

**NA Elections
2023-24**



CONTRACT WITH BHUTAN

13th Plan Plus 13 Pledges

For a better Druk Yul.
The promise we will deliver.





East-west highway





CONTRACT WITH BHUTAN

13th Plan Plus 13 Pledges

The PDP manifesto - titled “**13th Plan Plus 13 Pledges**” is our statement that as an elected government we have the primary duty to take charge over the 13th plan besides the party manifesto. The 13th plan and the 13 pledge manifesto should complement each other in achieving our national goals. As a political party mandated with the charge of governance, PDP believes that as much as it must accomplish its pledges, it is duty-bound to execute the 13th plan. The PDP government will have the responsibility to consolidate and align the 13th plan and the Manifesto to the greater goals of our country. The government shall also be responsible to mobilise adequate finances and use the funds with prudence in achieving both the five year plan and its election pledges.

For a better Druk Yul.
The promise we will deliver.





“As a nation, we are at an inflection point. Our actions today will determine the course of our future, and put us either in the path of success or failure. There will not be any more opportunities, and we have no choice but to work with the greatest sense of urgency.”

His Majesty The King
8th Session of the Third Parliament



Contents

06 Message from the President

08 PDP's election symbol

09 Reasons to choose PDP

11 PDP's slogan

12 PDP's team

14 The past

16 The future



Message from the President



My dear fellow Bhutanese,

We are in the midst of unprecedented challenges. Our nation's economy is teetering on the brink of collapse. With an average growth rate of just 1.7% in the past five years, our economy is at its worst in our recent history. Private sector, our main driver of growth, has become stagnant, with many businesses either closed or operating at reduced capacity. Youth unemployment has hit a record high of 28.6% (NSB, 2022). Public debt is at its highest, particularly non-hydro debt at a whopping Nu. 108 billion (MoF). Foreign currency reserve has depleted to a level that threatens to breach

the constitutional requirement. Fiscal deficits have widened while national revenue stream has dwindled.

A total of 80,614 Bhutanese people live in poverty in 2022 (NSB, 2022). That is, almost one in eight Bhutanese is struggling to meet their basic needs for food and other basic necessities. Development in our rural areas has nearly come to a standstill. To make matters worse, in recent years, an unprecedented number of Bhutanese, including professionals and skilled individuals, have been leaving the country in search of better economic opportunities abroad. This has put immense pressure on public service delivery, affecting our hospitals, schools, and public institutions.

These unprecedented economic challenges and mass exodus of Bhutanese are happening at a time when Bhutan is experiencing a steep decline in fertility rate, which currently stands at 1.8%, below the replacement rate of 2.1. If we are unable to reverse these trends, the very viability of our nation will be in jeopardy. If we do not course correct immediately, the very survival and sovereignty of our beloved nation will be at stake.

Our Druk Yul is a house cracked that beckons to be rebuilt. And we cannot afford to be complacent. We cannot be laid back. We need to act, and act



now, with courage and determination. As a nation, we have lost precious five years. We cannot afford to repeat the same mistakes again. The next five years are crucial for us to rebuild – get our economy back on track, enable private businesses to thrive, increase job opportunities, revitalize our education and healthcare systems, uplift the poor, empower our public servants, transform agriculture, and boost national revenue generation. We must strengthen our economy not only to retain our valuable human resources at home but also entice those who have migrated overseas to return and actively participate in nation building.

Bhutan's unique approach to nation building and development, encapsulated in the noble philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) promulgated by the visionary Fourth Druk Gyalpo, is admired globally. GNH is recognized as a 21st century development model worthy of emulation worldwide. PDP believes that GNH should continue to be the springboard to enhance peace, prosperity, and happiness for all Bhutanese in our collective journey to become a developed nation.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, and PDP's

manifesto – 'A Contract with Bhutan' is ambitious and unprecedented, with a clear goal to transform Bhutan into a developed nation in the next five years. It is a manifesto that responds to the hopes and aspirations of all Bhutanese to serve the Tsa Wa Sum. This manifesto is borne out of the aspirations and needs expressed by people in 20 dzongkhags and 205 gewogs during our extensive consultations with the people across the country.

I am honored to present our manifesto-Contract with Bhutan, with hope that it will instil renewed confidence and optimism for a flourishing life for every Bhutanese. I believe it will empower every citizen to believe in and strive towards a better Druk Yul.

We will not mince words. We will not merely make promises. We will deliver on our promises, through hard work, uncompromising resolve, and unwavering commitment. PDP has delivered before when our economy was in dire straits. And we will deliver again. I appeal to my fellow Bhutanese to come together to collectively build our beloved Druk Yul into a developed nation that we all can be proud of. This is PDP's promise to the People of Bhutan.

Tshering Tobgay



PDP's election symbol



PDP's election symbol is a white horse trotting confidently. The horse is a strong, sturdy and a resilient companion of that serves with dedication and commitment. Like the horse, PDP is resolved to serve the country, people and the King with unwavering dedication.

The white colour of the horse symbolises clarity of vision and purity in service. It indicates PDP's quest to serve the nation's vision with uncompromising commitment.

Reasons to choose PDP



1. The President

Our President DASHO Tshering Tobgay is a leader of action, not empty words. He will not 'sweet talk' or mince words but serve with deeds. Bhutan deserves a Prime Minister who can proudly represent our nation on the global stage, shoulder to shoulder with rest of the world in vision, leadership, and talent. In the last five years, even as a private citizen, our President has never failed to respond to the call of the nation. When COVID struck the nation, he volunteered as a DeSuup and served on the frontlines in the southern borders. When economic crises loomed, he tirelessly travelled across many countries to seek potential investors for Bhutan. Our President has the leadership abilities, vision, experience of managing national crises, and above all, the commitment and dedication to steer Bhutan to greater heights.



2. The Experience

With our experience in governance, we can begin work on the first day of assuming office. We bring a wealth of experience, with a cumulative 15 years in various roles in national affairs, having served in government, opposition, and as active observers outside parliament. As a two-member opposition, PDP provided important constitutional checks and balances to a powerful government. As a governing party, PDP rebuilt a broken economy, executed the 11th Five Year Plan, and delivered on its promises. As PDP stepped down, we developed the 12th Plan and ensured a smooth transition of power. As a party outside the parliament, we continued to provide checks on the government and offer alternative policy options.



3. The Team

Our team comprises candidates with extensive experience in governance, with many having served as ministers, parliamentarians, government secretaries, executives, and leaders in corporate and business companies. Our candidates bring with them a rich pool of knowledge and experience in governance, legislation, policy-making, and innovative business solutions. Chosen among many aspiring candidates, PDP has put together a formidable team, in fact the best team in its 15-year history. A distinct characteristic of our candidates is our collective aspiration to build a better Druk Yul, fortified by our conviction and commitment to wholeheartedly serve the Tsa Wa Sum.





4. The Track Record

PDP inherited an economy that was reeling under many challenges, including frozen credits, depleted rupee reserve, import bans, and a GDP growth that had slumped to record low of 2.05% (NSB 2013). Through an ambitious economic stimulus plan, PDP successfully revived the economy and addressed all the challenges. Not only did we execute an ambitious Nu.225 billion 11th Five Year Plan, we also fulfilled our election pledges. During PDP's government, our nation enjoyed a stable economy for five years.



5. The Manifesto

Our manifesto – ‘A Contract with Bhutan’ is bold, ambitious, and unparalleled, with a clear goal to transform Bhutan into a developed nation in the next five years. It is a manifesto borne out of the collective aspirations of the people of Bhutan. It is a manifesto that responds to the needs and aspirations of all Bhutanese people. It is a manifesto that represents our unwavering commitment to rebuild and transform our nation and empower our people for a prosperous future. This is PDP's contract with the people of Bhutan - the promise for a better Druk Yul.





For a better Druk Yul. The promise we will deliver.

In the vision of His Majesty is our Druk Yul where every citizen continues to enjoy peace, progress, and prosperity. Every generation of Bhutanese bears the sacred responsibility to participate in the nation building process and contribute towards the realization of His Majesty's vision. Throughout history, successive generations of our forefathers and leaders have passed on a united nation that is much stronger and better than the one they inherited. And this did not happen by mere coincidence. It required unwavering dedication, commitment, and sacrifices to make Druk Yul better.

Today, Bhutan is in the midst of unprecedented challenges. Our economy is in crisis, our private sector is stagnant, and thousands of our youth are unemployed. We are witnessing a never seen before exodus of Bhutanese leaving the country in search of better opportunities. Our education system is failing, and our healthcare services are strained due to shortages of doctors, nurses, and technicians. Our farmlands are left fallow even as we spend billions on food imports. Public confidence in our system has hit rock bottom. Our people are losing hope. Our nation is faced with a grave existential crisis.

Yet, amidst these daunting challenges, Druk Yul exudes assurance – an assurance that, just like our forefathers, we have the ability to rise up to the challenge, overcome obstacles, and make Druk Yul better to be passed on to our children, the custodians of our future. But this will not happen by mere coincidence. It will require the same level of diligence, dedication, and determination that characterized the efforts of our forefathers.

PDP's slogan "*For a Better Druk Yul. The Promise We will Deliver*" is an aspiration derived from the Royal Vision and inspired by the strength and resilience of our forefathers who have shown that Bhutan can thrive and flourish despite challenges and adversities. PDP calls upon every Bhutanese to join us in advancing His Majesty's vision to ensure lasting peace, progress, and prosperity in our beloved nation by making Druk Yul better. Alongside every fellow Bhutanese, PDP shall commit its efforts "For a Better Druk Yul." This is a promise we will deliver!

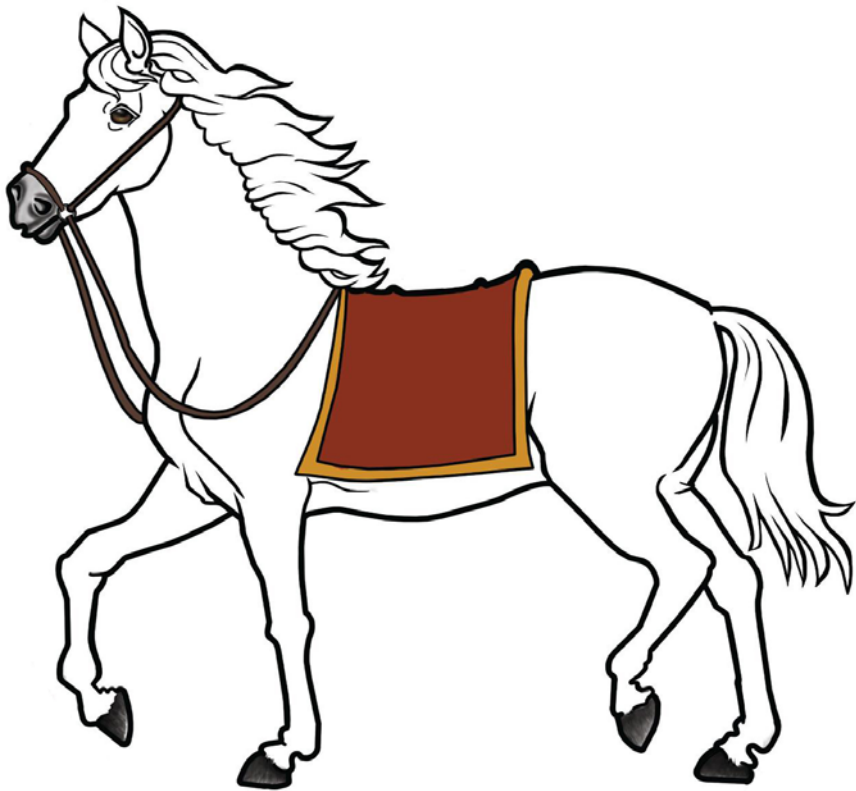


PDP's team

The team brings in wide range of experience in the matters of governance, parliamentary affairs, public policies, economic programming, business and organizational management. Our team comprise of:

1. Former Prime Minister **(1)**
2. Former Ministers **(7)**
3. Former Members of Parliament **(9)**
4. Former Government Secretaries **(1)**
5. Former Dzongdags/Directors/Director Generals **(7)**
6. CEOs of corporations and companies **(2)**
7. Businesses and Entrepreneurs **(10)**
8. Senior Civil Servants **(6)**
9. Former Program Officer, INGO **(1)**
10. Teacher **(2)**
11. Armed Force/Medical Doctor **(1)**





Highlights of PDP's achievements from 2013 - 2018

1. Rebuilt a collapsing economy

In 2013, PDP inherited an economy that was reeling under the rupee crisis, soaring inflation, frozen credit, import bans, and minimal business activity. We revitalized the economy with a Nu.5 billion economic stimulus plan and the subsequent implementation of an ambitious 11th Five Year Plan, recording a 7% GDP growth rate. Private sector business bounced back and boomed with substantial investments in infrastructure and five mega-hydropower projects. Non-hydro debt saw a decreasing trend for the first time, from 51 billion to 37 billion and INR reserve increased from 1,500 million to 18,500 million, taking the reserve from USD 920 million to USD 1.2 billion beyond the constitutional requirement while interests were reduced for the first time in history of our financial institutions.

2. Executed an ambitious 11th Five Year Plan

PDP government successfully executed a Nu. 225 billion 11th Five Year Plan, leading to the construction of critical infrastructure such as roads, airports, hospitals, and schools. These development activities had far reaching impacts on the lives and livelihoods of people, creating jobs, increasing business licenses, and reducing poverty to a record low of 8.2% (NSB 2017).

3. Empowered our rural economy

Our special focus on rural development yielded positive results - increased economic activities in villages, enhanced mechanization and farm productivity, blacktopping of Gewog center roads, and introduction of special crop insurance scheme and special energy subsidy for rural households. To bolster decentralization efforts, we allocated an annual development grant of Nu. 2 million to each Gewog, enabling thousands of development projects in villages and boosting the capacity and confidence of local governments to take charge of development in their own communities.

