience of the past five years. And with that experience, we have come to realize that there is still so much that needs to be done.

We have done far too little to create a fair and

equitable society. We have not been able to reconcile the yawning gap between the rich and the poor. Our efforts in empowering youth, women and vulnerable sections of our society have had little effect and efficacy. We have talked about happiness the world over but have done little to create favorable conditions for our people to live happier, healthier, and prosperous lives.

Thousands of our youth are jobless. Economic growth has not guaranteed a simultaneous growth in jobs. Our graduates and school leavers are not equipped with necessary life skills and know-how to take on the demanding challenges of the world of work.

Our villages - the cradle of our civilization - are falling apart and disappearing from our rural landscape while our towns and cities are bursting at the seams. Crime has become the mainstay of our media, and all sorts of social ills continue to plague our society. Our economy is in a mess. The Rupee crisis has

exposed our economic vulnerabilities, magnifying our excessive dependence on external resources.

Juxtaposed to that, our agriculture production has significantly diminished over the years. Our manufacturing base is too small. Private sector, the engine of growth, is still a fledgling, suffering from poor, myopic policy intervention and unfriendly business climate.

At this juncture a lot of odds are stacked against us but there is no reason or rhyme to lose our hopes. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa strongly believes that all these and many more can be achieved with the right leadership, political vision and will, coupled with bold and innovative ideas to launch fundamental reforms in the way our country functions.

Our manifesto is a conviction of this possibility to bring about positive change in all aspects of our lives. We offer new ideas and new solutions covering all dimensions of our national life. Our approach is bottom-up and citizens' interest is the central theme of our manifesto.

We don't want to flaunt a manifesto filled with empty, false promises. We don't want to sell dreams that cannot be realized. These are all realistic goals that we can achieve together, that will make our country stronger and better place for all. Our concerns are genuine and our pledge, simple: we want the best for the people and will not settle for any thing less. And we will make sure that no one is left behind.

Join Druk Chirwang Tshogpa to bring about positive change that every one of us needs and rightfully deserves. Together we can make it happen.

Vote for us!

Lily Wangchhuk
President

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INTRODUCTION





The CHANGE we need
The VOICE we deserve



The 2013 parliamentary election is a significant milestone in Bhutan's young democracy. Not only does it mark a successful transition to a democratic dispensation but also heralds a new beginning - of hope and promise for a better, stronger Bhutan. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa's manifesto is an expression of this possibility and our humble efforts in taking our country forward.

Our party's manifesto covers 12 broad areas cutting across all aspects of our national life that will ensure holistic growth and development, promote wellbeing and address multifaceted issues faced by our people. The fulfillment of these ambitious goals and targets, in which we hold great confidence, will eventually create enabling conditions for people to pursue happiness and live better lives.

DCT recognizes all current political, economic, environmental and social issues are interrelated and interconnected. We look at all these current issues and challenges in the country not only from the physical dimension but more importantly from a multi-dimensional perspective covering psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects. We believe this approach will result in more people-centric policies, activities, and programmes that are responsive to the needs of the people.

Citizen's interest is the central theme of our manifesto. It is our party's earnest belief that every government decision must ultimately

benefit and uplift people's wellbeing. All public resources must be frugally utilized in order to maximize the wellbeing and happiness of the people. To this end, we will inculcate a bottom-up approach to all decisions affecting the people. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa is fully committed to address all the needs of our citizens so that every one of them has the equal opportunity to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

As a political party founded on the wisdom and philosophy of liberty, justice and equality, we are committed to further strengthen democracy gifted to us by our beloved fourth Druk Gyalpo. We will protect people's civil and democratic rights, and uphold social justice and individual freedoms.

Our immediate priority will be to straighten the economy and get it back into form. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will put in place an exceptional team that will work toward the revival of the economy by solving the existing problems one by one. We will work to create new jobs, encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in business, and put in place enabling policies that will boost private sector growth. Our nation will be strong and independent only when we have a vibrant and self-reliant economy.

Our party will work hard to redefine our country's vision. What defines us as a nation and a people, our hopes and aspirations, is our

country's vision. We must get this right first, so that all aspects of our economy and national life will fall into place.

Furthermore, through our people-centric development approach, our party will seek out sustainable ways to develop unreached communities that have been left by the wayside. We will endeavour to develop and execute policies that will address the socio-economic gap between regions, dzongkhags and people. Without this, social and economic parity between people and regions cannot be achieved.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will introduce positive reforms in the education system and further strengthen and improve our health care system. We will provide vital opportunities to our youth so that they can pursue their dreams and fulfill their aspirations. As much as we work hard to preserve and promote our tradition and culture,

we will also invest in innovation and research.

In addition, our party will continue the green legacy of our enlightened monarchs through renewed efforts in the protection and conservation of our environmental asset. We will pursue sustainable policies while harnessing our natural resources through renewable projects, minimizing impacts of deforestation and biodiversity loss.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will pursue a progressive foreign policy with our neighbors and the international community. We are fully committed to further fortify our friendly relations with India while fostering respect for international law and treaty obligations.

This manifesto is a road map to achieving our collective national goals and objectives. We are strongly motivated to bring about positive change in the country and this manifesto is a means to this noble end.

A VIBRANT AND CARING DEMOCRACY

1



1. A VIBRANT AND CARING DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a special gift from the throne to the people of Bhutan. For democracy to take roots and flourish, we need to entrench a strong democratic culture and way of life. And this can be achieved by empowering citizens, encouraging civic participation in decision making process and inculcating a bottom-up approach to formulations of laws and policies.

The independence of democratic institutions must be guaranteed for all times while governance system must function with utmost transparency and accountability. Democracy should be about shared leadership, responsibilities and rights. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will ensure that Bhutanese democracy is a truly caring one.

1.1 *Protect and uphold the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan*

The Constitution is a sacred document, the bedrock of our democratic system. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will ensure that the Constitution is respected in letter and spirit for all times to come. Our party will uphold and protect the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution while promoting the responsibilities, values and principles of democracy. The wisdom of the Constitutional provisions shall guide all our thoughts and actions.

1.2 *Enact RTI Act to promote transparent & accountable government*

Good governance is of utmost importance for the success of a democracy. Our party will endeavour to create a transparent and accountable government. We will ensure that the government machinery is responsive to people's needs, accountable for their actions and transparent in their functioning.

In keeping with the constitutional provision of right to information guaranteed to all citizens, our party will prioritize the formulation and enactment of the Right to Information Act. Through the successful implementation of this Act, we will ensure that people in all levels of our society can exercise this fundamental right to public information. To this end, we will establish necessary laws and bylaws, rules and regulations, procedures, institutions and implementing agencies to ensure that people have easy access to government information.

1.3 *Promote fair, transparent and independent justice system*

Recognizing the crucial role of judiciary in a democracy in dispensing justice and upholding the rule of law, our party will promote fair, transparent and independent justice system. In keeping with our party's tenet of equality, justice, and liberty, we will strengthen the role of the judiciary system through consultative exchanges with relevant stakeholders and representatives from the judiciary, the public and government agencies.

Our people must have access to affordable and reliable legal services and to this end our party will encourage the establishment of private legal firms and enterprises through appropriate policy interventions. We will place high priority on training of professional lawyers, both in public institutions and private sector, so that we do not have a dearth of legal experts in the country.

While honoring the autonomy and independence of the judiciary, we will encourage speedy dispensation of justice. In so doing, not only will we create a trustworthy judiciary system but we will also promote the credibility and efficiency of the justice system.

1.4 Support and promote free, responsible, and independent media

Although the media industry has proliferated in numbers in the last seven years, many of them are currently at the brink of collapse. Our party recognizes the important role media plays in creating a vibrant democracy, and thus, we will review and amend current media policies, laws and programmes to create an enabling environment for free, responsible, and independent media.

The current media crisis is a direct consequence of unsound media policies and lack of long-term vision for the development of media as the Fourth Estate. We will promote a free and independent media that serves as the active and intelligent voice of civil society and not just the mouthpiece of government.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will push for a parliamentary endorsement of Bhutan Broadcasting Service's status as a public service

broadcaster (PSB). This will not only provide the much-needed legal framework to the national television channel as a PSB but such measures will also go a long way in promoting editorial independence, improving quality of broadcast journalism, and preventing any form of direct or indirect government control.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will encourage private players to enter the broadcast media particularly television after proper study and review. This is mainly to facilitate the growth of independent media and de-monopolize the media sector.

While our party will guarantee complete freedom to the media, as conscience-keepers of the society the media must practice responsible journalism and follow the highest standards of ethics and code of conduct. Ultimately media policies and regulatory provisions must create a vibrant media culture and a society that respects free speech, individual views, and opinions.

Our party will also establish independent bodies such as Media Council to address issues of ethical misconduct and contravention of existing rules and laws by the media. We will also strengthen and support civil society organizations that work for media development in the country.

1.5 Improve public service delivery

Civil Service is one of the most important institutions in Bhutan. Its effective performance can play a critical role in public service delivery and efficient functioning of the government. Our party will foster professionalism at workplace and efficient and responsive delivery of public services by every government

organization. We will encourage excellence in civil service delivery with implementation of systematic performance appraisals and efficient management systems.

Despite the introduction of position classification system and salary increment - both targeted at enhancing performance of civil servants – the low morale and motivation amongst civil servants affecting their effective performance is a matter of concern. International experts have been hired, technical capacities have been strengthened, new systems have been introduced but the challenges persist as the root causes have not been identified and tackled.

Often we make the mistake of relying on international expertise when the solution to the problem is available at hand, locally. To bring about positive change in our civil service, it is necessary to review a host of internal and external factors as they are all interrelated. Only civil servants can best understand the situation and offer remedial measures.

To promote high performing civil service, our party will formulate a number of strategic plans to bring positive reforms in the civil service which includes, developing leaders rather than administrators at managerial level; institute a good practice recruitment strategy; enhance effort in matching the skills with the job; promote horizontal recruitment and introduce explicit standards and measures of performance.