2013



4. Revitalized the social sector

Health and education sectors received the most budgetary provisions. About five hospitals were built across the country. Specialized medical education programs, including PG specialization through KGUMSB and MBBS study initiatives, were introduced to address the shortage of doctors. The procurement of two helicopters during PDP government's tenure facilitated the evacuation of approximately 1,000 medical emergencies. We established 63 central schools, providing access to quality education to about 70,000 students. The annual teacher professional development program enhanced the competence and commitment of 10,000 teachers. The national curriculum review initiative resulted in streamlining of our curriculum to the needs of the 21st century. We also initiated the digitalization of learning resources.



5. Enabled an accountable governance

To promote transparency and accountability, PDP initiated the weekly 'Meet the Press' program, where the entire cabinet engaged with the media, responding to their questions. Embracing a zero-tolerance policy against corruption, PDP proactively facilitated the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate corruption allegations against two of its cabinet members. The Prime Minister personally visited all 20 Dzongkhags at least five times to finalize the 11th Five Year Plan, sign annual performance agreements, and conduct mid-term reviews of plan activities. He also visited each of the 205 Gewogs to oversee gewog development and engage in consultations with the people. To forge a transparent and accountable governance, new programs such as the Government Performance Management System (GPMS) and Government to Citizen (G2C) programs were initiated.



Pledge

01

Economy - Rebuild and thrive
for a developed Bhutan





“The economic crisis we are facing today poses a grave existential threat to our nation. If we do not course correct immediately, the very survival and sovereignty of our beloved nation will be at stake. We have no choice but to work harder, with courage and determination, to rescue our nation from the brink of collapse. And extraordinary challenges call for extraordinary measures. The next five years are crucial to rebuild our economy. We need to take bold and brave decisions to revive and revitalize our economy and put it back on a flourishing trajectory.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



The past five years have taken a heavy toll on our economy, pushing it to the brink of collapse. The average GDP growth over this period, a mere 1.5% (*Kuensel: 17th August 2023*), marks the lowest point since Bhutan began measuring GDP. Our total public debt, as of March 2023, stands alarmingly at Nu. 267 billion (MoF), which is a whopping 132% of our GDP. This total debt includes non-hydro debt of Nu.108 billion, a staggering increase of over 100% compared to the 11th plan period's Nu.37 billion. Unemployment rate has surged to 5.9% (NSB 2022), with youth unemployment reaching a distressing all-time high of 28.6% (NSB 2022). Meanwhile, our foreign currency reserves have dwindled to just US\$ 574 million (RMA) as of June 2023, posing a threat to our constitutional obligation to maintain sufficient reserve for essential imports over 12 months.

In the past five years, virtually every business has endured severe financial setbacks, with many losing hope of recovery. Families are grappling desperately to make ends meet, while businesses are battling relentlessly to stay afloat. PDP firmly believes that we must not only rebuild our economy but also seize this opportunity to transform Bhutan into a developed nation, grounded in creativity, innovation, and sustainability and responsive to both immediate and long-term needs of our nation and our people. This transformation will demand political acumen, courage, vision, and the wisdom to make bold decisions, steering us towards a new trajectory of growth and progress. The challenges are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. In this section, PDP proudly presents 12-point Economic Transformation Plan.



To rebuild and revitalize our economy and transform our country into a developed nation, PDP pledges to achieve the following Economic Goals and Key Initiatives:



Economic goals:

1. Increase the GDP from US\$ 2.5 billion to an ambitious US\$ 5 billion (which includes the investments in Hydropower in the next five years).
2. Increase GDP per capita from US\$ 3,400 to US\$ 12,000 in the next 10 years.
3. Create full employment (97.5%) in the next five years, with annualized creation of 10,000 jobs, including 2,000 jobs in the digital sector.
4. Boost private sector investment from 40% to a robust 60% in the next five years.
5. Increase the contribution of manufacturing sector to GDP from 6% to a substantial 30% in the next five years.
6. Increase the number of tourist arrivals to an annual average of 300,000 tourists, with 50% originating from third countries, thereby revitalizing our tourism industry.
7. Increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Nu.43 billion to Nu.500 billion in the next five years.



Key initiatives:

1

Establish Economic Development Board (EDB)

A high-powered and dynamic Economic Development Board (EDB) will be established with the Prime Minister as its chairperson. The primary mandate of the EDB will be to fast track the establishment of businesses and Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) while enhancing the efficiency of government-private sector collaborations. The Prime Minister will personally spearhead efforts to attract FDIs in the country and facilitate domestic investments. The EDB will serve as a fast-track-gateway for FDIs and business investments for Bhutanese returning from overseas.



2

Implement Nu. 15 billion economic stimulus plan

PDP shall promptly mobilize Nu.15 billion immediately upon assuming government leadership and utilize this stimulus fund to facilitate the achievement of the macro-economic goals. To execute this initiative effectively, a dedicated Stimulus Plan Task Force will be established to craft a comprehensive plan and oversee its implementation. The stimulus fund will be used in the following areas, including but not limited to:

2.1 Provide loan deferment support and introduce special loan schemes tailored for businesses that are yet to fully rebound from the adverse impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in consultation with RMA.

2.2 Establish and execute programs initiated by the EDB

2.3 Establish downstream industries essential for supplying goods and services to hydropower development and the 13th plan.

2.4 Accelerate the establishment and up-scaling of start-ups and Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs).



2.5 Promote and support export businesses and import-substitution enterprises.

2.6 Promote and support domestic manufacturing enterprises.

2.7 Inject liquidity into the Financial Institutions in consultation with RMA.

2.8 Introduce special measures to support the following:

1. Women entrepreneurs
2. Youth entrepreneurs
3. Farmers
4. CSIs
5. Film and entertainment industry
6. Construction sector
7. IT sector
8. Tourism sector
9. Hotels and restaurants
10. Public Transport sector



3

Accelerate hydropower and renewable energy development**Hydropower:**

Bhutan's inherent competitive advantage lies in its immense hydropower potential. To achieve our ambitious goal of becoming a developed nation within five years, we must significantly increase our energy supply. Hydropower continues to play a vital role in uplifting Bhutan's economy, generating substantial national revenue, and supporting local manufacturing industries. Given our vast hydropower potential, PDP is committed to harnessing this natural resource and maintaining Bhutan's competitive edge in hydropower development. To this end, we will execute the following:

- 3.1** Undertake the development of six mega hydropower projects (Nyera Amari, Dorjilung, Bunakha, Kuri Gongri, Chamkharchu and Sunkosh).
- 3.2** Undertake development of seven small hydropower projects (Suchhu, Yungichhu, Burgangchhu, Jomori, Gamri-I, Bindu I and II, Dangchu, Begana, Dagachu and Gongri-Jerichhu pumped storage project).
- 3.3** Prioritize the completion of the PHPA-I and the PHPA-II Hydropower Projects.
- 3.4** Expedite the completion of Kholongchu Hydropower Project on priority, which has been stalled for several years.
- 3.5** Develop five mini hydro/other renewable projects at strategically feasible locations to stimulate local economic growth.





Renewable Energy:

Bhutan boasts substantial untapped renewable energy potential, including 12,000 MW of solar power, 761 MW of wind power, and abundant biomass energy resources. Recognizing this immense potential, PDP commits to harness 500 MW of renewable energy through the following initiatives:

3.6 Develop a 500 MW solar farm.

3.7 Initiate solar rooftop projects to harness solar energy at individual and community levels.





4

Fast track establishment of manufacturing units

Leveraging Bhutan's competitive edge in cheap power, availability of mineral resources, and access to huge markets in the neighboring countries, we will attract private investments in manufacturing units through the following strategic measures:

4.1 Fast track the approval of the establishment of manufacturing plants by creating a one-window approval system under the Economic Development Board, ensuring a swift and efficient process.

4.2 Fast track the approval of land allocation in designated industrial estates and create additional industrial estates in feasible locations across the country.

4.3 To maintain and optimize Bhutan's competitive advantage in terms of affordable power, we will conduct a comprehensive review of existing power tariff regime and ensure that our industries continue to benefit from this vital competitive edge.

4.4 Institute a Special Support Program to engage the private sector in manufacturing and supplying essential goods and services for Bhutan's rapidly expanding portfolio, which includes numerous hydropower projects and an ambitious 13th Plan. Some of the manufacturing needs include the following:

For hydropower sector:

- Steel
- Cement
- Hydro-mechanical and hydro-electro mechanical components
- Repairs
- Software



For central schools

- Textile – ghos, kiras, tracksuits, etc.
- Shoes, beddings, toothbrushes
- Books and other stationeries
- Teaching aids

New product/agriculture

- Drone manufacturing
- Green Hydrogen
- Synthetic fuel
- EV assembly
- Glass Reinforced Concrete
- Green Fertilizer
- Chain Link fence manufacturing
- Power tiller assembly and component manufacturing
- Animal feed (both cattle and poultry)
- Photovoltaic cells and solar panels



Health

- Pharmaceuticals and other hospital accessories
- Medical cottons



5

Equitable and responsible mining

Bhutan is endowed with abundant mineral resources, and the mining sector has the potential to be a major driver of the economy. Drawing from our nation's five decades of experience in mining, we possess the knowledge and capacity to harness these resources for the greater good. The PDP is committed to ensuring that our mineral wealth benefits the nation as a whole. We will be mindful of the disproportionate gains a few individuals may enjoy while ensuring that our rich mineral deposits are optimally used for the national interest through the following approaches:

5.1 Enact a rationalized mining policy that recognizes backlogs inherent in the mining industry and identify sustainable and prudent solutions for the optimal use of our economic minerals.

5.2 Introduce online system with defined timelines to fast track the application process without compromising quality standards.

5.3 Review the existing mining policy to attract investments for mineral resource optimization and provide equitable opportunities for the private sector.

5.4 Promote and encourage private sector involvement in value addition of economic minerals, and alternatively permit export of minerals in their raw form, subject to the levy of rationalized tax.

5.5 Promote and support local communities to actively participate in and have ownership of mines and quarries, ensuring that the benefits of mining are shared equitably.



6 Reclaim responsible tourism

Bhutan’s tourism sector is a vital asset that not only creates wealth and jobs but also showcases our nation’s rich heritage to the rest of the world. The benefits of tourism sector spreads across all levels of society.

However, in the past five years, the tourism sector has suffered major setbacks, affecting various sectors such as hospitality, tourism transportation, handicrafts, and the livelihoods of approximately 50,000 people directly or indirectly associated with tourism. The PDP shall reclaim tourism sector as the foremost revenue and employment generator in the country, making it an all-inclusive sector. We shall implement the following strategies to make the tourism sector robust, resilient, and sustainable:



6.1 Increase tourist arrivals at an annualized number of 300,000 tourists, out of which 50% would be dollar-paying visitors.

6.2 Review the Tourism policy including the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) levy and its rules and regulations to eliminate barriers hindering the growth and development of the tourism sector and enable participation of various stakeholders in the sector. The revised Tourism policy will also specify the utilization of SDF proceeds, such as investments in education, environmental conservation, and tourism infrastructure.

6.3 Promote tourism in Dzongkhags with less or no tourists arrivals through the following strategies



- » Introduce special promotional measures to incentivize tour operators bringing tourists to Dzongkhags that traditionally receive fewer visitors, especially in the east and south of the country.
- » Expand and modernize Yonphula, Bumthang and Gelephu Airports.
- » Mandate the Dzongkhag Administrations to develop tourism packages and promote tourism in the dzongkhags as part of the economic development initiative of the dzongkhag.
- » Provide special policy, financial and tax incentives to encourage the construction of tourist hotels, restaurants, and village homestays.
- » Open borders and establish exit and entry points for tourists in the following border towns:
 - Samdrup Jongkhar
 - Nganglam, Pemagatshel
 - Gelephu
 - Samtse
 - Panbang, Zhemgang
 - Jomotshangkha, Samrup Jongkhar

6.4 Undertake concerted tourism marketing with the Prime Minister personally leading the marketing initiative involving embassies.

6.5 Conduct feasibility studies for airports in the east and south, capable of servicing Airbus aircraft to boost tourism in these regions.

6.6 Support development of all tourism products and tourist amenities and facilities to ensure high touristic experience through private sector participation.



6.7 Support production of international films and documentaries on culture, environment, lifestyle and Bhutanese arts and tradition as part of tourism product development and to promote Bhutan as a tourism destination.

6.8 Professionalise guides through the following:

- » Support capacity development of our guides in the Bhutanese culture, tradition, ethnography, religion and foreign languages.
- » Support professional enhancement of the tour guides to lead international tours.
- » Establish training linkages with institutions abroad where our guides can be sent for training.

6.9 Support Arts and Crafts:

- » Establish Craft villages to exhibit our Arts and Crafts and as sales outlets in the following Dzongkhags:
 - Thimphu
 - Paro
 - Pemagatshel
 - TrashiYangtse
 - And other viable locations in the country
- » Streamline processes to ease the purchase and export of our artefacts and crafts to enhance sale.



7

Attract Foreign Direct Investments

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) serves as a catalyst for various critical aspects of our nation's development, including the influx of foreign exchange reserves, infusion of investments into key sectors, job creation, and the revitalization of our economy. Recognizing the pivotal role of FDI in the economic growth and sustainability of a small nation like ours, PDP commits to substantially increase FDI inflow from Nu.43 billion to Nu.500 billion in the next five years. To realize this ambitious FDI target, we will implement the following strategic approaches:

7.1 Establish Special Economic Zones/Autonomous Economic Areas and Export Processing Zones to foster a favorable environment for attracting FDIs.

7.2 Review and revise all policies and regulations that hinder FDI inflow in the country and develop a conducive regulatory environment for FDI.

7.3 Revise FDI policy to enable Bhutanese entrepreneurs to invest in businesses outside the country, with a particular emphasis on providing targeted support for enterprises seeking to expand Bhutanese businesses into international markets.

7.4 The Economic Development Board (EDB), with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson, shall be entrusted with the mandate to ensure achievement of the Nu. 500 billion FDI target.

7.5 Allow FDI in small and medium-sized investments, particularly in agriculture and ICT sector.

7.6 Establish special windows and channels to attract and facilitate investments from Bhutanese citizens residing abroad.

7.7 Allow establishment of casinos in the southern border towns as part of a broader strategy to attract investment and tourism.



8

Policy reforms and ease of doing business

Our ambitious plan to rebuild and transform our economy can only be successful if there is conducive policy environment and ease of doing business. We commit to create enabling policy landscape and improve ease of doing business significantly in the next five years. All regulatory burden and unnecessary processes and bottlenecks shall be eliminated and streamlined to support start-ups and growth of our businesses. To achieve the Ease of Doing Business target, we shall undertake the following initiatives:

Policy reforms (including monetary and fiscal):

8.1 Review and amend FDI policy, especially on the following provisions:

- » General conditions
- » Access to foreign exchange
- » Expatriate employment
- » Investment protection
- » Compliance

8.2 Establish robust e-payment gateways.

8.3 Review cooling period for foreign workers.

8.4 Review external commercial borrowing guidelines

8.5 Review and reform banking and financial systems to make it private sector friendly in consultation with RMA.

8.6 Permit private broadcasting.

8.7 Ease foreign workers recruitment process.



8.8 Revise Rules and Regulations to relax wetland utilization and to ease the processes for conversion as permitted by the Land Act.

8.9 Develop policy to promote investment in mineral resource optimization in mining except for strategic minerals.

Ease of doing business:

8.10 Create a 'one stop service delivery point' for all public services and a dedicated 'one stop service delivery point for businesses'.

8.11 Ensure that by next five years the rating on public service delivery is 4.5 rated on a scale of 1-5 indicating a high satisfaction on the public service delivery.

8.12 Undertake a comprehensive review of all the rules, regulations and processes that impact the conduct of businesses and remove all unnecessary regulatory burden and processes.



9

Creating demand for new products

Harnessing Bhutan's competitive edge and leveraging on advanced, cutting-edge technology, we will place special emphasis on promoting and supporting new products development. We shall actively support, promote, and facilitate the development of innovative new products through financial investments, formulation of favorable policies, and engaging interested private sector partners through various collaborative models in the following emerging product categories and sectors:

9.1 For hydropower sector

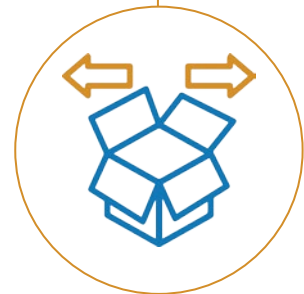
- » Steel
- » Cement
- » Hydro-mechanical and Hydro-electro mechanical components
- » Repairs
- » Software

9.2 For central schools

- » Textile – ghos, kiras, tracksuits etc.
- » Shoes, beddings, toothbrushes and tooth pastes
- » Books and other stationeries
- » Teaching aids

9.3 New product

- » Drone manufacturing
- » Green Hydrogen
- » Synthetic fuel
- » EV assembly
- » Glass Reinforced Concrete
- » Photovoltaic cells and solar panels



9.4 Health

- » Pharmaceuticals and other hospital accessories
- » Medical equipment
- » Medical cottons



10

Empowering Cottage and Small Industries (CSI)

Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs) serve as the cornerstone of a flourishing economy, contributing significantly to job creation, income generation, and overall health of the economy. CSI is the foundation for a thriving economy. In Bhutan, a staggering 95% of businesses fall under the CSI category, employing a substantial portion of our population. These CSIs not only play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable distribution of national income but also serve as crucial links in both the backward and forward stages of our economic value chain. Although the role of CSI in the economy is critical, the sector is plagued with numerous challenges. Access to finance remains a persistent hurdle, while issues such as limited market access, high logistics costs, competition from imported goods, a scarcity of skilled human resources, and supply chain and raw material constraints further compound their difficulties.

PDP believes that CSIs in Bhutan have immense potential to transform our economy as we embark on our journey towards becoming a developed nation. It is imperative that we empower CSIs to fulfill their true potential as vibrant pillars of a thriving economy, characterized by job creation, equitable income distribution, innovative solutions, and enhanced national wealth. To empower the CSI, we will:

10.1 Recognize CSI in Bhutan as the foundation for a thriving economy through policy directives and identify CSI as an industry that deserves the same attention as other more formalized sectors such as construction and tourism industries.

10.2 Establish a dedicated CSI window that is specialized to serve the financial needs of CSIs, such as access to investment fund, working capital, up-scaling fund, venture capital, and other tailored financial incentives and packages.



- 10.3** Allow special FDIs and partnership arrangement between foreign businesses and our CSIs and introduce special incentives for such collaborations.
- 10.4** Create start-up and incubation centers in all the larger Dzongkhags to nurture and support the growth of new CSI enterprises through the CSI window and other relevant agencies.
- 10.5** Require all the larger Dzongkhags to formulate an economic development plan that features CSIs as key players. The plan will identify all the services and incentives offered to promote CSI development.
- 10.6** All the Dzongkhags will also be required to identify and allocate land on lease for the CSIs to establish their business enterprises.
- 10.7** Promote international export market for CSI products through various channels, such as the establishment of market outlets in major cities worldwide, starting with countries where Bhutanese embassies are located.
- 10.8** Make policy interventions to sustain the competitive advantage of the CSI products over imported alternatives.
- 10.9** The government, through its embassies and other agencies, shall actively engage in securing certification and accreditation of CSI products, whether for export or domestic sales.
- 10.10** Introduce “Buy Bhutanese Product” initiative, mandating all government agencies to procure Bhutanese products while encouraging others to do the same.
- 10.11** Support the creation of a common forum, association or body for the CSI sector that represents the entire CSI sector, ensuring a unified voice in dealings with the government, FDIs, and other relevant agencies.
- 10.12** Provide special support to informal businesses, hawkers, '*Kortshong*' and other vendors to enable them to operate and conduct their businesses with due recognition from all government agencies, including access to the same support provided to CSIs.



11

Dry ports, Craft villages and Special Economic Zones

The establishment of dry ports, crafts villages, and Special Economic Zones will invigorate trade and boost economic development in Bhutan. These initiatives have the potential to revolutionize Bhutan's economic landscape, facilitating efficient movement of goods, nurturing local craftsmanship, and attracting foreign investments. Further, these initiatives will help stimulate economic activity, generate employment opportunities, and bolster Bhutan's global competitiveness. To this end, we will:

11.1 Develop and operate five major dry ports at:

- » Nganglam, Pemagatshel
- » Pasakha, Phuentsholing
- » Samtse
- » Gelephu, Sarpang
- » Samdrup Jongkhar

11.2 Develop Samtse as a Special Economic Zone for manufacturing and export.

11.3 Establish Craft Village in:

- » Thimphu
- » Paro
- » Other viable locations around the country



12

Export promotion support

Increasing exports will not only enhance our global trade footprint but also bolster foreign exchange earnings and narrow trade deficits. PDP recognizes the pivotal role that exports of products and services play in fostering economic prosperity. By strategically supporting and promoting the export of our goods and services, we can diversify our export base and set out on a path towards sustainable economic growth.

To realize this, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- 12.1** Undertake strategic export marketing of our products and services through rigorous marketing, linkages and establishing of sale outlets in the region and abroad.
- 12.2** Institute regular cargo flights to facilitate exports and marketing of domestic produce and goods to international markets.
- 12.3** Initiate the development of cold storage facilities, warehouses, and auction yards in the Dzongkhags.
- 12.4** Government will engage directly with other countries to obtain necessary certifications for the export of our farm and agriculture produce.
- 12.5** Facilitate and streamline export processes at the gateways and airports, ensuring the seamless movement of goods to international markets.
- 12.6** Initiate discussions on signing free trade agreement with Bangladesh, Thailand, and Nepal.



Pledge

02

A Thriving Private Sector





“For far too long, the private sector has been touted as the engine of growth. It is time we put our money where our mouth is. It is time we put in concerted efforts to create an enabling environment for private sector growth and allow the private sector to play a pivotal role in driving our economy forward. And this requires visionary policies and the fortitude to make daring decisions. The moment has arrived for our private sector to unleash its full potential.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



A nation's economy is reflective of its private sector, a vital partner in the progress and development of the country. Rebuilding our economy will only be possible with a vibrant private sector, and we can create a vibrant private sector only through radical policy decisions. Toward this end, PDP will create a conducive ecosystem for our private sector to thrive and make meaningful contributions to creating wealth, generating jobs, enabling development, and stimulating our ailing economy. Towards the vision of a thriving private sector, PDP shall be guided by the following strategies in empowering our private sector:

1

Enabling private sector growth

The establishment of dry ports, crafts villages, and Special Economic Zones will invigorate trade and boost economic development in Bhutan. These initiatives have the potential to revolutionize Bhutan's economic landscape, facilitating efficient movement of goods, nurturing local craftsmanship, and attracting foreign investments. Further, these initiatives will help stimulate economic activity, generate employment opportunities, and bolster Bhutan's global competitiveness. To this end, we will:

- 1.1** Shift our economy from being primarily led by the public sector to one driven by the private sector. The role of Druk Holding and Investments (DHI) and State Owned Enterprises (SoEs) shall be limited to sectors with predominantly social mandates and those of strategic national importance.
- 1.2** Undertake privatization and divestments of SOEs to stimulate private sector growth and boost capital markets.
- 1.3** Identify and outsource government agency activities and functions that can be handled by private entities. Some of these activities are:
 - » Water supply
 - » Waste management
 - » Roads maintenance
 - » Vehicle road worthiness services



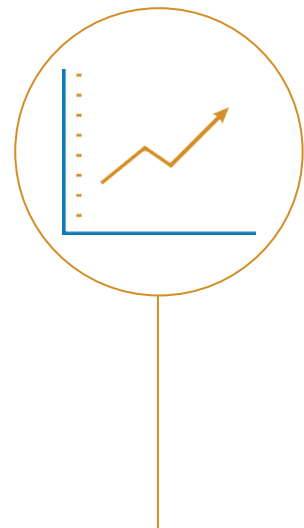
- 1.4** Revise FDI policy to facilitate partnerships between our private sector and FDIs, enabling joint ventures that bring in capital, expertise, and market access for Bhutanese products and services.
- 1.5** Revise FDI policy to enable Bhutanese entrepreneurs to invest in businesses outside the country, with a particular emphasis on providing targeted support for enterprises seeking to expand Bhutanese businesses into international markets.
- 1.6** Improve access to finance for private businesses by removing unreasonable barriers that prevent private businesses to access the much-needed finances.
- 1.7** In collaboration with the Royal Monetary Authority and Financial Institutions, review interest rates to ease the interest burden on credits and support the viability of businesses and projects.
- 1.8** Government shall actively seek export markets and facilitate trade for Bhutanese products and services with exports potential.
- 1.9** New growth sectors and avenues will especially be supported with tax incentives and any other measures to ensure success of the private sector ventures in these new sectors.
- 1.10** Private sector investments in rural economy will be supported through various government policy support and fiscal incentives.
- 1.11** Ease of doing business will be actively pursued through many approaches, including enhancing public service delivery and harmonization of acts, rules, policies and government processes.
- 1.12** Taxation policy and regulations shall be reviewed to rationalize taxes on land, property, business, vehicles and incomes.



Stimulus Plan for Private sector growth:

In our effort to rebuild the economy, we will be establishing a stimulus plan fund of Nu. 15 billion, a substantial portion of which will be allocated to support the revival and growth of the private sector. These funds will be utilized for various initiatives aimed at empowering and rejuvenating private businesses, including but not limited to:

- 1.13** Provide loan deferment and introduce special loan schemes tailored for businesses that are yet to fully rebound from the adverse impacts COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.14** Establish and execute programs initiated by the EDB.
- 1.15** Establish downstream industries essential for supplying goods and services to hydropower development and the 13th plan projects.
- 1.16** Accelerate the establishment and up-scaling of start-ups and Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs).
- 1.17** Promote and support export businesses and import-substitution enterprises.
- 1.18** Promote and support domestic manufacturing enterprises.
- 1.19** Inject liquidity into the Financial Institutions.
- 1.20** Introduce special measures to support the following:
 - » Women entrepreneurs
 - » Youth entrepreneurs
 - » Farmers
 - » CSIs
 - » Film and entertainment industry
 - » Construction sector
 - » IT sector
 - » Tourism sector
 - » Hotels and restaurants
 - » Public Transport sector



Targeted Private Sector Support:**Truckers and Taxi operators – That keep our economy moving**

Approximately 45% of the cost of production in Bhutan is attributed to transportation. Due to our challenging terrains and landlocked status, our businesses face the risk of losing their competitive edge due to high logistics costs when compared to global competitors. At the bottom of this economic pyramid are truckers and taxi operators who transport goods and people around the country and across the border. These trucks and taxis serve as a crucial link that can determine the success of our businesses and the economy at large.

Furthermore, a significant portion of the lower-income population depends on trucking and taxi operations for their livelihoods.

Recognizing the importance of safeguarding this livelihood source for truckers and taxi operators, PDP is committed to implementing measures that support and protect their wellbeing. As primary breadwinners, the livelihoods of truck drivers and taxi operators hinge on the sustainability and profitability of their businesses. To this end, PDP will implement the following initiatives to support and protect the livelihood of truck drivers and taxi operators:



1.21 For families with no other income sources, we will ease the Loan-to-Value (LTV) mortgage requirement, increasing it from 50% to 80% for the initial purchase or replacement of trucks or taxis.

1.22 Protect the viability of the truckers business by promoting fair carrying charges paid by the government and public corporations and monitor the carrying charges periodically to ensure that the rising cost of fuel is well considered.

1.23 Ensure that the transportation needs of government-owned corporations are met through private transporters and truckers, discouraging the procurement of separate fleet of trucks.