Our party will introduce performance agreement and regular feedback on performance; formulate strategies for effective management of under performance; reduce

reliance on supervisory appraisal and develop more broader performance appraisal exercise. We will also develop job-related standards for evaluation of performance; strengthen the performance appraisal system; encourage sense of commitment and ownership amongst civil servants; linking individual goals with broad goals of the organization; encouraging specialization, creativity and innovation.

The reforms will also include shifting from old administration to new public management by making Bhutanese civil service less distinctive from the private sector in terms of personnel practice, procedures and other features. We will reduce the density of general procedural rules governing public sector activity and increase the discretionary power of senior and middle level civil servants, especially over staff, contracts and finance; formulation of corporate/organizational strategy with clear targets, outputs, outcomes, work plan and schedule.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will improve the management of human resources involving staff in decision-making and targets and relax administrative controls while imposing strict performance targets. Our party will improve feedback from clients, reduce paperwork, stress on quality service and enhance public service delivery with effective use of information technology.

We will review and revisit the Position Classification System and BCSR in close consultation and involvement of civil servants across all sectors to make the policies and system more relevant and responsive to the current needs and challenges faced by civil servants and stakeholders.

1.6 Intensify the fight against corruption

A country with limited resources like ours cannot afford any form of corruption. It's a cancer that eats into the very life force of a nation. Particularly corruption of power, abuse of authority, and misuse of public resources deprive the citizens of their fundamental rights to equality, dignity and respect, and robs them of the important socioeconomic and human development they could benefit from.

Unless we truly inculcate a zero tolerance policy against any form of corruption, regardless of whether the perpetrator is big or small, and embrace a culture of extreme intolerance against corruption, it will be difficult to eradicate corruption and its multi-consequences and effects.

So far Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has made impressive headway in fighting corruption but there is a lot more that must be done. Our party will offer absolute support and cooperation to ACC in the fight against corruption.

Our party will ensure that ACC has the necessary political backing in its crusade against corruption. Our party will review the ACC Act to give more legal teeth to the anti-corruption agency and encourage more able professionals to join the ACC.

At the same time, our party is committed to raise the bar of political transparency and accountability to its highest level. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will be ruthless in our fight against corruption. We will never defend or protect any corrupt people, even if they are from our own party.

Our party is also aware of the fact that corrupt practices exist because of systemic flaws and loopholes. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will carry out a massive review exercise across all sectors, public institutions, and agencies to address the systemic flaws and put in place new surveillance standards to detect even the minute of corrupt practices.

In addition, our party will step up performance auditing of individual public servants and institutions so that they are accountable for their responsibilities and actions. As much as we reward excellence in public service delivery, our party will also come up with stringent administrative, disciplinary, and legal actions against corrupt people.

1.7 Get the grassroots on board

People at the grassroots and the local government machinery are integral aspects of our young democratic system. Their involvement in decision-making process is vital to the success of development plans and programs that will be launched and executed at the grassroots level and rural communities spread across the country. As a grassroots political party, Druk Chirwang Tshogpa believes in people-centric, bottom-up approach to formulations of laws and policies.

Therefore, our party will ensure that all national policies and laws go through a screening process at the local government level. Led by the member of the parliament, local government officials comprising Gups, Mangaps and Tshogpas will conduct consultations with the people on specific critical issues. On the other hand, most development plans and programs will come from the local government to the

central government for approval and review.

Our party will strengthen local government administration through decentralization, human resource development, and devolution of discretionary powers over financial and management issues.

1.8 Establish a Law Review Commission

Laws and legislations must always be passed to strengthen the rule of law, order, and harmony in the society. However, often certain laws are passed by the Parliament that affect people and their democratic rights. Such oversights must be addressed immediately.

In a bid to ensure that laws passed by the Parliament do not disregard individual rights and freedoms, and are effectively implemented to achieve its objectives, we will establish a Law Review Commission, an independent body comprising former justices and legal experts that will advise, review, and recommend feedbacks to the Members of Parliament on bills and laws.

The Commission will conduct research and consultations and make recommendations to the Parliament so that MPs can make informed decisions while passing laws and amending/reforming laws.

A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

2



2. A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Our economy is in a mess. The Rupee crisis has exposed our economic vulnerabilities, magnifying our excessive dependence on external resources. In fact, we have been importing almost everything from vegetable to luxury goods, far beyond sustainable limits. Juxtaposed to that, our agriculture production has significantly diminished over the years. Our manufacturing base is too small. Private sector, the engine of growth, is still a fledgling, suffering from poor, myopic policy intervention and unfriendly business climate.

And all this while we were made to believe that we are pursuing a policy of economic self-reliance. If we are in this quagmire, it is all because of the chronic disconnect between policy rhetoric and execution - a consequence of misplaced priorities and deficiency of a clear, futuristic vision. At the receiving end are our people, silently suffering the brunt.

Our party will build a sustainable economy by prioritizing wealth creation, economic prosperity and self-reliance. We will encourage an entrepreneurial culture based on research, innovation, creativity, and incubation.

Our nation will only move forward when our citizens are economically empowered, when all of us prosper together. Our nation's sovereignty will be strengthened only when our economy is self-reliant and independent. Our nation will

truly be rich when all of us are equal, when wealth is distributed fairly among our people, and when there is no disparity between the rich and the poor.

2.1 Address the Rupee crisis

Rupee crunch is a natural progression, a tipping point of over dependence on the Indian economy and continuous outflow of Rupee from the Bhutanese economy. Bhutan imports almost everything from India including large numbers of construction workers. Spending on travel, education, medical trips and pilgrimage to India further fuels Rupee spending. This has resulted in huge and incessant outflow of Rupees.

While Bhutan exports almost 80% of its goods to India, mainly hydropower, the value per se hasn't been equivalent. This has created a mismatch in import-export figure, triggering a negative balance of trade. In other words, Bhutan has been spending more Rupees than it has been earning. Viewed from a demand and supply perspective, this is one of the overriding causes of Rupee shortfall in the domestic market.

Our party will give top priority to addressing the problem of Rupee shortfall in the economy. We will sync fiscal and monetary policies and strengthen institutional capacity to deal with such issues both in the present and future.

In the short term, we will continue to seek GOI line of credit and Rupee currency SWAP arrangement with the Government of India to meet the rupee shortage in the economy.

In the medium term, we will encourage more middle and upper class Indian tourists to visit Bhutan by intensifying marketing and advertising and increasing the frequency of Drukair flights to destinations in India. Our party will endeavour to bring in at least 150,000–200,000 high-end Indian tourists to Bhutan.

Our party will initiate bilateral negotiations with the Government of India to revise tariff rates for electricity particularly exported from the Chukkha Hydropower plant and recommend tariff revisions for other hydropower projects as well.

We will explore the possibilities of re-starting the Bhutan Lottery business in India, which earned huge amounts of Rupee for the country. If done appropriately, lottery business in India has the potential of earning millions of Rupee, and thus meeting our rupee requirements.

Our party will pursue the policy of self-sufficiency in meeting our own basic needs through local production. For instance, to curtail rice imports, which alone drain out millions of Rupee from the economy, we will revitalize rice production through appropriate mechanisms and strategic policy measures. In a similar vein, we will also promote self-sufficiency in vegetable, dairy, and other commodities that can be produced in large scale to meet the local demand.

We will review tax levied on imported goods according to different categories and need and review customs and excise duty imposed across all imported goods and commodities.

Our longer term solution for Rupee shortfall will be to expedite the construction of the

hydropower projects without any further cost escalation, expand our manufacturing and export base, and explore alternate trade partners and markets in the region.

A large number of Bhutanese students after completing higher secondary school are forced to pursue tertiary education in India and other neighboring countries. Not only does this put extra burden on parents, it has also contributed to rupee outflow from the economy. Our party believes that all Bhutanese students must be able to study in colleges and tertiary institutions of their choice in the country. Our party will therefore encourage the establishment of private colleges, schools and institutes that can absorb students who do not get the opportunity to study in government schools and colleges.

2.2 Pursue balanced socioeconomic development

DCT will pursue a policy of socioeconomic development that takes into account all regions in the country. We will explore all possible opportunities to enable the poor and backward areas to enjoy the benefits of development. For this, we will prioritize budget allocation according to the needs of each dzongkhag. Through this need-based allocation, we will prioritize development activities in dzongkhags.

In addition to investments in infrastructure development, we will emphasize economic plans and activities for each dzongkhag that will create jobs for the youth in that particular area and provide them a source of livelihood. This will not only address the issue of unemployment but also curtail urban-rural drift, mostly from backward dzongkhags to the more, developed urban towns and cities.

We will facilitate low interest loans to small and medium enterprises in far-flung dzongkhags to encourage small time, local entrepreneurs to create, expand and develop their business. We will ensure that local products have readily accessible market.

Our party will encourage employment for local laborers for all government projects including major hydropower projects. Certain employment quota will be set aside for the employment of skilled and unskilled local workforce in all mega projects, joint ventures and private constructions.

We will focus on enhancing skills and employability of our youth by diversifying courses in vocational skills institutes across the country. We will focus on specialized skills development so that our own national workforce can gradually replace imported skilled manpower over a period of time.

To create an economy that is self-reliant, we will need to focus on local production that will meet the demands of the Bhutanese consumer. Currently, we import almost every goods and services, leading to huge cash outflow from the economy. Therefore, our party will develop policies to encourage local products through subsidies and fiscal incentives.

Our party will also review existing monetary policies particularly interest rates and try to put in place a progressive interest rate policy that benefits the financial institutions and the people. Interest rates must also be reviewed in the context of high inflationary trends of the past few years. In the end, we should be able to facilitate better and easier access to credit

and capital so that more Bhutanese can start up business that will meet our domestic needs.

Our party will revisit and review the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy to encourage more FDI inflow in the country. Despite revising the FDI policy, we have not been able to attract FDI and reap its benefits. Our party will prioritize FDI in key areas so that benefits will directly trickle down to the people and not be enjoyed by just a select few.

We will endeavor to spread the civil service machinery to other areas to balance development and progress, and also to de-congest urban towns that are bursting at the seams. We will provide incentives to the private sector to establish business in other parts of the country.

2.2 Bridge income inequalities

DCT's vision is to create a society that thrives on equality. The growing disparity in wealth creates unnecessary divisions in society. Our policies will be directed at bridging income gaps and minimizing concentration of wealth.