1.24 Establish an Indo-Bhutan office along the Indian Highway to provide assistance to travellers and truckers in distress, including those involved in accidents in consultation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and Home Affairs.



1.25 Revive and strengthen the stabilization fund, which will be used, amongst others, to maintain stable fuel prices within the country.

1.26 Promote EV taxis in the country through special incentives and financial subsidies.

1.27 Install adequate number of charging stations in major towns and along highways to ensure that the waiting time for EV vehicles to recharge does not exceed half an hour.

1.28 Promote convenient and more taxi parking spaces in urban areas.

Empowering Cottage and small Industries (CSI)

CSIs are the bedrock of a flourishing economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, income growth, and overall health of the economy. In Bhutan, 95% of businesses fall under the CSI category, making it the largest sector in terms of employment. CSIs also play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable income distribution and serving as vital links in both the forward and backward ends of the value chain within the economy. However, despite their critical role, CSIs in Bhutan face a multitude of challenges. Access to finance remains a persistent issue, hindering their growth. Additionally, challenges like limited market access, high logistical costs, competition from imported goods, lack of skilled labor, and supply chain and raw material constraints further compound their difficulties.

PDP believes that CSIs in Bhutan have immense potential to transform our economy as we embark our journey towards becoming a developed nation. It is imperative that we empower CSIs to fulfill their true potential as vibrant pillars of a thriving economy, characterized by job creation, equitable income distribution, innovative solutions, and enhanced national wealth. To empower the CSI, we will:

1.29 Recognize CSI in Bhutan as the foundation for a thriving economy through



policy directives and identify CSI as an industry that deserves the same attention as other more formalized sectors such as construction and tourism industries.

1.30 Establish a dedicated specialized CSI window that is mandated to serve the financial needs of CSIs, such as access to investment fund, working capital, up-scaling fund, venture capital, and other tailored financial incentives and packages.

1.31 Allow special FDIs and partnership arrangement between foreign businesses and our CSIs and introduce special incentives for such collaborations.

1.32 Create start-up and incubation centers in all the larger Dzongkhags to nurture and support the growth of new CSI enterprises through the CSI Bank and other relevant agencies.

1.33 Require all the larger Dzongkhags to formulate an economic development plan that features CSIs as key players. The plan will identify all the services and incentives offered to promote CSI development.

1.34 All the Dzongkhags will also be required to identify and allocate land on lease for the CSIs to establish their business enterprises.

1.35 Promote international export market for CSI products through various channels, such as the establishment of market outlets in major cities worldwide, starting with countries where Bhutanese embassies are located.

1.36 Make policy interventions to sustain the competitive advantage of the CSI products over imported alternatives.

1.37 The government, through its embassies and other agencies, shall actively engage in securing certification and accreditation of CSI products, whether for export or domestic sales.

1.38 Introduce “Buy Bhutanese Product” initiative, mandating all government agencies to procure Bhutanese products while encouraging others to do the same.

1.39 Support the creation of a common forum, association or body for the CSI sector that represents the entire CSI sector, ensuring a unified voice in dealings with the government, FDIs, and other relevant agencies.

1.40 Provide special support to informal businesses, hawkers, ‘Kortshong’ and other vendors to enable them to operate and conduct their businesses with due recognition from all government agencies, including access to the same support provided to CSIs.



Tourism and Hotel sector

Bhutan's tourism sector is a vital asset that not only creates wealth and jobs but also showcases our nation's rich heritage to the rest of the world. The benefits of tourism sector spreads across all levels of society. However, in the past five years, the tourism sector has suffered major setbacks, affecting various sectors such as hospitality, tourism transportation, handicrafts, and the livelihoods of approximately 50,000 people directly or indirectly associated with tourism. The PDP shall reclaim tourism sector as the foremost revenue and employment generator in the country, making it an all-inclusive sector. We shall implement the following strategies to make the tourism sector robust, resilient, and sustainable:

1.41 Increase tourist arrivals at an annualized number of 300,000 tourists, out of which 50% would be dollar-paying visitors.

1.42 Review the tourism policy including the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) levy and its rules and regulations to eliminate barriers hindering the growth and development of the tourism sector and enable participation of various stakeholders in the sector. The revised Tourism policy will also specify the utilization of SDF proceeds, such as investments in education, environmental conservation, and tourism infrastructure.

1.43 Promote tourism in dzongkhags with less or no tourists arrivals through the following strategies:

- » Introduce special promotional measures to incentivize tour operators bringing tourists to dzongkhags that traditionally receive fewer visitors, especially in the east and south of the country.
- » Expand and modernize the Yonphula, Bumthang and Gelephu Airports.



- » Mandate the Dzongkhag administrations to develop tourism packages and promote tourism in the dzongkhags as part of the economic development initiative of the dzongkhag.
- » Provide special policy, financial and tax incentives to encourage the construction of tourist hotels, restaurants, and village homestays.
- » Open up borders and establish exit and entry points for tourists in the following bordering towns:
 - SamdrupJongkhar
 - Nganglam, Pemagatshel
 - Gelephu
 - Samtse
 - Panbang, Zhemgang
 - Jomotshangkha, SamrupJongkhar

1.44 Undertake concerted tourism marketing with the Prime Minister personally leading the marketing initiative involving embassies. A significant budget shall be allocated from the SDF for these marketing efforts.

1.45 Conduct feasibility studies for airports in the east and south, capable of servicing Airbus aircraft to boost tourism in these regions.

1.46 Facilitate development of all tourism products and tourist amenities and facilities to ensure high touristic experience.

1.47 Support production of international films and documentaries on culture, environment, lifestyle and Bhutanese arts and tradition as part of tourism product development that can promote Bhutan as tourism destination.



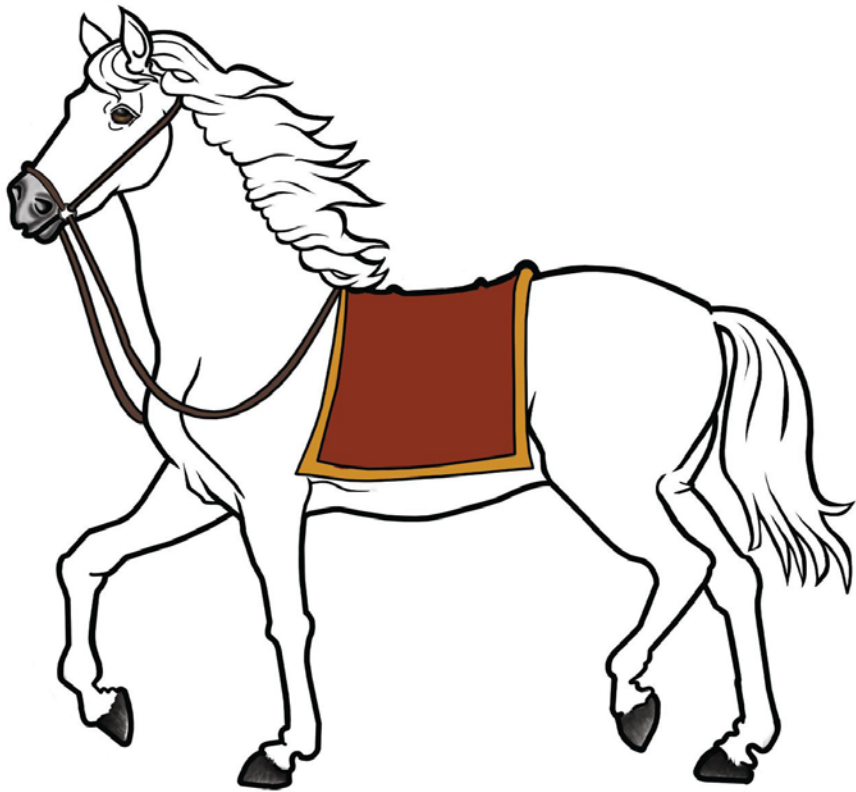
1.48 Professionalise guides through the following:

- » Support capacity development of our guides in the Bhutanese culture, tradition, ethnography, religion and foreign languages.
- » Support professional enhancement of the tour guides to lead international tours.
- » Establish training linkages with institutions abroad where our guides can be sent for training.

1.49 Support Arts and Crafts:

- » Establish Craft villages to exhibit our Arts and Crafts and as sales outlets in the following Dzongkhags:
 - Thimphu
 - Paro
 - and other viable locations in the country
- » Streamline processes to ease the purchase and export of our artefacts and crafts to enhance sale.





Pledge

03

Infrastructure -
Driver for Transformation





“Infrastructure development is indispensable for expediting economic growth, and as we prepare to become a developed nation in the next five years, critical infrastructure such as road networks, telecommunications, aviation, water supply, housing, and ICT will have to match up to the needs for a developed Bhutan. These infrastructures will enable us to not only revitalize our economy but also fast track growth and progress.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Infrastructure is the foundation of economic growth, and PDP is committed to giving it the special attention it deserves. We will give special focus on building critical infrastructure that would cater to the emerging needs of the ambitious goal of transforming Bhutan into a developed nation. Large-scale infrastructure development not only yields long-term benefits once completed and operational but also benefits the economy during the construction phase. Significant government investment in major infrastructure projects would give the much-needed stimulus to a stagnant economy while creating business opportunities for construction and allied enterprises and create job opportunities. Critical infrastructure will serve as the foundation that enables and empowers our economy to not only revive but also thrive. Under the critical infrastructure Development, we present seven Key Initiatives:

1

Hydropower plants

Bhutan is uniquely blessed with comparative advantage to harness our running rivers. The six hydropower plants that are completed and operational have been major contributors to our national revenue and continue to drive economic growth. PDP will continue to place strategic importance on hydropower development in selected areas. The following hydropower plant development will receive prioritized attention:

1.1 Undertake the development of six Mega Hydropower Projects (Nyera Amari, Dorjilung, Bunakha, Kuri Gongri, Chamkharchu and Sunkosh).



- 1.2** Undertake development of seven Small hydropower projects (Suchhu, Yungichhu, Burgangchhu, Jomori, Gamri-I, Bindu I and II, Dangchu, Begana, Dagachu and Gongri- Jerichhu pumped storage project).
- 1.3** Prioritize the completion of the PHPA-I and the PHPA-II Hydropower Projects.
- 1.4** Expedite the completion of Kholongchu Hydropower Project on priority, which has been stalled for several years.
- 1.5** Develop five mini hydro/other renewable projects at strategically feasible locations to stimulate local economic growth.



2

Airports and air transport

Airports serve as critical communication link across international and national borders. Bhutan's mountainous terrains constrain communications and transportation network. Air transport offers significant advantages to overcome distances over mountainous terrains. PDP shall accord high priority to the air transport sector through the following initiatives:

- 2.1** Conduct feasibility studies for the construction of international airports in the east and the south.
- 2.2** Accelerate the expansion of Yonphula Airport and invest in instruments to improve sustained operations of the air services.
- 2.3** Expand and modernize the Yonphula, Bumthang and Gelephu Airports.
- 2.4** Expand Drukair to operate and compete internationally and prepare for operations from Gelephu International Airport after its completion.



3

Railways, roads, bridges, ropeways and gateways

PDP recognizes the pivotal role of transportation in bolstering the nation's economy. A well-developed network of transport and communication, coupled with streamlined travel and logistics, is essential for robust economic growth. PDP shall initiate the development of the following strategic roads, transport infrastructure and gateways:

3.1 Establish railway connectivity at Gelephu, Nganglam, Samtse, Samdrup Jongkhar, and Pasakha with the Indian rail links.

3.2 Open up Samdrup Jongkhar, Gelephu and Samtse border as an international gateway for tourists and other foreigners entering and exiting Bhutan.

3.3 Complete the South-East-West Highway by building/improving the following road networks:

i. South-East-West Highway:

- Jomotshangkha – Dewathang
- Dewathang – Nganglam
- Nganglam – Panbang
- Panbang – Gelephu/Sarpang
- Gelephu/Sarpang – Lhamoizingkha
- Lhamoizingkha – Phuentsholing
- Phuentsholing – Samtse
- Samtse – Tendu

ii. Inter-Dzongkhag connectivity

- Sherichu to Kuri Gongri
- Chhukha to Dagana



- Chumey to Shingkhari
- Khomshar to Wama
- Ura to Shingkhari
- Lauri to Merak
- Helela to Nahi (bypass)
- Tarithang to Panbang (bypass)
- Sunkosh to Dagana road widening
- Dagana to Dalbari

3.4 We will initiate expansion of double lanes for:

- Trongsa – Zhemgang – Gelephu Highway
- Tsirang to Sarpang
- Gyalpoizhing - Nganglam
- Samtse – Dophuchen – Haa Secondary National Highway
- Samtse – Tendu
- Pemagatshel - Nganglam
- Trashigang - Rangjung

3.5 Initiate secondary road network for clusters of gewogs to promote better connectivity.

3.6 Build ropeways to areas where road construction is not feasible due to security concerns.

3.7 Construct bridges wherever needed.

3.8 Promote the establishment and use of waterways in the southern borders wherever feasible.

3.9 Liaise with the government of West Bengal to streamline and ease transport of Bhutanese goods from the Kolkata seaports.

3.10 Set up adequate charging stations for electrical vehicles along all highways.



4

Water – for every house and every farm

Bhutan has long grappled with water scarcity, a problem that affects both urban and rural areas. Shortages of drinking water persist across the nation, from the capital city to remote villages. Our farmers face tremendous challenges during paddy planting season as they compete for water to irrigate their fields. His Majesty's water project, executed by the DeSuup, serves as a shining example of what can be achieved with the right approach and concerted effort. We believe it is possible to make water available to every household and every farm. Inspired by His Majesty's initiative, PDP is determined to set this ambitious goal of ensuring 'water for every house and every farm'. We shall achieve this goal through the following initiatives:

4.1 The mandate for the Department of Water (DoW) will be further prioritize to make water available to every home and every farmland.