We will review and rationalize our tax regime so that lower and middle-income groups are not overburdened. We have learned from the U.S. and other consumerist countries that too much wealth and power in too few hands eventually undermines the values and strengths of real democracy.

Our party will review taxation policy and rationalize income tax slabs. We will endeavor to put in place a more rational taxation policy. Currently, given the high cost of living standards

fueled by inflation, lower and middle-income groups are finding it difficult to meet their daily ends. Particularly in urban towns like Thimphu and Phuentsholing, a majority of Bhutanese people barely survives through the month, a large part of their income being spent on paying exorbitant house rents and other necessities.

It is unfortunate that people's level of income is not sufficient to meet the necessary daily requirements, further adding to their misery. We will ensure that the poor and low-income groups are not over-burdened by tax levy while the richer pay their fair share.

Every Bhutanese citizen must have the security and comforts of a home. We will ensure that low and middle-income groups have affordable homes. Our party will formulate a national housing plan for low and middle-income groups through which they can eventually own the house.

We will review the national wage rate. It is high time wages are fixed by taking into account various factors like inflation, working conditions, and hours of work. We will also introduce labor policies that will encourage per-hour pay and strictly facilitate overtime payments.

We will introduce a policy of progressive salary where remuneration in the private and corporate sector and government will be raised by certain fixed percentage every year. The practice of salary hike in the civil service has more often directly impacted inflationary trends with house rents and price of commodities shooting up in the wake of the pay hike. Thus, a system of annual increment of salaries will be more effective and beneficial.

Most small businesses are not able to flourish for want of capital. Access to credit is difficult for small business because banks do not lend to those without any collateral. Our party will develop micro-financing schemes through which small enterprises and businessmen can avail loan to advance and expand their business.

Agriculture's contribution to GDP has been dwindling over the years. This is mainly because our farmers are hanging their spades and looking for alternate source of income. There is no incentive in farming where one can hardly feed oneself. This has forced many farmers to leave their farms for greener pastures in urban areas.

Our party will revive agriculture through accessibility to agriculture loans which farmers can use to expand their farming activities and engage in commercial farming.

2.3 Boost private sector growth

For a long time now, the private sector has been dubbed the engine that will drive the economy forward. But genuine efforts to develop the private sector have been few and far between. We believe the private sector can play a crucial role in creating wealth, jobs and eventually a strong market-oriented economy. We will provide the much-needed stimulus through a supportive environment and incentives to enable the private sector to unlock its potential.

To this end, our party will develop a clear policy for private sector growth by consulting with private sector stakeholders.

We will enhance public service delivery for private sector and ease of doing business by

Our party will encourage banks to provide low interest loans to small and medium enterprises to boost their growth and development.

2.5 Create new jobs and employment opportunities

If unemployment figure of 2.1 percent is to be believed, it is as good as saying that we do not have unemployment problem in Bhutan. But the inconvenient truth is, still a large number of Bhutanese, particular the youth, are unemployed. They have not only lost their confidence in the government but are at the brink of losing their hopes and aspirations. We will never let that happen. We will create new, and more jobs for the youth. We will never ask our youth to go back to the farms after they have completed college. We will provide them enough jobs so that they can use their skills in productive ways to earn a livelihood and contribute to the country's progress.

To this end, our party will establish professional recruitment agencies that will provide skills development opportunities. Our philosophy is that we will not give them fish but teach them how to fish. These skill development programmes will enable youth to gain skills that are in demand in the market.

Our party will encourage a strong and vibrant culture of entrepreneurship in the private sector through technical assistance, fiscal incentives and appropriate policies. We will boost the private sector to encourage more jobs creation. In the end, a vibrant and strong private sector will be able to absorb large numbers of Bhutanese youth coming out of colleges and universities.

We will rebrand manual jobs as 'labor with dignity' with appropriate incentives, wages, and salaries plus social security schemes. Unless a

job that requires hard labor is compensated with equivalent cash income, there will be no dignity of labor. Our party will strive to create a new culture of work where such jobs are given the same respect and dignity as any white collar, desk job.

Therefore we will review and revise the national wage rate. It is high time wages are fixed by taking into account various factors like inflation, working conditions, and hours of work. We will also introduce labor policies that will encourage per-hour pay and strictly implement overtime payments.

We will create jobs in the green industries and manufacturing sector for the skilled and unskilled workforce.

If the unemployment scenario in Bhutan needs to improve, first we must revamp our education system that prepares our young to take up mostly public services oriented jobs. Our party will revise the education curricula so that youth have an array of opportunities to pursue in life. We will diversify opportunities for them to pursue a career in the arts, entertainment, sports, and business, among many others. To this end, we will enhance the capacity of career counselors in schools, and introduce youth to career counseling early in life.

2.6 Invest in Infrastructure development

Infrastructure development is essential to a nation's progress. Our party will continue to make huge investments in infrastructure development across the country. However, our approach will be need-based. We will channel resources for infrastructure development in dzongkhags and gewogs that are in dire need

and give priority to backward communities.

Our party will focus in developing four regional hubs in the country that will serve as business centers for each region. This will curb rural-urban drift, promote balanced socio-economic development, create wealth and job opportunities.

We will improve the transportation networks and invest in quality roads that last through varied seasons, cutting down huge recurrent cost that goes into maintaining and repair of road networks every year.

We will invest in infrastructure development in health and education sector, and enhance access to quality boarding facilities in schools in remote parts of our country.

2.7. Expand and promote the tourism sector

Tourism remains one of our most important sources of revenue and employment. Our party will further boost tourism industry to attract more high-end tourists every year.

Our party will review taxation in the tourism sector, build capacity and professionalism through trainings.

We will make huge investments in infrastructure development to advance tourism opportunities in the country. We will explore possible opportunities to expand tourism in the East and South to equitably distribute the benefits of tourism.

We will diversify tourism products and packages including food tourism, eco-tourism, health and wellness tourism among many others.

Our party will invest in marketing and advertising to attract more regional tourists including high-end Indian tourists to Bhutan. We will also put in place stricter regulatory frameworks to monitor undercutting in the tourism sector.

2.8 Address fronting issues

Rampant fronting has stifled business growth, mostly in border towns in Bhutan. Such malpractice in trade and business has resulted in loss of revenue and contributed to the outflow of rupee from the economy.

Our party will endeavour to put an end to such illegal trade practices by stepping up measures to clamp down fronting in all possible areas. We will strengthen monitoring and surveillance, and introduce tougher legal actions for people who involve in fronting business.

RURAL PROSPERITY:
REACHING THE
NEGLECTED

3



3. RURAL PROSPERITY: REACHING THE NEGLECTED

Growth that is not inclusive benefits only a few at the expense of the rest. Through our people-centric development approach, we will focus on improving local communities' self-reliance. Our policies will seek out sustainable ways to develop unreached communities that have been left by the wayside.

We will endeavour to develop and execute policies that will address the socioeconomic gap between regions, dzongkhags and people. Without this, social and economic parity between people and regions cannot be achieved. Bhutan can only prosper if there is balanced social and economical development.

Poverty is a glaring development issue that needs to be addressed. Our party will endeavour to bring down poverty levels in the next five years, and give Bhutan's poor the much-needed support and assistance to live better lives.

3.1 Rural infrastructure development

Infrastructure development in rural communities is vital to its progress and prosperity. Our party will ensure that communities across the country, more importantly those left behind, have access to modern infrastructure and amenities. Therefore, our party will ensure that every community has the bare minimum of modern amenities such as BHUs, road connectivity, electricity, safe drinking water, schools, and lhakhangs. We will

promote stronger and better homes for village communities that are earth-quake resistant. In addition to building rural roads, we will also assure that people have access to rural transport services. 'Road without motor vehicles', is an anomaly in our development story. Our party will ensure that these communities have at least a minimum weekly public or private transport services, proportionate to their population and connecting where feasible.

3.2 Improve local communities' self reliance

It is of paramount importance that communities across the country have equal access to facilities and opportunities to better living conditions. Our party will make concerted efforts to improve the living conditions of local communities across the country.

Our party will initiate the Gewog Economic Plan through which we will identify a core economic activity for each gewog. This will create jobs, provide alternate sources of income and strengthen community vitality.

We will encourage and promote small and cottage industries in local communities specific to the resources that are available in the community. We will also facilitate market access and opportunities of exporting the products to other markets in the region.

Our party will emphasize on creating a brand Bhutan product from each gewog that can be exported to local and outside markets. To facilitate this, we will establish farmer's markets

in the four regional hubs and urban towns and also build linkages with public institutions.

3.3 Fix the farms

Farming remains the lifeblood of our rural communities. However, many farmers are giving up their age-old practice and shifting to alternate forms of employment such as road workers. In fact, they prefer this type of livelihood because farming is a difficult job, particularly when the output does not match the amount of time, resources, sweat and hard labor they put in through out the year. Wildlife predation has added to this misery and poverty, forcing farming communities to give up their trade.

Our party will therefore review and step up strategic measures to combat human-wildlife conflicts in Bhutan. Unless this issue is addressed, many of our farmers will toil hard only to find their crops damaged and destroyed by wild animals.

We will explore new technology and methods to combat wildlife predation to encourage our farmers to stay back in the villages. We will also improve the system and procedure of paying compensation to farmers whose crops are destroyed by wild animals.

We will encourage farmers to adopt commercial farming and facilitate access to markets. To avoid farmer's dependence on single crop, we will promote mixed cropping with equal emphasis on commercial crops.

We will come up with policies to revive traditional crops that have gone extinct and provide support in reviving these crops. We will explore domestic markets according to the

demand and supply for such traditional crops.

To encourage commercial farming and trade, we will invest in building several storage facilities in key areas in the country. We will also subsidize transportation of vegetable and crops and establish common distribution facilities for poor farmers who cannot afford to hire transport facilities on their own.

Our party will promote and create a pool of traders who will facilitate trade between producers and suppliers.

We will review the national irrigation plan and invest in building irrigation facilities across the country.

3.4 Promote organic farming

Our party will ensure that we achieve 100% organic agriculture in the next five years and meet the growing demand for domestically produced organic produce by providing adequate resources and supports.

We will step up supports on import substitution where we are under producing at present. We will provide technology and machines to farmers through grants and loans to encourage large-scale farm production.

Our party will promote and support a network of farmer's markets at local levels to encourage more direct selling from producers to consumers. We will promote packaging of organic produce in premium quality for export to regional and international markets.

We will review agriculture and food regulatory policy to ensure that food Bhutanese citizens are consuming are safe and healthy.



SOCIAL HARMONY AND VIBRANT SOCIETY

4



4. SOCIAL HARMONY AND VIBRANT SOCIETY

Happiness is a fundamental human desire and we will create enabling conditions for people to pursue genuine happiness, based not on the acquisition of more western gadgets and “conveniences”, but on better access to fundamental needs such as safe drinking water, adequate food, durable shelter, modern health care and education. We will ensure that tens of thousands of low and middle-income families have decent roof over their heads.

So long as our society is plagued with social ills, our people will never be able to enjoy a better quality life. In fact, most of our current social ills are manifestations of economic deprivation, poverty, lack of education and the unavailability of meaningful work.

In order to minimize our social problems, we must address these interconnected issues with careful data gathering and intelligent planning. We will attack the root causes of growing social issues such as unemployment, farm abandonment, alcoholism, vandalism, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, suicide, depression, etc. with appropriate policy interventions, including targeted programs of relief for those in dire need such as the disabled, the homeless, orphans, and single mothers.

4.1 Housing for low income groups

Every citizen must have a decent roof over his or her head. Mostly in urban towns, housing has become very expensive and hardly affordable.

This has pushed many low-income groups not only to the fringes of towns and illegal squatters with poor amenities but also to fringes of our society.

Our party understands their plight and burden, and will therefore develop a comprehensive national housing plan for the low and middle-income groups. We will ensure that these groups have access to a decent home and the security and comfort it provides.

4.2 Formulate disabled friendly policies

There is a need to develop policies that promote the welfare of disabled citizens. As a party to UN Convention on the Rights of People of Disabilities, our party will endeavor to formulate and implement inclusive policies that will address the needs of the physically challenged, orphans, homeless and elderly citizens without care givers.

We will initiate the formulation of a Disability Act through consultations with disabled people and associations to give more meaningful legal protection of their rights.

We will also initiate policies and rehabilitation programmes for homeless people through the formulation and implementation of a national strategy to address homelessness of senior and aging citizens in the country.

Our party will also come up with good housing, medicare, retirement and recreational schemes for senior citizens. We will also review Rural Life Insurance schemes.

4.3 Address social issues covering crimes, domestic violence, suicides, substance abuse, etc.

Our party will develop a comprehensive national strategy to address a gamut of social issues faced by our society. We will endeavour to get to the bottom of these issues through proper scientific studies and surveys and implement the strategic activities recommended.

We will focus more on corrective methods by encouraging the establishment of rehab centers and counseling programs.

Our party believes that criminalization of drugs user is a one-size fits all solution that is narrow and close ended in approach. Thus, we will review the legal veracity and effectiveness of such laws on the behavior and attitude of drug users.

Our party will encourage a milder yet effective approach through counseling programmes and corrective facilities to reach out to a large number of drug users who are in need of help. Education and awareness will be heightened to discourage youth from using drugs.

We will create alternate platforms like gaming centres, sports facilities, libraries and parks where youth can be productively engaged and keep them at bay from socially harmful activities.

We will also develop strategic frameworks to enable recovering drug users and criminals to integrate with the mainstream society without having to face social discrimination.

To end domestic violence in our homes, we

will strictly enforce the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and support NGOs and agencies working for women's right and protection. We will encourage marriage counseling programmes to reduce the high number of divorce cases.

Suicide is a growing concern in our country. To curb suicides, we will invest in mental health programs, and expand psychiatric counseling and help centers in all dzongkhags. In addition, we will also expand advocacy and spiritual counseling programs.

4.4 Provide adequate platforms for redressal of grievances

Our party will build communication channels and mechanisms through which aggrieved citizens can redress their grievances. We will create grievance cells in respective dzongkhags to address people's problems and issues.

We will formulate policies that will address injustice and discrimination in the society to promote unity, and enabling conditions for people to pursue happiness in the country.

4.5 Improve living conditions for monks and welfare for old, retired monks

Recent studies have revealed that monks, nuns and gomchens suffer an average sick days of 5.1 days, the maximum across all occupations. Recognizing the varied problems faced by our religious communities, our party will create enabling conditions for monks, nuns, and gomchens to live healthier and better lives.

We will in put in place social security measures like retirement benefits and old-age insurance schemes for the monk community. We will

enhance access to health care facilities, build better homes and recreational facilities for monks and nuns.

We will also introduce policies and systems to avoid child abuse and harassment in the religious institutions.

We will encourage the monk body to play bigger role in spiritual development of the society through more relevant forms of teachings.

4.5 Review and amend the Land Act 2007

Land is a scarce resource in the country. It is a source of security. Land provides a sense of belongingness to the people. Our party will therefore review and amend the Land Act 2007 in order to remove the incongruent provisions in the Land Act. To this end, we will first launch

a national consultation process with the people of 20 dzongkhags and various government stakeholders.

4.6 Improve security and safety of people living along border areas

In recent years, lot of kidnapping cases was reported in the southern dzongkhags bordering India. This brought undue trouble and worry to the people living along the border areas. Our party will ensure the security and safety of every Bhutanese, and make sure they live a life without having to fear for their safety.

To this end, our party will engage in bilateral discussions with the Government of India to beef up security measures along the border, increase the deployment of police troops, and initiate rural police forces for vulnerable communities.

EMPOWERING OUR WOMEN

5



Around half of Bhutan's population is women. We can no longer ignore the important role women play in nurturing a family, building a society, and strengthening a nation. Bhutan can only prosper when her women are happy, safe and secure and when policy decisions are responsive to all sections of the society.

Over the last few decades, Bhutanese women have increased their share of employment and have made important inroads into different types of jobs and sectors as well as to higher status professional and managerial occupations. However, the gap between women and men in all areas still remains considerable whether it is access to credit, labor force participation, higher education, civil service, employment, decision-making or governance, which gives reason for concern.

The needs, challenges of men and women are different and 'one-size fits all' policy often does not work in the interest of both men and women. With the absence of women's voice particularly in decision-making, most of the current policies and programs are not responsive to women's needs. As a result, Bhutanese women are faced with number of challenges which include higher unemployment amongst women, fewer number of girls pursuing higher education, higher number of Class X and XII drop outs are girls, gender based violence, sexual harassment at workplace, teenage pregnancy, issue of fatherless children

and national identity affecting children's entry into education, and lack of affordable domestic help and affordable day care center for working women, among others.

More women are infected with HIV/AIDS and cases of maternal mortality rate are high. Many legal instruments also need to be reviewed from a gender perspective to avoid negative or undesirable implications for both women and men. According to GNH Survey, women are said to be less happy than men. We are committed to find out why and what can be done and can't leave it there.

We will promote greater participation of women in all spheres of life with gender responsive and family-friendly policies. We will also review and amend legislations and policies that currently create discriminatory obstacles for women. We will initiate a variety of vocational programs that will enhance and diversify the income-generating power of women through cooperatives, micro-financing projects and easier access to higher education.

5.1 Formulate gender responsive policies to both men and women

Our party will promote policies that are responsive to the needs and challenges faced by women to support development and advancement of women, and create conditions to ensure that women have good health, education, knowledge, capabilities, employment opportunities by addressing the current economic, social, cultural barriers to their

effective participation in all spheres. Bhutan can prosper when policy decisions are responsive to all sections of the society.

Achieving gender equity on a broader societal scale requires gender responsive governance reforms. To this end, we will create a new 'Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development' to promote women and youth empowerment and address varied social issues and challenges for progressive Bhutan.

This Ministry will promote gender responsive policies and family friendly policies and will work towards strengthening family relations, creating more harmonious homes and society. It will also ensure that every Bhutanese citizen is treated without discrimination, with love, care and respect in their families and promote a community in which women, children, the disabled and the old age is given their rights, respect and protection.

5.2 Institute family friendly policies at workplace

Our party will set new standards for improving working environment for female employees. This will include conducive facilities that will address the special needs of the women.

We will review and extend the duration of maternity leave for both female workers and paternity leave for their male counterparts.

We will promote and provide affordable day care centers at workplace. Working mothers must have time and access to affordable day care centers. Our party will frame policies that will encourage day care centers near and around offices so that mothers have more time and

easier access to their children during working hours. We will also put in place conducive policies to enable feeding mothers to work from home.

We will also increase the duration working mothers can spend feeding and tending to their children. Children are our future and if they are nurtured well in their tender years, they will grow to become stronger, dynamic leaders tomorrow.

5.3 Review and amend existing policies and laws that create challenges for women

Working conditions involving night duties and long shift system are most common in hydro projects and industrial establishments, which has ample employment opportunities for VTI graduates. But as profit driven organizations, they are more likely to recruit more men than women as they do not have any special provision for men. Thus, VTI female graduates are more likely to face challenges with employment than men, resulting in loss of investment made by the government on their vocational trainings and leading to equity issues.

Our party will come up with a more gender responsive approach that will address the possible adverse impact, increased paternity leave for men and provision of tax holidays for companies that recruit large number of women.

Our party will review and amend the Marriage Act to address incongruent sections and clauses that put women in a disadvantaged position. While doing so, our party will also place high respect and consideration for both men and women's rights.

5.4 Create enabling environment for women's effective participation in all spheres

To encourage women's participation in all spheres, be it local government, politics, bureaucracy, or national decision-making levels, our party will formulate policies that will create enabling environment and conditions that will promote women's participation.

Our party will make concerted efforts to address gender inequality through education and awareness, and institutional reforms.

We will ensure that women have access to employment, training and further studies that will advance their skills and employability.

5.5 Provide employment opportunities for women with introduction of women-friendly vocational programs and trainings

We are yet to realize that 'one-size fits all' policy does not always work in the interest of both men and women. For example, to address growing unemployment and to meet the growing demand for skilled workers, Vocational Training Institutes (VTI) have been established

to provide training on automobile engineering, construction work, plumbing, carpentry, domestic wiring, masonry etc.