4.2 The DoW shall ensure that every home has access to safe and sustained drinking water 24/7.

4.3 The DoW shall construct adequate irrigation channels to ensure every farmland has sufficient water to meet its agricultural needs.

4.4 The DoW shall ensure protection and conservation of water catchment areas.

4.5 The DoW shall adopt best technologies and practices for water tapping, treatment, supply and conservation.

4.6 The DoW shall spearhead collaboration among various relevant agencies to ensure the comprehensive realization of our goal of providing water for all.



5 Ensure reliable electricity supply

Electric power reliability remains a concern in many regions across the country, necessitating a substantial infrastructure overhaul. To this end, we will:

5.1 Upgrade and modernize the electrical infrastructure by replacing outdated components, and implementing state-of-the-art technologies to enhance the overall reliability of power supply.

5.2 Implement grid resilience measures to mitigate the impact of unforeseen disruptions, ensuring a more continuous and dependable electricity supply for all.

5.3 Expand the integration of renewable energy sources into our power grid not only to promote sustainability but also contribute to a more stable and uninterrupted power supply.



6 Home ownership for all

Home ownership will significantly improve the economic and social well-being of families and our nation as a whole. By enhancing financial security and raising social anchor, home ownership will play a key role in creating an inclusive and happier society. We believe that government must and can play a greater role in enabling citizens to own homes. The following strategies will be adopted to promote home ownership:

6.1 The National Housing and Development Corporation shall be entrusted with the core mandate to ensure 'Home Ownership for all'.

6.2 A flagship program called "Rent to Own" will be instituted through which the government will develop housing stock that will be made available to civil servants, private sector salaried employees, and low-income groups. These houses will become eligible for ownership after a specified number of years of occupancy.



6.3 For first time home/apartment purchase or first house constructions in consultation with stakeholders including RMA, we will:

- Support access to loans by Loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage ratio from 70% to 95%.
- Reduce interest rate to 4%.
- Maintain housing loan payback period to 30 years.

6.4 For House constructions in villages, we will provide all the support provided to first time house construction.

6.5 For real estate developers in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as FIs and RMA, we will:

- Facilitate lease of state land for construction of housing stock.
- Engage the private sector in development of housing stock.
- Support down payment and guarantee payment of installments by creating special financing windows.

6.6 For existing government housing colonies (such as Changjiji Housing complex), we shall:

- Revise the tenancy agreement to enable tenants to occupy the houses until their retirement or transfer.

6.7 Take measures to ensure that housing colonies are safe, secure, and crime-free, with adequate parking spaces and recreational facilities.



7

Telecom, ICT, internet and TV services

The 21st century world has become increasingly digitalized, and our transformed economy will heavily rely on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The advancements in digital technology offer immense opportunities to radically improve our economy, education, businesses, and all facets of our lives. To harness the full potential of ICT and its related sectors, we will initiate the following:

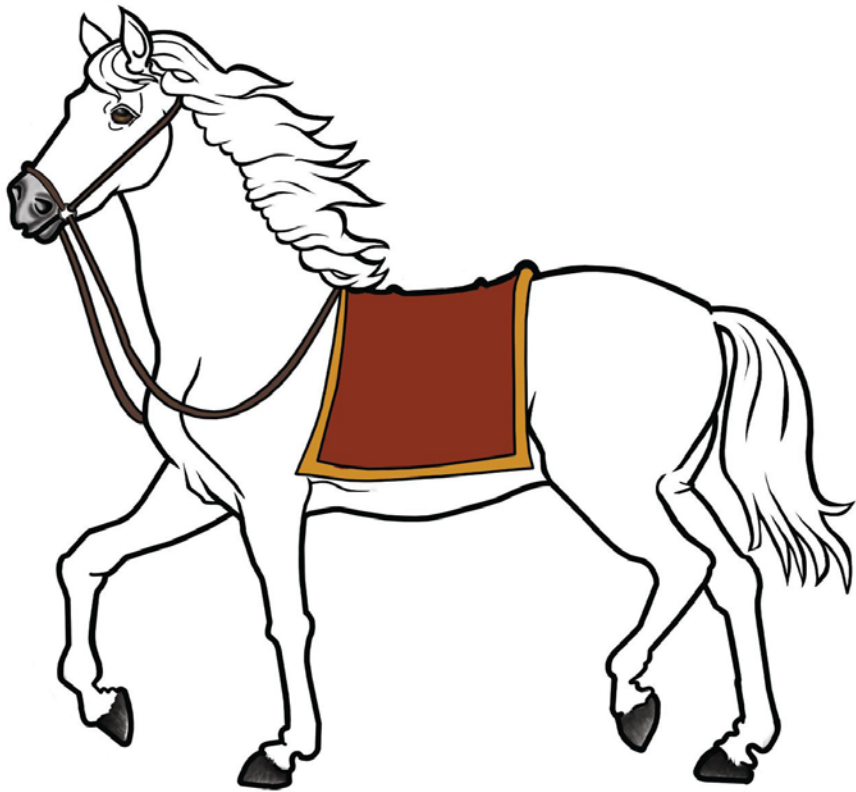
7.1 Initiate reduction of telecom charges, such as data charges to 50% of the current rate or equivalent to the rates in India.

7.2 Ensure stable and high-speed internet connectivity is available in every Dzongkhag, Gewog, and Chiwog, including all institutions such as government offices and schools.

7.3 Ensure no village or cluster of houses suffer from weak or disruptive telecom services.

7.4 Ensure cable TV connectivity to all the villages by incentivizing cable operators to extend their services to remote villages.





Pledge

04

Rural development -
Powering our Villages





“Our villages are our roots, the fountain head of our identity, culture, and tradition. Our rural areas can also be important economic players if each village can harness its unique potential. We must invest in empowering our villages, enabling them to remain vibrant sources of our Bhutanese heritage while contributing substantially to our nation's economic transformation.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Our villages are home to approximately 61% of our population (NSB 2022), primarily subsistence farmers who rely on land and livestock for their livelihoods. These rural areas are the cradle of Bhutan's rich tradition and culture, which thrive within the socio-ecosystem of our villages. We believe that our villages deserve the highest level of attention and investment from the government to transform into vibrant habitats with abundance of economic opportunities and flourishing social lives. To achieve this vision, we will implement the following initiatives to develop our rural regions:

1 Minimum Gewog development program

Through the Minimum Gewog Development Program, we will foster equitable and sustainable development across the nation, improving the quality of life and wellbeing of citizens residing in remote regions. We will ensure that no Bhutanese is left behind. Through the Minimum Gewog development program, we will:

Education:

1.1 Review and establish Central Schools as needed. As residential boarding schools, these central schools shall provide free meals, school uniforms, stationeries and beddings to every student.



1.2 Large Chiwogs will have schools designated as Chiwog School based on the need analysis. These Chiwog schools will have one ECCD and classes from PP to III. In cases where the Chiwogs already have primary level schools, these schools will be retained. All the Chiwog schools will be provided with at least lunch at the schools.

1.3 Strengthen Non-formal education facilities to encourage more people in villages to access non-formal education and a second chance at learning.

Health:

1.4 Ensure that all Gewog health centers have one doctor (depending on resident population) and adequate health staff, including one female health worker.

1.5 Ensure that every Bhutanese resident will be provided with annual comprehensive health check-up, including blood test, endoscopy and ultrasound.

1.6 Ensure that “No one is left behind” and provide health services, including medical examination and blood test, at patients’ home for elderly and those with disabilities.

Water:

1.7 Ensure that every household has access to safe drinking water 24/7, with convenient access points within their homes.

1.8 Ensure our farmlands have adequate irrigation water.

Roads:

1.9 Base course/stone soling all the farm roads and blacktop all farm roads to big Chiwogs.

1.10 Resurface and maintain all Gewog Center Roads with proper drainage facilities.

1.11 The responsibility to maintain roads at the Gewog levels will be entrusted to the Department of Surface Transport under Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.

1.12 Construct new farm roads wherever needed.



Economy:

- 1.13** Ensure that every village has access to stable mobile network connections.
- 1.14** Establish Farmers' Shops (Sanam Tshongkhang) dedicated to buying agricultural produce at predetermined prices that would be implemented on need basis and in the event of market failures.
- 1.15** Set up a Nu. 20 million agriculture or livestock project for a cluster of Gewogs based on need assessment to enhance production, processing and marketing of farm and livestock produce.
- 1.16** Promote the establishment of a youth-owned and operated workshop in every Gewog, specializing in vehicle and machinery repair and maintenance, as well as stocking essential spare parts needed within the Gewogs.
- 1.17** Build helipads on need basis in the Gewogs to support helicopter services.
- 1.18** Taxation policy and regulations shall be reviewed to rationalise tax on land, property and business income.
- 1.19** Set up Fuel dispensing depots in Gewogs wherever not available to provide continuous supply of fuel for vehicles and farm machineries.



2

Minimum livelihood support

Through the Minimum Livelihood Support to the Gewogs, we will:

2.1 Support house construction by relaxing Loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage ratio from 70% to 95% for first time house construction, including the following benefits:

- » Reduce housing loan interest rate to 4%.
- » Maintain housing loan payback period to 30 years.
- » Waive all taxes/royalties on local materials used for house constructions.

2.2 Increase the life insurance payment for death from 30,000 to 150,000 for rural residents.

2.3 Allocate adequate funds to finance damages to crops and livestock from natural disasters and predators.

2.4 Every rural household shall continue to receive 100 units of free electricity.

2.5 Upgrade all 2-phase power connection to 3-phase.

2.6 Provide 80% loan equity for the purchase of one utility vehicle or farm machinery per family.

2.7 Provide interest free loans to buy power tillers, tractors and other farm machinery.

2.8 Provide interest free loans to buy Jersey cows for livestock farmers.



3 Capacity development of Gewog Administration

Through the capacity development program of Gewog Administration, we will:

- 3.1** Raise the salary of Local Government officials along with civil servants and other public employees depending on the economic situation of the country and government’s fiscal situation.
- 3.2** Ensure a functional Gewog pool vehicle for the Gewog with adequate funds for its operations.
- 3.3** Allocate a Human Resource Development (HRD) budget for capacity development programs aimed at enhancing the skills and capabilities of local government functionaries, to be administered at the local level.



4 Gewog waste management

- 4.1** Every Gewog will be assigned specific land areas for waste disposal.
- 4.2** Dedicated waste collection vehicles will be provided for each Gewog, either individually or through a collaborative effort among neighboring Gewogs through public-private partnerships.



5

Highland development

Highland (*la gong sung*) residents are those who reside in the high mountain regions, typically along the northern frontiers of the country. These highland communities have adapted to the challenges of high-altitude climates and the natural environment, giving rise to their distinct traditions and culture. Livestock, medicinal products, and tourism are vital components of their livelihoods. Furthermore, the highlanders' settlements in the north significantly contribute to the security of our northern borders. These highland communities are spread across 12 Dzongkhags. Their role in forging a stronger security in our northern borders must be protected. PDP recognizes the invaluable contribution of highlanders to our unique culture and tradition and is committed to sustaining and promoting their way of life. To ensure their continued flourishing lives and livelihoods, we pledge to:

5.1 Cultural Preservation and promotion:

- » Recognize and support the celebration of the festivals that are unique to the highland communities.
- » Support initiatives that will help preserve and promote the native language, arts and crafts.
- » Support cultural centers and research that foster understanding, appreciation and exchange of practices and knowledge of the highlander with the rest of the country and the world.



5.2 Livelihood protection and promotion:

- » Promote investment in local industries such as agriculture, livestock, artisanal crafts, and tourism to create more opportunities for local employment and livelihood.
- » Support special financial incentives to promote entrepreneurship and start-ups that are focused in creating economic opportunities for highland communities.
- » Establish linkages with educational institutions to develop vocational and craft skills to enhance production and marketing of the crafts and products of the highland communities.



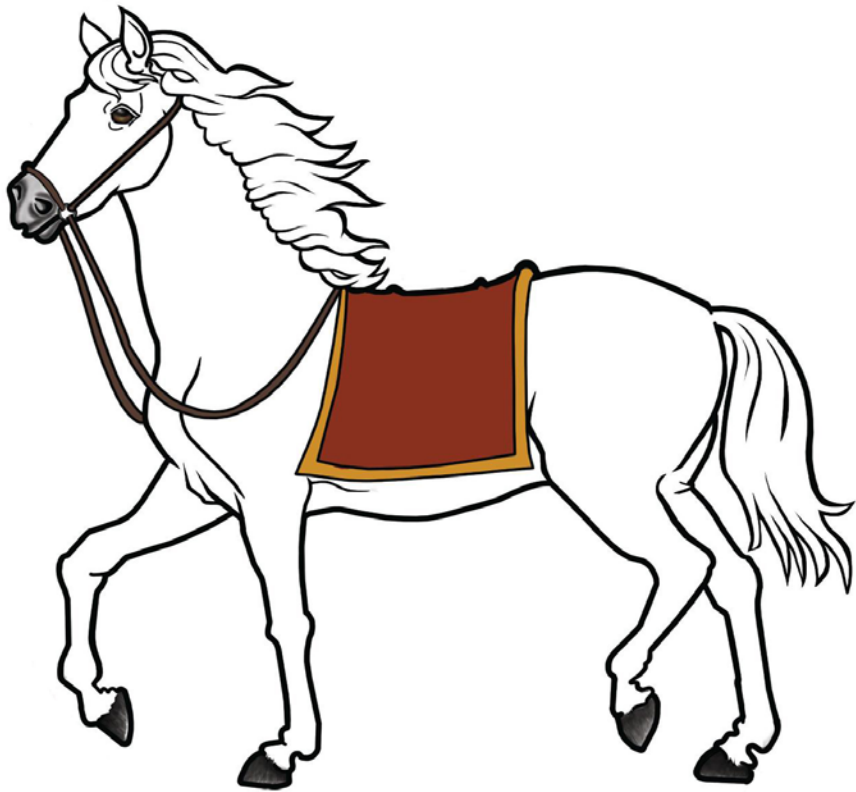
5.3 *Environmental conservation:*

- » Adopt and implement effective conservation and safeguard measures to ensure a sustained ecosystem such as the rivers, forests, and pasture land.
- » Promote responsible tourism that is sensitive and mindful to the long-term interests of the Highland communities.