Similarly, MoLHR conducts training programmes for out of school youth, which includes trainings in graphic designing, computer hardware, electronics repairs, denting etc. While the trainings are meant for both men and women, it is evident that the most of the trainings are not gender sensitive as they are male oriented.

While the vocational programmes and trainings are intended to enhance employment opportunities for both women and men, it is likely to encourage higher male enrolment and higher employment opportunities for men than women. These trainings offer limited choice and opportunities for women, thus further widening the unemployment gap between men and women.

Our party will come up with training programs at vocational institutes that takes into considerations women's special needs, and concurrently create job opportunities in the market. We will invest in skills-development programs for women and encourage entrepreneurship among women through low interest loans and access to credit.

INVESTING IN YOUTH, OUR FUTURE

6



6. INVESTING IN YOUTH, OUR FUTURE

Our youth must be given the vital opportunities they need to pursue their dreams and fulfill their aspirations. They are our most valuable asset, our leaders of tomorrow. We will empower Bhutan's youth to be nation builders through opportunities that enhance their interests, skills, and abilities into adulthood.

Realizing the importance of youth for better tomorrow, youth empowerment is one of the top areas of action for Druk Chirwang Tshogpa. Our party will work towards empowered youth for progressive Bhutan by providing opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities into their adulthoods complemented with appropriate structures; creating supportive relationships; providing positive social norms and opportunities for skill building built on a foundation of scientific research through multi dimensional approach.

To enhance youth participation in Bhutanese democracy, we will establish youth divisions in all 20 Dzongkhags supported by voluntary youth coordinators to provide a more broad based representation of youth. DCT believes that youth often have different experiences and views to adults, which enrich discussions and improve decision-making. It is very important for youth to be engaged in decisions that affect their lives and the community's lives. Change is possible when young people are involved and

political parties need to be responsive to the voices and challenges faced by youth today for better tomorrow.

Unemployment is the biggest challenge faced by youth with more than few thousand graduates and several thousand Class X and XII dropouts without jobs. This has resulted from mismatch of job and skills, weak implementation of policies, challenges with education system/curriculum that does not encourage creativity and analytical thinking, and quality and standard of education. In addition, unemployment is also caused by limited number of higher education institutes and colleges and inadequate career education.

Substance abuse, crime, suicide, depression, gang culture, teenage pregnancy, high school dropouts and sexual harassment are other issues that need to be tackled. The causes are related to easy availability of drugs, peer pressure, influence of commercial films, lack of awareness, family status, lack of adequate support at home and school, broken homes, domestic violence, lack of entertainment and sport facilities, generation gap, vulnerability of young women, lack of policies that addresses youth related issues and absence of adequate platform for youth voice.

DCT believes that the solution to youth problems is not through punishment but by addressing the root cause of youth related problems with multi dimensional approach. Our party will address the challenge related

to substance abuse by enhancing greater awareness amongst youth, strictly monitoring and controlling the inflow of drugs into the country, supporting and increasing the number of rehabilitation center, and enhancing counseling programs.

6.1 Initiate Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development

Young people in Bhutan today live in complex and challenging times. To empower youth for better tomorrow, we will initiate the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development.

This Ministry will address socioeconomic challenges faced by the Bhutanese youth with youth friendly policies. To optimally tap their constructive and creative energies, the Ministry will also pursue personality building and skills development. It will also promote capacity building for sports and other curricular activities.

6.2 Encourage productive, creative entrepreneurial and empowered youth with positive reforms in education system

Our education system by and large prepares youth for a job in the public service. This must change in order to address the growing youth unemployment and overcrowding in the civil service machinery. Our youth must be able to exploit their talents and creativity and stand on their own feet.

To this end, our party will review the existing education curricula and make necessary reforms to include more relevant curriculum that will prepare the youth for a career in business and enterprise.

Our party will introduce entrepreneurship programmes and business development trainings at higher secondary and tertiary education levels. Such programmes will provide the necessary professional skills and information on market opportunities to student so that they can make informed decisions before starting a business venture.

6.3 Address youth unemployment challenges

To address youth unemployment, our party will cooperate closely with the private sector by creating enabling environment for private sector development and with provision of special measures and incentives.

Our party will widen the diversity of courses offered at VTIs and increase the number of VTIs across the country. We will further provide enhanced skills development and internship opportunities for youth, promote better working environment for blue collar jobs and strengthen career education in schools; and encourage entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation amongst youth.

We will introduce professional recruitment agencies that will focus on skills development according to the market needs and facilitate employment in various sectors in government, public and corporate institutions.

Our party will encourage private sector agencies to employ large number of youth through fiscal incentives and tax holidays. Such organizations, for instance Business Process Outsourcing, can create hundreds of jobs for the youth.

6.4 Encourage FDI to provide youth employment

The current FDI policy has not been able to create business investments that generate optimum number of jobs in the economy. Thus, our party will review and revise the existing FDI policy to encourage more FDI into the country. We will encourage FDI ventures that have the potential to create large number of employment particularly for the youth.

Our party will encourage FDI ventures in the hospitality business, ICT sector, creative and green industries. These ventures alone can create enough jobs for the youth in the next five years.

6.5 Promote networking opportunities for youth

Bhutanese youth must be given the opportunities and necessary exposure to learn from experiences of youth from other parts of the world.

Our party will establish networking programmes with regional and global youth forums to encourage active participation of our youth in these forums. Within the country, our party will promote Youth Associations that will engage with the government and policy makers to address youth issues and challenges.

Our party will also explore opportunities for our youth to get employment in the region and abroad by building institutional linkages and bilateral cooperation with neighboring countries.

6.6 Introduce career opportunities in sports

The government's spending in developing sports in Bhutan has been very minimal. This goes to show why the state of affairs in the sports arena is very poor. Druk Chirwang Tshogpa believes in the talent and potential of our youth and will ensure that they have the platform and opportunities to showcase their talents. Above all, we will create long-term career opportunities in the sports field.

Our party will introduce career opportunities in various sporting fields and expand and upgrade sports facilities across the country. We will train our young sportsmen and women to be competent enough to partake in international sporting events and win medals, international fame, and make our country proud. It's time we have our own national sports stars and athletes.

6.7 Support NGOs involved in youth empowerment

NGOs and civil society organizations that work for youth empowerment are important institutions in our society. They provide the necessary support for youth development and help us build stronger and responsible youth leaders for tomorrow. It is vital that these institutions and agencies have the unconditional support of the government of the day.

Our party will uncompromisingly extend all kinds of support to these NGOs and CSOs that play such a crucial role in our society. We will encourage these NGOs to come up with innovative programmes to engage youth and prevent them from falling prey to the social evils

and distractions that destroy their lives.

Our party will solicit support and funds from international donors to be ploughed into numerous youth activities initiated by NGOs and CSOs.

We will incentivize the private and the NGO sectors to create and implement their own training programs to enable more youth to gain critical skills to become leaders and entrepreneurs in both of these sectors.

6.8 Establish rehab centers and corrective facilities

Our party believes that criminalization and punishment is not the solution to youth problems. First, we will need to address the root cause of youth related problems with a multi-dimensional approach.

Our party will address the challenges related to substance abuse by enhancing greater awareness amongst youth and strictly monitoring and controlling the inflow of drugs into the country.

Our party will support the establishment of a number of rehabilitation centres, train professional counselors, and enhance counseling programmes in the country.

Our party will review the penal code and come with up legal frameworks to ensure that drug addicts and juveniles have access to proper rehab facilities and are integrated into the mainstream society without having to face social stigma and discrimination.

We will introduce sex education in schools, encourage better relationship between youth and teachers/parents and promote youth association to provide adequate platform for youth voice and their participation in decision-making and institute youth friendly policies in keeping with the changing environment.

Our party will support networking opportunities for Bhutanese youth with youth from other countries, encourage volunteerism, and introduce civic education, human and family values in schools and institutes.



MAKING EDUCATION BETTER AND RELEVANT

7



7. MAKING EDUCATION BETTER AND RELEVANT

The Bhutanese education system has stagnated for a long time now. There is a need to revamp and introduce fundamental reforms in the education system so that it is relevant with the changing times. Our education system prepares students for career opportunities in the public service and not so much for the world of business and enterprise. This must change now, and it can happen so only with reforms in the education curricula and new approach to teaching-learning method.

Education must also instill in our children the universal values of love, compassion, humanity along with the right skills and competency. They must have the skills and knowledge to get employed not just in Bhutan but also anywhere in the world.

Our party wants every child to receive an excellent education, to unlock their potential and ensure that they can succeed in life. Many children still leave school without the knowledge and skills to be successful. We will ensure that every child leaving primary and secondary education have basic life skills they need.

7.1 *Introduce positive reforms in education*

Our party will introduce positive reforms in the education system by framing the national education policy. This policy will be the apex

document for any reforms and programmes that will be introduced in the education sector. It will define the goals and long term vision, identify current challenges and chart out the future road map to provide the best education for our children.

We will make education compulsory for all children in the country, giving them the most vital platform to accumulate knowledge, skills and values to lead a successful and happy life.

Our party will increase primary education enrollment and sustain the numbers through university level. To achieve this, we will invest more in schools, teachers and infrastructures, and encourage more affordable private schools, colleges and institutes.

Children must enjoy utmost attention in school. Our party will ensure that every child has the best possible education by increasing the number of teachers, cutting the class size, prioritizing one-to-one teaching and introducing catch-up classes.

Our party will improve discipline in schools by early intervention to tackle basic education of those children who are otherwise most likely to misbehave and become demotivated.

7.2 *Review standards and curriculum*

To make the most of their years in school, every child needs an education that best suits their abilities and interests and one that will ensure their future. The current curriculum restricts

children to go beyond textbook learning, promotes rote learning, and precludes their analytical thinking and analysis. The old fashion pedagogy does not sync with the changing environment today's children are growing up in.

Our party will establish the Royal Education Council as fully independent body to oversee curriculum standards, teaching methods, examination models, system of school inspection and performance evaluation of students, teachers, schools, institutes and colleges.

Our party will review, revise and put in place an education curriculum that tailors to the needs of children. The education curriculum will be practical and research based that will enhance our children's capabilities of creative thinking, analysis, and problem solving skills.

Our party will also introduce diploma and degree programs in colleges that will provide a mix of specific vocational training and academic learning.

Our party will introduce compulsory skills development programs at higher secondary education level. This will enable students to continue their specific skills development at degree and diploma levels and ultimately create more vocationally and academically trained graduates.

Our party will step up the opportunities for "hands-on" or experiential learning that will include internships, externships, and volunteering.

7.3 Invest in infrastructure development

Our party will make new investments in infrastructure improvement in educational institutes, schools, colleges and universities. Our children must have access to modern classrooms, laboratories, playgrounds, and recreational facilities. In short, we will create conducive learning environment for children.

Particularly in rural schools, we will invest in building boarding facilities and introduce feeding programs for student. Many of our children in rural areas walk long hours, often through treacherous mountain paths and forest, to reach school. We will ensure that they have decent boarding and hostel facilities in their schools.

In middle and higher secondary schools, our party will introduce additional skills development centers where students can train and sharpen their skills.

In colleges and universities, we will expand library resources, introduce ICT learning aids, teleconference and interactive teaching models.

7.4 Better incentives for teachers

Teachers are the center of our education system. They groom future leaders. Our party will place utmost importance to the development, training, and welfare of our teachers. We will select the best crop of people to join the teaching cadre through incentives and welfare schemes that befits the noble profession.

Our party will promote quality education through high-performing quality teachers

and incentivizing teaching profession. We will introduce performance-based evaluation for teachers that will directly translate to incentives and promotion benefits.

Our party will introduce new pay scheme and incentives to attract and retain excellent teachers.

Our party will improve teacher training by increasing the size of the teacher training colleges and initiate Teach First Program to attract more top graduates into the teaching profession.

We will improve training for existing teachers over the course of their career to keep them updated with best practice in the field of education. We will ensure that appropriate qualified teachers teach respective subjects.

7.5 Encourage private educational schools, institutes and colleges

A large number of Bhutanese students after completing higher secondary school are forced to pursue tertiary education in India and other neighboring countries. Not only does this put extra burden on parents, it has also contributed to rupee outflow from the economy.

Our party believes that all Bhutanese students must be able to study in colleges and tertiary

institutions of their choice in the country.

Our party will therefore encourage the establishment of private colleges, schools and institutes that can absorb students who do not get the opportunity to study in government schools and colleges.

We will frame guidelines and policies for the establishment of private colleges and schools and encourage such institutions to be spread out across the country. Our party will also explore possibilities of undertaking bigger projects under the public private partnership model.

7.6 Expand adult learning and education programs

Our party will ensure that adults working in the government, private and corporate sectors who wish to study have opportunities to continue their higher studies in schools and colleges in the country.

Our party will come up with a policy whereby all interested adults in the country can pursue their education in schools and institutes they prefer. We will also make fees affordable for them.

We will promote distance education and learning, and put in systems to recognize and reward higher learning initiatives.

**FOR A STRONG AND
HEALTHIER BHUTAN**

8



8. FOR A STRONG AND HEALTHIER BHUTAN

People's health is of supreme importance to any nation, more so for a country like ours with just over 700,000 people. Our smallness should be our strength. In fact, it should not be difficult to provide quality health care services for all. We will promote healthy citizens by investing in research and stepping up preventive measures and care for communicable and non-communicable diseases. We will also invest in mental health programs. We will create a pool of qualified health care professionals and retain experienced professionals through attractive financial incentives, service benefits and better working conditions.

We believe that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Bhutan's health sector continues to face new challenges that pose bigger public health concerns. The disease burden of preventable disease like NCDs is on the rise. There are also significant disparities in access to services that raise serious concerns about equity. The distribution of health facilities and health personnel are skewed and needs major review.

Our party will adopt a multi-pronged approach to ensure that the country tackles current health challenges, while at the same time employing long-term strategies to strengthen institutional and human capacity, promote safety at work place and higher morale amongst health professionals, increase investment, ensure equity in resource allocation and staff deployment.

8.1 *Promote preventive measures & strategies*

A lot of our health burden can be reduced if appropriate preventive measures are taken. Non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, alcohol liver diseases etc. are posing new public health challenges in the country. These are preventable diseases.

Our party will develop the national strategy for prevention of non-communicable diseases and implement various targeted programmes to reduce the health burden of NCD with in the next five years. For people suffering from NCDs, our party will prioritize providing efficient health care services for them.

Our party will work with the local government, the private sector and communities to establish robust outreach services to take health care to the people and ensure access to all Bhutanese across the country and ensure that those in remote and marginalized areas have access to proper health care services.

Our party will invest in expansion of specialized services such as treatment for cancer, dialysis services for kidney patients, and ensure that such services are available in major referral hospitals in the country.

Our party will increase the budgetary allocation for prevention and health care promotion, while at the same time ensuring that curative services are well catered for. We will work with

development partners and communities to support community sensitization and awareness campaigns on preventable diseases.

Our party will put in place measures in support of the development of health programmes that meet the needs of young people and comprehensively address new and emerging health conditions previously associated with adults, such as non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

We will initiate and strengthen school health programme to support preventive measures and health promotion.

8.2 Expand and invest in research, science and technology

The safety and health of our people depends on vibrant research in science and technology. We are ill equipped in terms of technical knowledge, facilities and resources to combat a major disease outbreak. Being prepared is the most viable option for a country like ours with limited resources.

Our party will make new investments in expanding research programmes on disease prevention and control, training of scientists and doctors, and infrastructure development for science and research facilities.

Our party will keep aside different funds for research projects and studies both in traditional and modern science and medicines. To meet the increasing demand for drugs, our party will endeavour to come up with our own national pharmaceutical manufacturers and also encourage possible FDI in this sector.

8.3 Enhance food safety standards and regulations

Bhutan imports majority of its essential food commodities from neighboring countries. It is vital that we have strong food safety standards and scientific and technical capacity to monitor the quality of food items that enter Bhutan.

Such monitoring must also be done for food items produced within the country. Unhealthy food can cause a wide range of health problems for the people and ultimately become a source of social and economic burden.

To this end, our party will strengthen the capacity and powers of Bhutan Standard Bureau and Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority. These two agencies will have sufficient qualified manpower and scientific research laboratories to monitor the quality of food items imported and exported.

Our party will also enhance safety standards for food products following international standards.

8.4 Encourage and promote private health services

While our party will give utmost priority to free public health care services, at the same time, we will also encourage and promote private health care services. This is mainly because a lot of our affluent citizens go out of the country for regular medical treatments, spending huge amount of money during those trips.

Our party will therefore encourage the establishment of high-end private health clinics

and hospitals that will cater to the medical needs of affluent Bhutanese people. In so doing, we will be able to stop the drainage of money, running into millions, from the economy and also be able to create a large number of jobs for various health professionals.

Our party will support efforts to strengthen public-private partnerships to expand access to a wider range of available vaccines by out-sourcing certain logistical components, such as the cold chain management and storage.

Our party will work with local governments to implement measures to improve sanitation and hygiene by supporting the establishment of water, sanitation and environment fund.

8.5 Promote and better working conditions for health safety

Health workers and professionals comprise one of the most important aspects of our health care system. As care givers, their role is significant in improving the health of the people. DCT believes that health workers and medical professionals at all levels must have proper working conditions and service benefits.

Our party will ensure that all health workers in the country have access to better working conditions. We will enhance safety standards in hospitals and BHUs so that health workers are not exposed to risks and health hazards while delivering health care services.

We will promote better living conditions and monetary benefits for health workers in rural communities and far-flung pockets of the country.

8.6 Meet the human resource needs in the health sector

Bhutan has an acute shortage of specialized health professionals, which forces many Bhutanese to seek health care abroad at enormous cost to individuals and households. The government spending on patient referrals has also been huge.

Our party will invest in training and recruitment of specialized health professionals and distribute them in Dzongkhags and regional referral hospitals in the country. We will develop a comprehensive HRD plan to meet the human resource needs of the health sector in the next 10 years.

We will encourage and promote tertiary health institutes in the country and diversify training programmes at diploma and degree levels. We will also establish institutions for developing specialized health professionals.

Our party will come up with attractive incentives to retain specialized health profession from leaving their services. We will encourage specialized doctors to remain as doctors through out their career with better salaries, incentives and perks.

In remote rural communities, we will deploy additional health staff and improve access to health care services through the establishment of outreach clinics in communities. Our party will support efforts to ensure all health facilities have staff as per the minimum staffing norms established by the WHO.

Our party will increase budgetary allocation to the health sector over time to ensure

that human resource capacity is improved, availability of equipment, innovation and increased investment in preventive health programmes.

8.7 Strengthen mental care programme

Mental health problem is a growing public health concern in the country. Many people suffering from mental health problems do not come forward seeking care because of social stigma. There is a need to create awareness on mental health problems and educate the people on its harmful effects and long-term consequences. Particularly as a GNH country, we have bigger responsibilities to provide care to this group of people and help them with professional care and counseling and enable them to live normal lives.

Our party will prioritize budget allocation for national mental health programme, specialized training of psychiatric health professionals, nurses and caregivers and institutional capacity building to cater to the special needs of people suffering from various mental health problems.

We will improve access to counseling for people with mental health problems by continuing cognitive and behavioral therapies.

We will endeavor to reduce ill health caused by excessive drinking and introduce new strategies to tackle the problems of irresponsible drinking.

8.8 Improve patient welfare and safety

Our health care system must be able to meet the high safety standards and assure people

that the care they are given are of good quality. Safety and patient welfare should be of foremost importance.

Our party will support the establishment of a social health insurance scheme and social protection policy for the patients.

For a large number of Bhutanese patients who are poor and without families to support them, we will put in place welfare systems such as access to patient guest house, free food and care, and provide them with health volunteers and helps to look after them.

We will also introduce mobile health units that will travel from communities to communities, providing the necessary health services to patients who cannot afford to travel to BHUs and hospitals.