5.4 *Special incentives:*

- » Schools will be made available to the highest grade as possible to ensure that students do not have to locate to other areas.
- » Other school amenities such as school stationeries and books shall be provided.
- » Health facilities that have the capacity to perform minor operations and diagnostic services such as X-ray, ultrasound and blood test will be developed.
- » Helicopter services shall be offered at 60% discounted fare.





Pledge

05

Agriculture -
Farming for transformed Bhutan





“Bhutan is witnessing a fundamental threat posed by our agriculture and farmland vanishing. If we do not make major reforms in our farming practices and agricultural management, the present generation of farmers may be the last. The drudgery of farming, human-wildlife conflict, perennial water shortage, and absence of market for our agricultural products need to be addressed with bold decisions. It will take ambitious, courageous, and innovative interventions to ensure the survival and continuity of our farming and agriculture. Our farmers must continue to play the central role of feeding the nation for hundreds of years and achieving our national goal of food self-sufficiency in the next five years.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



One of Bhutan's paramount national goals is achieving food and nutrition self-sufficiency, and the achievement of this national goal is hinged on our farming practices. Unfortunately, Bhutan's agricultural sector faces considerable challenges, making it a laborious endeavor. Each year, vast tracts of land go uncultivated while 30% of crops are lost to wild animals (MoAL, 2023). The difficult terrain, a shortage of farm labor, weak technical support, inferior farm inputs, and water scarcity are some of the challenges confronting our farmers. Consequently, over the past five years, employment in agriculture has plummeted by 22% (NSB, 2022). This has resulted in the country's continued dependence on food imports, incurring billions in expenses. It is imperative that we rescue our struggling agriculture sector and make strides towards achieving the critical goal of food self-sufficiency. This calls for bold strategies and initiatives to revolutionize our agriculture and farming practices.

PDP is committed to boosting farmers' income by five-fold and make significant strides toward National Food and Nutrition Self-sufficiency through the "Transforming Farming and Agriculture" program. Under this initiative, PDP will undertake the following actions:

1

Land management

We shall commission a major land management program that includes the following core initiatives:

- 1.1** Facilitate the use of government land for large-scale agricultural ventures to interested private sector and farmers.
- 1.2** Allow conversion of wetland to alternative land usage and farming practices that offer greater viability and sustainability.
- 1.3** Reserve minimum acreage of wetland for paddy cultivation for which government will provide special support in terms of:
 - » Provision of machinery support for land preparation, planting, harvesting, and water supply.
 - » Support buy-back of paddy.
 - » Other necessary technical support in paddy cultivation.



- 1.4** Support terracing and leveling of farmlands to facilitate mechanization of farming practices.
- 1.5** Provide rationalized fencing support of farmlands by providing chain-link fence.
- 1.6** Ensure every farmland including paddy fields have sustained and adequate irrigation water supply.
- 1.7** Review immigration laws and policies to permit foreign workers in the agriculture sector to address the critical issue of farm labor shortage.

2

Sales promotion, marketing and production support

- 2.1** Establish special interest free loan facilities to purchase power tillers and other farm machineries.
- 2.2** Set up a Nu. 20 million processing or production facility in 50 strategic locations which will facilitate grading, sorting, processing, packaging and marketing.
- 2.3** Institute a buy-back scheme through farm shops in which the government will actively facilitate the creation of markets and provide support for the purchase of strategic crops and produce.
- 2.4** Establish 'Sanam Tshongkhang' Farm Shops in every gewog with the specific objective of implementing the buy-back program, serving as dedicated hubs for the buying and selling of local farm produce.
- 2.5** Support setting up of fertilizer plants within the country.
- 2.6** Support setting up of animal feeds plants to ensure adequacy and fair price of the feed.
- 2.7** Provide free seedlings.
- 2.8** Stop the levy of tax on small farmers on their sale of agricultural and livestock produce.



2.9 Taxation policy and regulations shall be reviewed to rationalise tax on land, property and business incomes.

3 Export promotion support

3.1 Undertake export marketing of our farm produce through rigorous marketing, linkages and establishment of sale outlets in the region and abroad.

3.2 Institute regular cargo flights to facilitate exports and marketing of domestic produce and goods to international markets.

3.3 Initiate development of cold storage, warehouses, and auction yards at Dzongkhag levels.

3.4 Government will engage directly with other countries to secure necessary certifications for the export of our farm and agricultural produce.



4 One Gewog One Product (OGOP)

We will support the OGOP program with the aim of supporting every Gewog to produce at least one product that will receive prioritized support from the government. PDP shall implement the OGOP program through the following activities:

4.1 Support every Gewog to identify at least one product that will receive prioritized support from the government for production, processing, packaging, and marketing.

4.2 The OGOP product, which may be agricultural produce, livestock product, forest or handicraft product with exports potential, shall receive additional support in export facilitation and transportation subsidies.



5

Chirub collective farms

Collective farms often referred to as “model villages” is a distinctive approach to agriculture practices where land, resources, and labor are pooled together. This model encourages shared responsibility and promotes sustainable farming practices. Collective farms have immense potential in generating jobs, revenue, and agricultural produce while enhancing our food security. We will:



5.1 Facilitate youth groups (50 to 150 of them) to set up collective farms in strategically viable locations across the country.

5.2 Provide land on lease for long-term use and help develop essential infrastructure, including housing, roads, and access to utilities such as water and electricity.

5.3 Provide the collective farms with necessary machinery and offer technical support and guidance to enhance their farming capacities and productivity.

5.4 Provide financial and technical support to establish packaging and processing units, enabling the collectives to add value to their produce.

5.5 Support in creating distinctive brands for each collective farm through marketing support.



Pledge

06

Human resources -
Powering 21st century Bhutan





“His Majesty’s profound advice that “what we cannot match in numbers, we must make up in talent” stands critically relevant today. As we experience the lowest fertility rate and the fastest emigration of Bhutanese to other countries, the only way to address the unprecedented human resource challenge is to excel through talent. We must invest in building our human resources and nurturing our human capital, ensuring they are skilled, motivated, and empowered to engage meaningfully in an economy that is transforming to become a developed nation in the next five years.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



People are the cornerstone of any nation. A skilled, capable, and resilient populace is the driver for a strong nation. Access to quality healthcare, education, sustainable livelihoods and continued human development efforts would go a long way in enhancing the chances of success for individuals and the nation alike. We believe that governments must create the right conditions and opportunities for people to develop their capacities and unleash their potential. To optimize the potential of our people, we commit to undertaking the following initiatives:

1

Empowering the civil servants

Under the Program to Empower the Civil Servants we will:

1.1 Review the pension policy to eliminate the requirement for a 20-year service threshold for pension eligibility.

1.2 Enable home ownership on priority by providing the following benefits:

- » For first time home/apartment purchases or first house constructions, we will support loan access by relaxing Loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage ratio from 70% to 95%.
- » Reduce interest rate to 4%.
- Maintain housing loan payback period to 30 years.
- Institute a special program called 'Rent to Own' where housing stock will be made available for ownership to civil servants or salaried tenants after a specified duration of occupancy.



2

Job protection plan for contract employees

Under the Job Protection Plan, for contract employees such as teachers, health workers, ESPs, GSPs, wardens and matrons, drivers, ward boys and ward girls, ECCD and NFE instructors etc. we will:

2.1 Change the nature of employment from contract to para-regular positions by enacting legislation that provides same service conditions and benefits to the contract employees.

2.2 All contract employees who are regularized as para-regular employees will have the following benefits same as other civil servants:

- » Home ownership
- » Salary Raise
- » Allowances
 - Professional development
 - Provident Fund and gratuity benefits
 - Transfer allowances



3

Caring for the corporate and private sector employees program

Under the program 'Caring for the Corporate and Private Sector employees', we will:

3.1 Implement Provident Fund and gratuity schemes for all corporate and private sector employees.

3.2 Promote fair pay for employees in the corporate and private sector.



3.3 Extend home ownership program to corporate and private sector employees similar to the civil service employees.

3.4 Ensure that all corporate and private organizations maintain a safe and healthy work environment.

4

Women and children

PDP shall empower our women to be important contributors to nation building. We will execute the following to uplift our women:

4.1 Institute special financial support scheme to provide women with easy access to credit to start and upscale their businesses.

4.2 Create conducive working environment to enable women to take equal part in all development activities.

4.3 Establish or mandate establishment of crèche centers in all workplaces.

4.4 Introduce social security schemes for vulnerable women to ensure they have access to adequate livelihood support.

4.5 Institute breast feeding breaks for working mothers with small children.

4.6 Support working parents by allowing employment of foreign domestic workers through recruitment and placement agencies.



5

Persons with special needs

PDP will strive to create an inclusive society that recognizes, respects, and advocates for the rights and requirements of people with special needs. To this end, we will implement the following policy and support measures:

- 5.1** Actively implement the provisions of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD).
- 5.2** Implement the provisions of the Guidelines on disable-friendly infrastructure.
- 5.3** Strengthen health check-up services to detect and prevent potential disabilities in infants.
- 5.4** Provide employment and business support to persons with disabilities by facilitating employment, instituting special loan schemes, and providing skills training.
- 5.5** Institute special start-up credit schemes for persons with disabilities interested in starting businesses.
- 5.6** Increase the number of schools for special needs children to ensure uninterrupted access to education for these children.
- 5.7** Provide adequate budgetary and funding support to schools for the disabled to build and improve disable-friendly infrastructure, upgrade curricula, and access to teaching-learning materials, among others.
- 5.8** Support the parents of the persons with disabilities through the following schemes:
 - » Allow flexible working hours.
 - » Support employment of domestic helpers.
 - » Provide specialized training support to take care of children with disabilities.



6 LGBTQ and persons with other pronouns

PDP believes that sexual orientation and gender identity are inherent aspects of our identities and should never be the basis for discrimination or abuse. We will respect and protect the inherent rights of the LGBTQ community through:

- 6.1** Address legal and cultural barriers to prevent exercise of equal rights by the LGBTQ community.
- 6.2** Promote inclusive work environment and work conditions that embraces the needs and rights of the LGBTQ community.



7 Pensioners and elderlies

- 7.1** Review the pension payment for the pensioners and elderlies.
- 7.2** Ensure priority channel/lane to receive public service.
- 7.3** Provide checkup services for elderlies at their homes.
- 7.4** Support funds for community activities and programs to enhance elderly engagement in social affairs.



8 National work force (NWF)

- 8.1** Double the pay for the national workforce.
- 8.2** Create special support program for the education of children of the NWF by giving priority admissions in schools of their choice.



9

Reverse declining fertility rate

Bhutan faces a pressing challenge with its declining fertility rate, which has already fallen below the minimum replacement level of 2.1. This demographic decline poses significant long-term impacts on our economy and national productivity. To reverse this trend, we will implement a ‘three-child’ policy, encouraging every couple to have three children. This policy will be supported by the following strategies and initiatives:



9.1 Develop a comprehensive “Fertility and Family Policy for Bhutan” to reverse the declining trend. The policy shall amongst others consider the following initiatives to encourage families to raise at least three children:

- » Income support to parents
- » Childcare support
- » Child education support
- » Domestic helper support
- » Crèche help support
- » Flexible working hour support

9.2 Pay Cash incentive

- » For the birth of the third child and above, a cash incentive of Nu.10,000 per month will be paid for three years.

9.3 Require crèche centers in all work places.

9.4 Support employment of domestic helpers for working parents.

9.5 Introduce flexible working hours for working parents.



Pledge

07

Youth - Enabling the
dream for every youth





“Every Bhutanese youth aspires to serve the King, the country and the people. They are ambitious, competitive, and want to be successful individuals. Bhutan’s future will depend on our youth. We must ensure that every youth is equipped with the right knowledge and skills of their choice. We must ensure that they have the best opportunities to harness their talents and become successful in realizing their own dreams and passion.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Approximately 50% of our population is aged 26 years or younger, with youth between the ages of 15 to 25 constituting 30% of our demography. We believe that our youth represent the future of our country. However, with youth unemployment currently standing at an alarming 28%, the country's future is at grave risk if this trend continues. A competent and committed youth population is essential for ensuring the nation's success. We believe that it is the foremost responsibility of the government in power to ensure that our youth are provided with a wide range of opportunities for employment and businesses. The following key initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that our youth are meaningfully employed or productively engaged in businesses of their choice:

1 Youth employment program

PDP commits to achieving full employment (97.5%) in the next five years. As part of the youth employment program, we will establish a Youth Center in every dzongkhag. The Youth Center will be mandated to support employment of every youth in the respective dzongkhags. The Youth Centers will also provide the following services:

- 1.1 Rehabilitation services.
- 1.2 Youth employment facilitation services.
- 1.3 Youth Entrepreneurship development centers.
- 1.4 Youth Business incubation centers.
- 1.5 Youth recreational services.
- 1.6 Youth skilling services.
- 1.7 Youth Banking services.
- 1.8 Business and employment support for those returning from abroad.

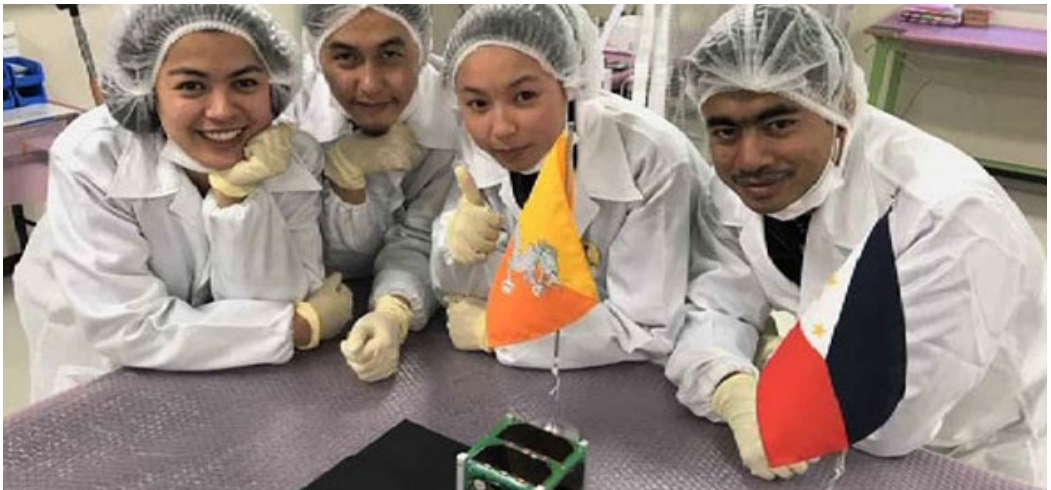


2

Youth skilling program

2.1 Through the youth skilling program, we will equip 60,000 youth with essential skills in various trades and professions that are currently in demand in the job market.

2.2 Expand Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions to accommodate every youth who wishes to pursue skills development in a trade of their choice.



3

Overseas study and employment program

Through the overseas employment program we will:

3.1 Liaise with countries that are safe for work and facilitate the employment of our youths.

3.2 Establish institutional partnerships with foreign educational institutions and offer specialized training programs in fields that are in demand abroad, such as nursing, care giving, and teaching. Additionally, we will facilitate opportunities for our youth to gain employment in these vocations overseas.

3.3 Support one youth from a household (where no member of the household had gone abroad) to study and work in countries like Australia, the Middle East and Canada by providing concessionary education loans to pay tuition fees for the first semester.



4 Youth Startup Loan Program

Through the Youth Startup Loan Program, we will:

- 4.1** Establish a dedicated youth startup organization tasked with generating innovative business ideas and assisting young entrepreneurs in securing land leases, accessing credit, and establishing robust marketing networks.
- 4.2** Establish a specialized 'Access to Finance' window within the 'Youth Startup organization' designed to offer concessional loans to our youth for financing their entrepreneurial ventures.



5 Youth Unemployment Support Allowance

Through the youth unemployment allowance program, we will:

- 5.1** Vigorously track and facilitate every youth in search of employment and engage them in skilling programs.



6

Youth/Children in distress

A substantial number of our youth come from broken families and are exposed to drugs and alcohol, come in conflict with the law, and often have to fend for themselves both in schools and in their communities. To support these youth in distress, we shall:

6.1 Through CSOs or through designated agencies:

- » Enable continuation of education
- » Access to counselling services
- » Provide basic needs
- » Provide reintegration programs
- » Facilitate employment or business ventures



7

Promotion of sports

To promote sports as an appealing career option and a significant contributor to the nation's health and wellbeing, we will:

- 7.1** Support the development of sports facilities throughout the country.
- 7.2** Support the participation of sporting competition at regional and global levels.
- 7.3** Support sport clubs to sustain, train players, and participate in various competitions.



Pledge

08

Education and skills development -
For 21st century and beyond





“In the face of unprecedented changes, what we teach and how we teach our children can easily become irrelevant and meaningless. It is important that our education system stays on top of these changes and continues to play a major role in shaping the lives of our children. At the heart of the education system is our teachers. We must ensure that our teachers are constantly equipped with updated skills and motivated to make positive impacts on the lives of our children.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Education is the greatest equalizer, empowering individuals to unlock their full potential. When education falters, it not only deprives our children of their promise but also inflicts lasting harm on society for generations to come. The COVID 19 pandemic forced schools to be shut for long periods, disrupting learning for several years. The challenge of bringing life back to our education is compounded by deteriorated morale of our teachers. Even as reforms are initiated to elevate the quality of education to meet the needs of the 21st century world, our teachers who are at the heart of education are leaving the system in droves. Crowded classrooms, resource starved schools, overburdened teachers, and weak leadership are some pressing challenges. Education must receive the highest priority of any government because the fate of our nation hinges on the success of our education system. We believe that government must put in all effort to create our education system that nurtures our children for the 21st century world with the right knowledge, skills, and aptitude. Towards this vision, PDP shall implement the following strategies:

1

Restructured school system

Our schools should be spaces that enable holistic, integrative, enjoyable, and engaging teaching and learning interactions between students and teachers. Students must feel safe and comfortable in the physical and psycho-social ambience of the schools to learn and interact with others. Teachers must be empowered to demonstrate their full potential in the education of the students. To realize this goal, PDP shall:

1.1 Review and establish Central Schools as needed. As residential boarding schools, these central schools shall provide free meals, school uniforms, stationeries and beddings to every student.

1.2 Large Chiwogs will have schools designated as Chiwog School based on the need analysis. These Chiwog schools will have one ECCD and classes from PP to III. In cases where the Chiwogs already have primary level schools, these schools will be retained. All the Chiwog schools will be provided with at least lunch at the schools.



- 1.3** Empower our schools with fiscal discretion, granting them the autonomy to manage their own budgets, including greater control over teacher and staff recruitment, Professional Development programs, and oversight of both academic and non-academic affairs.
- 1.4** Provide lunch to all schools to ensure every child receives at least one balanced meal in a day.
- 1.5** Decongest classrooms by maintaining student - teacher ratio at 27:1.
- 1.6** Empower all schools with ICT enabled teaching-learning facilities such as high-speed internet connectivity and smart classrooms.
- 1.7** Provide adequate budgetary support to schools for the disabled to build and improve disable friendly infrastructure, upgrade curricula, and access teaching-learning materials etc.
- 1.8** Private schools will be facilitated to play constructive role in the education system. They will be granted greater autonomy to choose their own school management processes, curricula, and recruitment of foreign teachers.
- 1.9** Allow the establishment of international schools.

2

Competent and committed teachers

Teachers are the soul of our education system, and it is imperative that policy makers prioritize their wellbeing to ensure they can provide the best possible education to our students. Teachers should not only be competent but also deeply committed to their profession. Policies and initiatives to equip our teachers with the latest content and pedagogical knowledge should be given top priority. Every effort should be exerted to keep our teachers motivated, respected, and committed to their crucial role. To realize this goal, PDP shall:

- 2.1** Ensure our teachers receive a minimum of 80 hours of annual professional development training to keep them updated on the latest advancements in content and pedagogical practices.



2.2 Provide opportunities to our teachers for short-term study tours, exchange programs, and immersion experiences with some of the best schools in the region and abroad.

2.3 Rationalize workload so that our teachers are not overburdened with excessive administrative responsibilities that rob their time off actual teaching.

2.4 Review Individual Work Plans (IWP) for the teachers and institute an alternative performance measurement system that is both sensitive and responsive to the unique needs of our teachers in consultation with MoESD and RCSC.

2.5 Enhance Research Endowment Fund to enable our teachers to undertake action research in areas of their choice.

2.6 Prioritize home ownership program for our teachers so that our teachers can own or build their own houses.

2.7 Declare Saturdays as non-working days for teachers to foster healthier work-life balance.

2.8 Standardize the employment of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and Non-Formal Education (NFE) instructors as professional employment, ensuring that they are entitled to the same service benefits and conditions, such as leave, provident fund, gratuity, transfers, and training opportunities as other regular teachers.

2.9 Provide opportunities to ECCD and NFE instructors for professional growth by creating training opportunities and pathways to enhance their qualifications.



3

Engaged and motivated support staff in the schools

The foot soldiers of schools are the support staff such as administrative personnel, caregivers, wardens, matrons, cooks, and accountants. The support staff must receive the care and attention to enable them to perform their duties as an integral part of the school system. An engaged and motivated support staff will greatly contribute towards the achievement of the goals of the schools. Towards this, PDP shall:



- 3.1** Review and establish the roles of support staff such as cooks, caretakers, wardens, matrons, security personnel, office assistants, and others in schools so that they are not overburdened.
- 3.2** Allow support staff to avail paid vacations similar to teachers when schools are closed for winter and summer vacations.
- 3.3** Change the employment status of support staff from contractual to para-regular through a special executive order, ensuring that they receive the same service conditions and benefits as other regular employees.
- 3.4** As Para-regular employees, school support staff will have all the benefit same as other civil servants for home ownership, salary raise, transfer, loan access, professional development, Provident Fund, and gratuity benefits.



4

Responsive curriculum

Curriculum is the heart of our education system, the very essence that shapes the knowledge and skills of our graduates. As Bhutan transforms to become a significant global player, our curriculum must also evolve to meet the emerging needs of our nation and the world at large.

We should not hesitate to discard the vestiges of our education system that no longer serve us and we must have the courage to embrace those that will be vital for our children's future. Our curriculum must be responsive to the future needs while firmly anchored to our cherished Bhutanese values. To achieve this goal, PDP shall:



4.1 Promote the adoption of international curricula such as Cambridge and the International Baccalaureate (IB) especially by the private schools to provide students with diverse educational pathways and global perspectives.

4.2 Empower teachers by granting greater autonomy in developing their own lessons within the framework of the curriculum instead of the current prescriptive approach.

4.3 Institute specialized schools such as STEM schools, Sports Academy, Performing Arts institute and Vocational and Training schools.

4.4 Participate in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

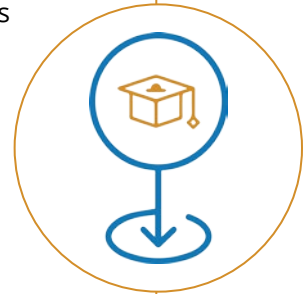
4.5 Align school curriculum with the Gyalsung program, building upon and leveraging the knowledge and skills gained from the Gyalsung curriculum, to create a cohesive and complementary educational experience.



5

Tertiary education

- 5.1** Revise the promotion criteria of faculty under the Royal University of Bhutan to enable smooth career progression of our Bhutanese faculty to become professors.
- 5.2** Encourage tertiary education programs such as Masters degree within the country by enhancing stipends for students.
- 5.3** Grant adequate research fund to the faculty to undertake high-impact research studies and promote an environment where such research studies are used by relevant agencies in decision-making.
- 5.4** Grant adequate fund to enhance continuous professional development of the faculty.
- 5.5** Grant greater autonomy to tertiary institutions to enable them to create and innovate their practices and curriculum with the changing needs of the environment.
- 5.6** Actively support faculty exchange program with institutions abroad to share and bring in knowledge and practices.



5.7 Support development of adequate infrastructure including sporting facilities in colleges and tertiary institutes.

5.8 Streamline, restructure, and enhance the Continuous Education (CE) program to offer a “second chance” for individuals to upgrade their qualifications, while also elevating the accreditation of CE to be on par with regular studies.

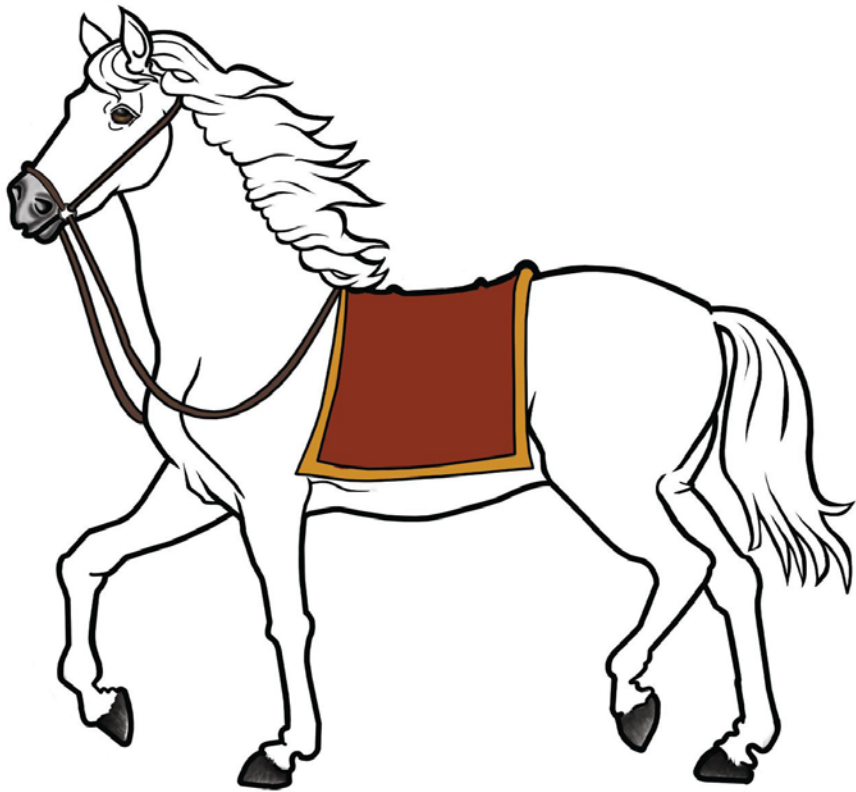
5.9 Allow international tertiary institutions in the country.

5.10 Support private tertiary institutions/colleges by removing unnecessary regulatory burden that prevents their growth, creativity, and innovations.

5.11 Establish a college in Tsirang through Public-Private Partnership model focused on promoting new ICT/economy drives of the country.