8.9 Renew our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS

Our party will work with communities and all stakeholders to ensure that our efforts to reduce HIV trends are sustained, by enhancing health-promotion and preventive approaches to health care and public education, while addressing social stigma and discrimination. We will support NGOs like Lhak-Sam to take the lead in creating awareness on HIV/AIDS.

We will increase funding for HIV/Aids programme with emphasis on both prevention and care and treatment, to ensure access to all, irrespective of their socio-economic status.

We will establish a special fund for managing chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and HIV/Aids among others.



PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF TRADITION & CULTURE

9



9. Promotion and preservation of tradition & culture

Our unique culture is one of our formidable strengths. Our rich traditional, cultural, religious and spiritual heritage is the essential basis of our national identity.

We will invest in developing arts through the institution of Arts Endowment Fund and encourage a vibrant culture industry.

We will inculcate a strong sense of family and human values amongst our children and youth. We will revive and promote Bhutanese tradition, culture and way of life.

9.1 Institute the Arts Endowment Fund

To promote and preserve Bhutan's rich culture and tradition, our party will institute the Arts Endowment Fund. This special Fund will be allocated for a five-year term to implement numerous activities and programmes that will promote Bhutan's vibrant culture and tradition.

In fact, the Fund will be utilized to protect our age-old culture, some of which are at the brink of disappearing and revitalize them to connect with the cultural setting and thinking of the time.

The Fund will be manned by the Department of Culture, assisted by a division that will chart out programs and activities to be implemented over a five-year long period.

The activities will include revival of dying culture, developing local content for Bhutanese, reviving Bhutanese drama and theatre while also encouraging contemporary arts and culture.

9.2 Establish a performing arts and film institute

Our party will establish a performing arts and film institute in the country to promote and preserve Bhutan's rich tradition and culture through visual and performing arts. The institute will focus on development of traditional as well as contemporary arts and revive dying practice of Bhutanese drama/theatre and innovate the Bhutanese film industry.

9.3 Invest in culture industry

Our party will invest in further strengthening the culture industry to promote our local arts and crafts, culture and way of life. In so doing, it will serve a dual purpose. Not only will it promote local culture but also create additional employment. We will boost the music industry, handicrafts, traditional medicine, and meditation centers among others.

We will support gainful employment of locally trained artisans and craftsmen to preserve our arts and crafts.

9.4 Promote local films and documentaries

Films and documentaries are powerful mediums through which we can promote Bhutanese

culture. Our party will thus encourage a vibrant film industry and fund documentaries on Bhutan's history, culture and tradition.

To promote professionalism and competency in our local film industry, our party will draft and implement a National Film Policy.

Our party will also encourage and provide attractive platforms for local documentary filmmakers to produce high quality

documentaries that will be both broadcast within the country through BBS and TV channels abroad.

9.5 Promote folk literature

Oral literature is a medium through which Bhutan's rich cultural heritage has been passed down from one generation to another. Our party will make renewed efforts in preserving oral literature by documenting it in print and audio-visual formats.

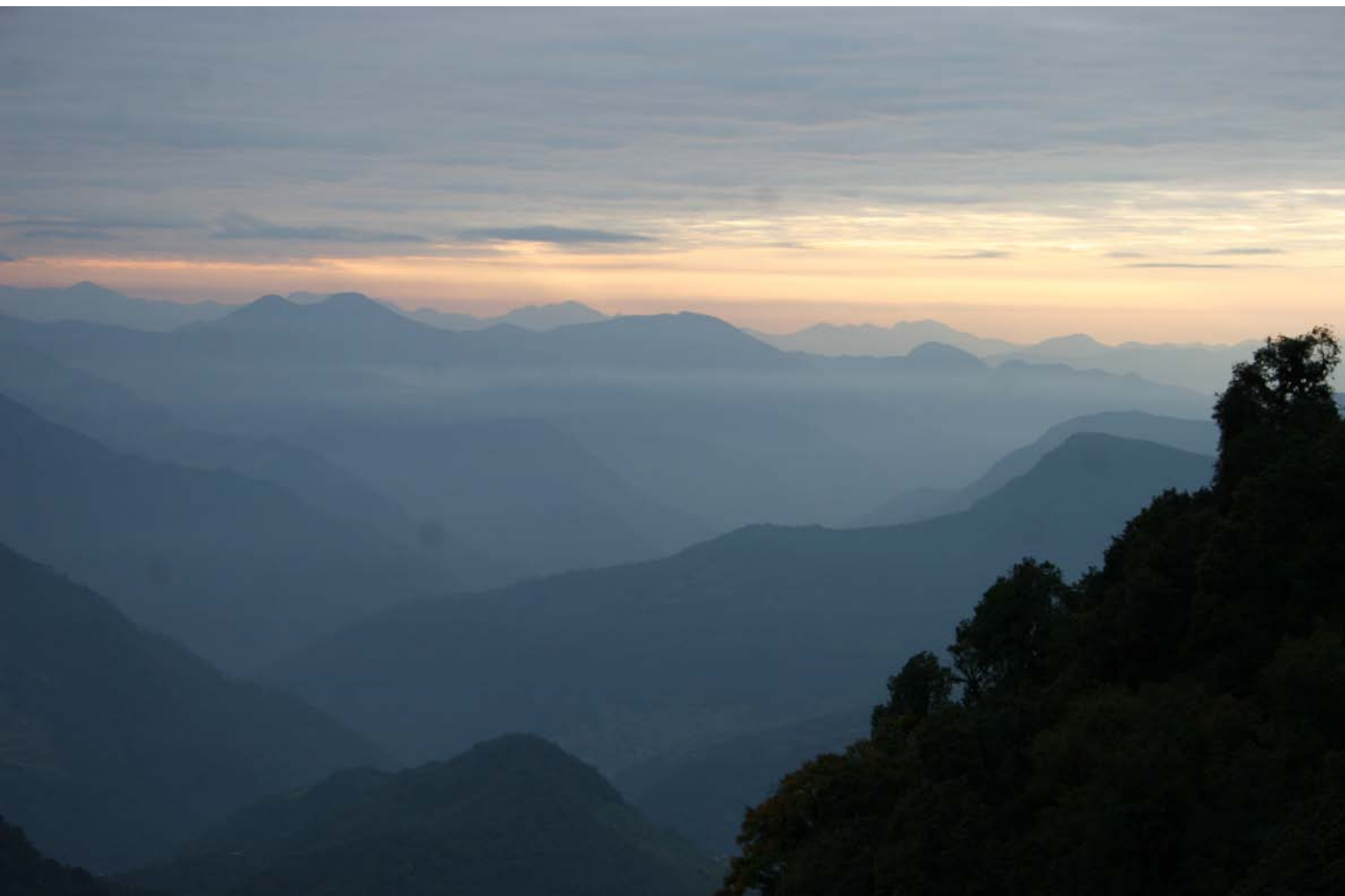


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A GREEN VISION

10



10. A Green Vision

We will continue the green legacy of our enlightened monarchs through renewed efforts in the protection and conservation of our environmental asset. We will pursue sustainable policies while harnessing our natural resources through renewable projects, minimizing impacts of deforestation and biodiversity loss.

Bhutan's natural resources belong to its citizens. We will ensure that all enjoys the bounty of our natural resources and its benefits and encourage a socially responsible mining sector.

We also commit to minimize the loss and fragmentation of our precious wildlife habitat and prevent the destruction of the indigenous culture by requiring legitimate impact studies before new roads are constructed.

10.1 Ensure 60 percent forest cover for all times

Our party is unwavering in its commitment to ensure that the constitutional provision of 60 percent forest cover is maintained for all times to come. To this end, our party will initiate national tree plantation program covering thousands of hectares of land every year.

Our party will beef up institutional capacity, human resource capabilities and upgrade technology in fighting forest fires. We will also make concerted efforts to prevent and control forest fire incidents through education and public advocacy programs.

Our party will encourage environment friendly development activities and minimize adverse harm to the environment during the construction of roads and infrastructure. We will empower the National Environment Commission to play more effective roles in the monitoring and evaluation of environmental impacts of development activities.

We will continue to encourage local people to take stewardship of the forest and natural environment near and around their communities through sustainable forestry management systems.

10.2 Promote green tourism

Tourism is one of the core sources of wealth generation and employment in the country. Our party will continue to strengthen Bhutan's efforts in environmental conservation by initiating green tourism products and eco-tourism opportunities. We will ensure that the benefits of eco-tourism trickles down to the community level.

We will launch new projects such as new parks, trekking routes, bird watching tours, and promote the development of cycling as a growth area for tourism.

Our party will enhance, conserve and sustain Bhutan's wildlife to conserve the environment and ecological tourism. We will ensure that the management of wildlife in the country does not interfere with the environment.

We will ensure sustainable wildlife management in the parks, sanctuaries and nature trails, among others, to eliminate human-wildlife conflict.

10.3 Initiate waste management systems

Waste is emerging as a huge national issue in the country. The capital Thimphu alone produces tones of waste on a daily basis. There is a strong need to start proper waste management facilities in major towns in the country.

Our party will heighten initiatives for waste management systems in each major town by introducing recycling and composting programs, and establishing proper waste treatment plants.

Our party will also invest in modern technologies to recycle waste and minimize harmful waste from polluting our river systems.

We will strictly implement the Waste Management and Control Act and enhance monitoring and compliance to curtail littering and pollution.

Our party will focus on civic education and advocacy on waste management through one-on-one interaction with all sections of our society and through coordinated media campaign messages at target audience.

Our party will encourage private sector to enter into the waste management and recycling business through technical assistance and fiscal incentives. Our party will ultimately endeavour to outsource waste management in major

Thromdes to private firms so that Thromde offices can focus more on development services like improving city roads, drainage, and water supply among others.

Our party will continue to ensure that Bhutan does not import any waste products from outside.

Our party will adopt and implement natural resource conservation strategies that will include re-generation, renewal, bio-remediation, and afforestation.

10.4 Review mining policy

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will review and revise the existing mining policy. Our party will ensure that the country's natural resources are distributed equally among the people and provide opportunities for every potential individual to start a mine along public private partnership model.

We will also revise the royalty and taxes levied on the mining industries keeping in mind the considerable damage mines have on the natural environment and community settlements near and around the mines.

Our party will encourage clean technology and environment friendly mining practices. We will enhance strict monitoring and compliance to mining standards and facilitate greater employment generation in the mining sector.

10.5 Go 100 percent organic

Our party will endeavour to make Bhutan 100 percent organic and explore global markets for organic produces from Bhutan. Our party

will completely stop the import of all kinds of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. In its place, we will develop local facilities and capacity to produce organic fertilizers and meet the local demand.

We will ensure that all farmers practice organic agriculture and meet the growing demand for domestically produced organic produce by providing adequate resources and supports with a focus on import substitution.

We will introduce supports like organic farming scheme to encourage farmers to shift to organic production.

Our party will declare Bhutan a Genetically Modified (GM) free country, free from all cultivation of GM plants and free from imports of GM produce.

10.6 Improve energy efficiency

Our party will encourage energy efficiency in all commercial and public buildings, promote energy saving technology and boost investment in clean energy by reducing our dependence on crude oil.

We will make it compulsory for all government agencies and institutions to report on their energy use and set target for reducing it.

Our party will fulfill Bhutan's commitment to stay carbon neutral for all times. We will adopt long term policies for clean energy and energy efficiency and expand investment in energy technology innovation.

Our party will endeavour to attract more Clean Mechanism Development (CDM) projects in the energy sector particularly hydropower.

Our party will roll out market incentives, such as pollution taxes, tax rebates for green enterprises, and eco-labeling. We will also establish strong environmental and emission standards, such as standards for fuel consumption, energy-efficiency and recycling guidelines.

We will adopt and implement strategies and policies to determine the quantity and quality of resources at the gewog, dzongkhag, and national levels, and implement precautionary measures such as environmental impact assessments, audits, monitoring and evaluation.

10.7 Step up the fight against climate change

Our party will continue the relentless fight against climate change. We will seek financial and technological assistance from donor countries that will be ploughed into mitigating the risks of climate change, especially in vulnerable sections of our society.

We will enforce international environmental treaties and renew our efforts toward environmental conservation through reduction in emission, maintaining a carbon neutral economy and zero net deforestation.

Our party will engage with major emitters and economies to provide enhanced financial support for carbon neutral solutions and lead international efforts to promote transfer

of technologies that will help tackle climate change.

Our party will partner with the international community in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, build capacity of relevant stakeholders in both public and private sectors to formulate strategies and actions to address climate change.

We will develop innovative and adaptive development responses to the risks posed by climate change. These innovative and adaptive measures will include crop and livestock insurance schemes, research on drought-tolerant crops, conservation farming, agro-forestry, and agricultural diversification.

Our party will promote green investment and increase the number and quality of jobs in the green sectors.

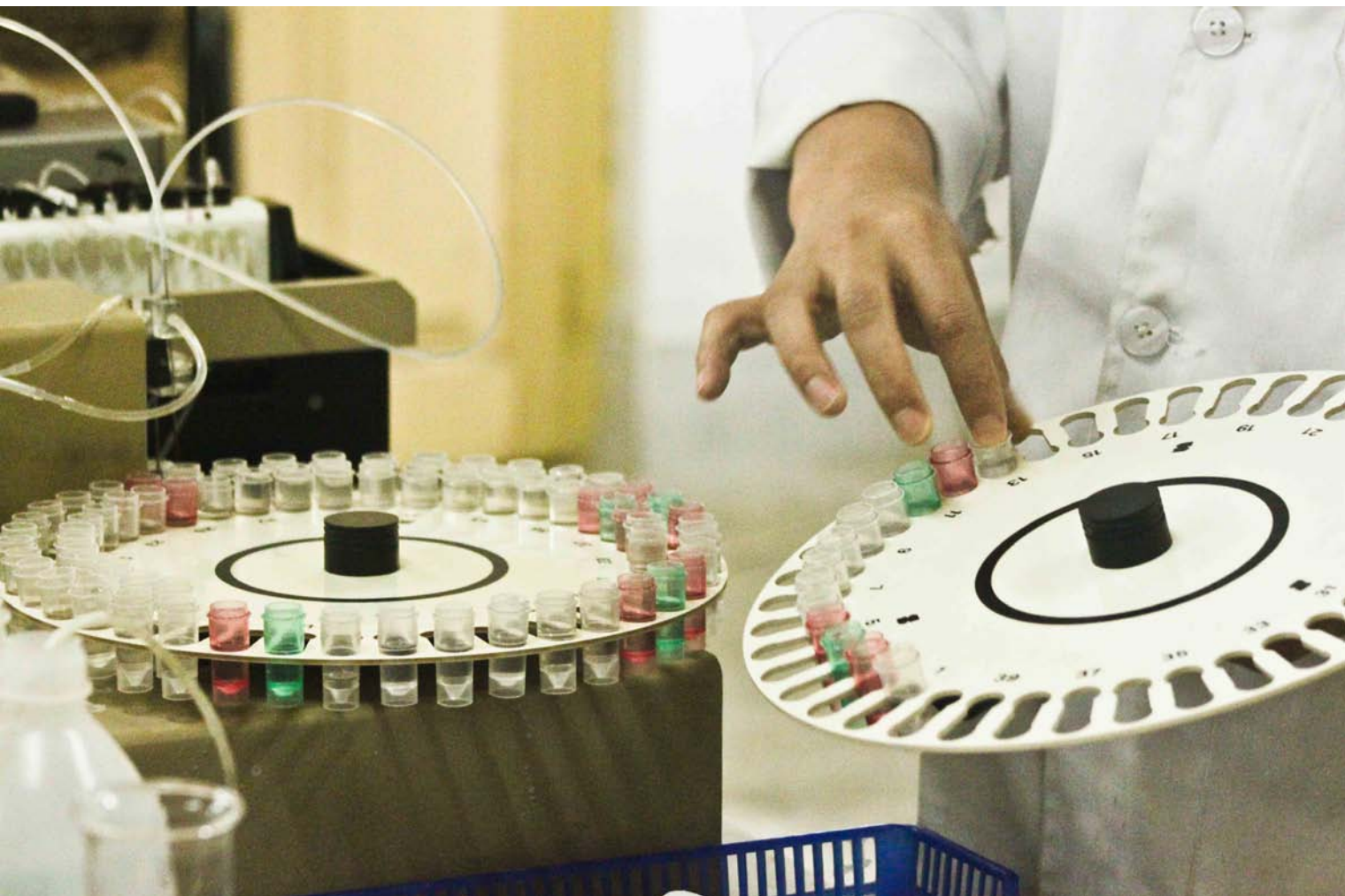


We will continue the green legacy of our enlightened monarchs through renewed efforts in the protection and conservation of our environmental asset. We will pursue sustainable policies while harnessing our natural resources through renewable projects, minimizing impacts of deforestation and biodiversity loss.



INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

11



Our party will keep aside considerable amount of resources and national budget for training and research areas for all levels of professionals in the country.

STRENGTHENING BHUTAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

12



12. STRENGTHENING BHUTAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

After coming out of the self-imposed isolation in the 1960s, Bhutan has maintained a progressive foreign policy with its neighbors and the international community at large based on the respect for international law and treaty obligations, and peaceful means to promote international peace and stability.

As a small nation without economic power and military might, Bhutan's sovereignty and security depends on the kind of foreign policy we pursue. Our enlightened monarchs have established cordial relations and cooperation with our neighboring countries, international bodies and organizations, ensuring Bhutan's sovereignty is safeguarded.

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa will continue to pursue a progressive foreign policy for Bhutan and further enhance our strong ties with old friends and build new relations and confidence with others.

12.1 Strengthen Indo-Bhutan relations

India is our most trusted neighbor and development partner. Ever since India and Bhutan started its friendship based on mutual trust and confidence, both the nations have come a long way. Today, the relation between India and Bhutan has become even stronger and an exemplary model of bilateral relation between a giant economy and a small country in the world.

Our party is committed to further strengthen the close ties, friendly relations and economic cooperation with India. We will diversify areas of cooperation, enhance people-to-people interactions and deepen our relationship with the Government of India and the people of India.

12.2 Formulate a comprehensive foreign policy

Our party will engage various stakeholders in the government, academicians, researchers and foreign policy experts to come up with a comprehensive foreign policy of Bhutan. This is important since no matter which political party comes to power, Bhutan's foreign policy must serve the strategic economic needs and national interest of the country.

In pursuing the foreign policy, our party will place utmost importance to national security and territorial integrity, economic advancement and development, national stature and prestige, and national interest and influence in the global affairs.

12.3 Renew ties with regional and international partners

Our party will promote regional cooperation, international co-operation, peaceful settlement of disputes and adhere to the UN Charter and other international treaties. We will promote economic diplomacy at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to spur the country's development. We will continue to promote

goodwill with the international community on the basis of peace, cooperation, and the sovereign equality of states.

We are committed to play a constructive role in regional and global affairs and in particular to further strengthen the close and collaborative relationship and economic cooperation with neighboring countries.

12.4 Enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulates, articulates and implements Bhutan's foreign policy. This calls for proper co-ordination as well as considerable resources. Implementation of a successful foreign policy will require adequately trained staff with professional abilities and skills. Staff deployed in the ministry must possess adequate skills to ensure professional execution of the ministry's mandate.

Therefore, our party will promote foreign service cadre and introduce specialized foreign service trainings for diplomats to ensure that they receive appropriate skills and have

the professional capacity to discharge their responsibilities.

We will also ensure that officers deployed to the diplomatic service have proper academic and professional qualifications, as well as appropriate experience in their areas of competence.

Our party will put in place a system of appointing senior career diplomats, who have vast experience in foreign affairs, as ambassadors to achieve the country's foreign policy objectives.

12.5 Promote economic partnerships and international Trade

Our party will pursue diplomacy that places emphasis on building economic and trade partnerships with other nations. In addition to regional co-operation, our party will take up international initiatives aimed at consolidating trade and economic relations globally to achieve the country's developmental goals by building global economic partnerships.



Druk Chirwang Tshogpa
 Thimphu, Bhutan
 Tel.: +975-2-334508/09
 Mobile: +975-17161952/77161952
 Fax: +975-2-334507
 Email: drukchirwangtshogpa@gmail.com

www.dct.bt