5.12 Establish a Vocational Training Institute in Dagana and Kheng Tama, Zhemgang.





Pledge

09

Health -
Ensuring quality healthcare





“Both physical health and psychological wellbeing lie at the heart of our happiness. We must strive to ensure that every Bhutanese has access to the best healthcare possible - a healthcare that is timely, effective, and caring.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President

Good health forms the foundation of our existence, influencing every aspect of our lives. Health is the cornerstone of human happiness and wellbeing. And a healthy population contributes significantly to a nation's prosperity, productivity, and economic progress. We believe that it is the responsibility of every government to create effective and efficient healthcare system that is responsive to the changing healthcare needs of its people. To ensure efficient, accountable, and a caring healthcare service, we will undertake the following:

1

Guaranteed citizen's healthcare service program

Under the Guaranteed citizen's healthcare service program we will:

- 1.1** Ensure that all gewog health centers have one doctor (depending on resident population) and adequate health staff, including one female health worker.
- 1.2** Deploy additional doctors to all 20 dzongkhag hospitals and require each hospital to assign one doctor for monthly visits to all Gewog primary healthcare centers, ensuring that healthcare services reach even the most remote areas.
- 1.3** Ensure that all 10-bedded hospitals in gewogs are furnished with the necessary equipment and facilities to conduct minor surgical procedures, X-rays, ultrasounds, as well as comprehensive laboratory capabilities for essential tests including blood, blood sugar, stool, urine, renal, and liver function assessments.
- 1.4** Ensure that every Bhutanese resident will be provided with annual comprehensive health checkup, including blood test, endoscopy and ultrasound.



- 1.5** Ensure that “No one is left behind” and provide health services, including medical examination and blood test, at patients’ home for elderly and those with disabilities.
- 1.6** Ensure that every district hospital has at least one General Specialist with adequate number of doctors, nurses, and technicians.
- 1.7** Ensure that every district hospital has dialysis service facilities.
- 1.8** Streamline the referral system and institute additional referral systems from Samtse, Mongar, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Nganglamand Dewathang where patients can be referred to Siliguri, Bogaigoan and Guwahati in India.
- 1.9** Strengthen Bhutan Health Trust Fund and achieve continued and uninterrupted supply of vaccines and essential medicines for all times to come.
- 1.10** Revamp public health activities through promotion of health and prevention of diseases.
- 1.11** Promote e-consultation services.



2

Upgrade health infrastructure and system

Under the health infrastructure and system program, we will:

2.1 Upgrade Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWRH) as super-specialist teaching center with capacity for organ transplant and other super-specialized medical services.

2.2 Upgrade Regional Referral Hospitals (Mongar and Gelephu) to multi-specialty hospitals with at least two specialists in all the specialized areas. The Regional Referral Hospitals will have the capacity to perform certain tertiary operations and will be equipped with MRI and CT scan services.

2.3 Establish a Dzongkhag hospital in Thimphu to decongest JDWRH.

2.4 Establish Samtse hospital as a Regional Referral Hospital.

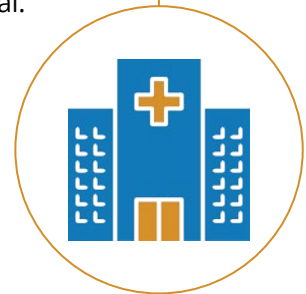
2.5 Establish a cancer hospital in Thimphu.

2.6 Set up 10 specialist centers with operation facilities at strategic locations (Nganglam, Dewathang, Riserboo, Trongsa, Wangduephodrang, Paro, Phuentsholing, Tsirang, Zhemgang, Dagana). These centers will be staffed with six general specialists, covering fields such as medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, orthopedics, surgery, ophthalmology, and anesthesiology, ensuring comprehensive healthcare access in key regions.

2.7 Establish at least one 10-bedded hospital in remote areas with large resident population and poor connectivity.

2.8 Strengthen the electronic patient information system.

2.9 Establish a Mother and Child Hospital in Gelephu.



3

Develop Human Resources capacity

Under the Human Resources capacity development program, we will:

- 3.1** Establish Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB) as the regional center for excellence in medical and health education.
- 3.2** Enhance programs in MBBS to produce 30 doctors annually and 20 international doctors annually.
- 3.3** Recruit retired health personnel to address the shortage of healthcare professionals.
- 3.4** Ensure engagement of specialists through incentives to provide e-consultation service.
- 3.5** Enhance degree courses in nursing, traditional medicine, and allied health sciences.
- 3.6** Strengthen specialization for doctors and introduce fellowship in selected specialty areas.
- 3.7** Introduce Masters in Public Health program to strengthen preventive and promotive services.
- 3.8** Revamp health governance system at the center and dzongkhags in line with decentralization policy with greater autonomy in human resources, financial and public health activities.



Pledge

10

Flourishing Thromdes





“Our towns and cities must mirror our rich traditional heritage, unique architecture, and natural surroundings. Our thromdes must serve as shining examples of our modern, contemporary landscapes where life is comfortable, secure, and prosperous. We must develop urban centers that foster a high quality of life, social wellbeing, economic prosperity, and spiritual growth while providing all the essential modern amenities.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Bhutan is currently witnessing an ever-increasing number of Bhutanese living in urban areas, with nearly 40% of its population now residing in urban regions of the country. This shift in population settlement puts increasing pressure on urban infrastructure, such as housing, water, waste management, and public services such as hospitals, schools and public utilities. Many of our thromdes and urban centers are grappling with the challenges brought about by growing population migration. Water shortages, waste management, a lack of affordable housing, insufficient parking spaces, crowded hospitals and schools, and poor road conditions are some of the challenges faced on a daily basis by people living in urban areas. PDP shall promote the following core principles in the development of urban centers:

- » Ensure balance between tradition and modernity.
- » Ensure that neighborhoods promote good physical health and mental wellbeing.
- » Ensure that urban spaces foster prosperity and support livelihood.
- » Ensure that urban centers not only facilitate physical development but also foster spiritual growth, serving as models for sustainable and holistic urban development.

PDP shall prioritize the development of all our existing thromdes and other potential areas into flourishing urban spaces. PDP shall undertake the following initiatives:



1

Thimphu - our capital city

Thimphu, the capital of our country, is the seat of governance. It is home to more than 100,000 Bhutanese, with almost 30,000 families from across the country. It is home to our King and the Je Khenpo and also hosts all major central government offices, international organizations, embassies, corporate headquarters, and head offices of private sector entities. The Capital city's population continues to grow annually, underlining the need for focused attention and priority. As the capital of Bhutan, Thimphu should serve as an exemplary model for urban development, embodying our rich culture and tradition and unique architecture. PDP believes that Thimphu Thromde should be a space for everyone to experience convenience, comfort, and care as we pursue meaningful lives. Towards this goal, PDP shall:

- 1.1** Initiate Paro - Thimphu National Capital Region Development Plan.
- 1.2** Build a district hospital for Thimphu Dzongkhag.
- 1.3** Develop additional parks, gardens, sports, and recreational facilities, including basketball courts, football grounds and swimming pools.
- 1.4** Ensure availability of safe, clean, and sustained drinking water 24x7 all year round in every household.



- 1.5** Implement wastewater management systems that meet international standards to safeguard human health and facilitate the sustainable expansion of the city.
- 1.6** Ensure a 'waste-free' capital city by setting up additional waste recycling center for the city and increasing waste and resource drop-off hubs.
- 1.7** Ensure all road networks are properly maintained without any potholes and spilling drains by appointing dedicated agency solely charged with the mandate.
- 1.8** Construct storm drainage system to ensure that storm water do not spill over onto the roads.
- 1.9** Improve and build public amenities, including parking spaces, public toilets, public libraries, and children's amusement centers, to enhance the quality of life and convenience for the residents of Thimphu.
- 1.10** Automobile workshops will be supported with land lease at suitable locations considering the convenience for businesses and customers. These allocated cluster of workshops shall be supported with good infrastructure such as road, lights, water supply, waste management system, etc.
- 1.11** Establish Craft Markets to provide local artisans and the handicraft sector with essential point-of-sale platforms and increased market access.
- 1.12** Undertake development of additional housing colonies for low-income groups.
- 1.13** The residents of Changjiji colony shall be allowed to occupy the government apartments until their retirement.
- 1.14** Promote sustainable taxi and bus services through use of electric vehicles. Special financial schemes will be instituted to encourage EV transport systems and adequate charging stations will be made available.
- 1.15** Set up hotlines to lodge complaints related to any public utilities such as water, waste, road, crime and power.
- 1.16** Taxation policy and regulations shall be reviewed to rationalize tax on land, property and business incomes.
- 1.17** Review E4 land policy to enable more build-up space.



2

Empowering our thromdes

One of the strategic means to curb rural-urban migration is the development of thromdes in other parts of the country. Existing thromdes such as SamdrupJongkhar, Gelephu, and Phuentsholing have effectively deterred migration to overcrowded urban areas while also serving as vital economic hubs for their respective regions and neighboring dzongkhags. It is imperative that these thromdes continue to thrive as economic centers and contribute to balanced regional development. We must continuously support emerging regions that are sustainable and have the potential to grow into viable thromdes. To empower our thromdes and promote sustainable, regionally balanced growth, the PDP pledges to undertake the following measures:

All dzongkhag thromdes and large yenlag thromdes shall have the following minimum service:

- 2.1** Ensure availability of safe, clean and sustained drinking water 24 x 7 all year round in every household.
- 2.2** Ensure a 'waste-free' thromde by setting up waste recycling center for the thromde and increasing waste and resource drop-off hubs.
- 2.3** Ensure all road networks are properly maintained without any potholes and spilling drains by appointing dedicated agency solely charged with the mandate.



- 2.4** Construct storm drainage system to ensure that storm water do not spill over into the road.
- 2.5** Improve and build public amenities, including parking spaces, public toilets, public libraries, and children’s amusement centers.
- 2.6** Ensure every thromde has designated space for sale of local products such as handicraft and agricultural produce.
- 2.7** Ensure every thromde has adequate parking space.
- 2.8** Ensure every thromde has adequate amenities such as footpaths, streetlights, and sewer networks.
- 2.9** Review taxation policy and regulations to rationalize taxes on land, property, and business incomes.
- 2.10** Review E4 land policy to enable more build-up space.
- 2.11** Review regulations to consider increasing the maximum number of storeys allowed for buildings in areas where height restrictions are currently in place.
- 2.12** Undertake development of additional housing colonies for low-income groups.
- 2.13** The residents of the housing colony shall be allowed to occupy the apartments untill their retirement.

3

Upgrade emerging big Dzongkhag throms to class A thromdes



4

Develop Nganglam as a economic hub

Nganglam is positioned strategically at the cross section of the east, west, central, southern and northern dzongkhags. It has the potential to be a critical economic hub that would bring substantial benefits to other nearby dzongkhags and beyond. Bordering the Indian state of Assam, Nganglam is home to the country's largest cement plant - Dungsam Cement. Given its strategic importance, we will develop Nganglam into a thriving economic hub. The following will be undertaken to develop Nganglam into an economic hub:

- 4.1** Finalize town development plan for Nganglam and initiate development of the township.
- 4.2** Upgrade the Nganglam hospital to a full-fledged hospital to cater to population of the developed township.
- 4.3** Develop a comprehensive tourism plan for Nganglam and neighboring dzongkhags and promote tourism activities in the region.
- 4.4** Establish Nganglam checkpoint as international gateway to allow entry and exit of tourists and international visitors.
- 4.5** Identify and develop industrial estates in Nganglam and promote establishment of industries and enterprises.



5

Develop Kanglung as an education hub

Kanglung is home to Sherubtse College, the first premier educational institute in the country, established by the Third Druk Gyalpo. With pleasant weather and gentle topography, Kanglung is suitable to be an educational hub for the eastern region. It can also leverage on the already existing educational institutions such as Yonphula Centenary College, Jampeling Central School, Draktso School and the Kelki Private school. PDP shall develop Kanglung to harness its potential to become the education hub in the region.



The following initiatives will be undertaken:

- » Introduce additional academic programs at Sherubtse to leverage on the existing infrastructure.
- » Revive the Yonphula Centenary College with introduction of relevant training programs.
- » Establish TVET institute at the Kelki school which is left unused at present.
- » Upgrade Kanglung hospital to cater to the growing population and nearby communities.
- » Establish a regional Farm Machinery Center at Khangma.
- » Revive Agriculture Research Centre at Khangma

6

Develop Samtse as a special economic hub

Due to its proximity to the major township of Siliguri in India and its extensive flat terrain, Samtse provides an ideal location for industrial expansion. The presence of the Damdum Industrial Park and several upcoming industries, along with the relocation of the industrial estate from Gelephu, positions Samtse as a critical economic hub. We will designate and develop Samtse as a specialized economic hub, accommodating industrial and manufacturing units, an export processing center to further promote economic growth.

7

Home ownership for all

Home ownership will significantly improve the economic and social wellbeing of families and our nation as a whole. By enhancing financial security and raising social anchor, home ownership will play a key role in creating an inclusive and happier society. We believe that government must and can play a greater role in enabling citizens to own homes. The following strategies will be adopted to promote home ownership:

7.1 The National Housing and Development Corporation shall be entrusted with the core mandate to ensure 'Home Ownership for all'.



7.2 A flagship program called “Rent to Own” will be instituted through which the government will develop housing stock that will be made available to civil servants, private sector salaried employees, and low-income groups. These houses will become eligible for ownership after a specified number of years of occupancy.

7.3 For first time home/apartment purchase or first house constructions, we will:

- » Support access to loans by Loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage ratio from 70% to 95%.
- » Reduce interest rate to 4%.
- » Maintain housing loan payback period to 30 years.

7.4 For House constructions in villages, we will provide all the support provided to first time house construction.

7.5 For real estate developers in consultation with stakeholders such as FIs and RMA, we will:

- » Facilitate lease of state land for construction of housing stock.
- » Engage the private sector in development of housing stock.
- » Support down payment and guarantee payment of installments by creating special financing windows.

7.6 For existing government housing colonies (such as Changjiji Housing complex), we shall:

- » Revise the tenancy agreement to enable tenants to occupy the houses until their retirement.
- » Take measures to ensure that housing colonies are safe, secure, and crime-free, with adequate parking spaces and recreational facilities.



Pledge

11

Culture, Films, Arts and Media -
Expressions without fear or favor





“Bhutan’s unique stories find expression through our arts and cinema. These mediums are powerful in not only preserving our culture and cherished values but also in strengthening our national identity and sovereignty by sharing our unique stories to a global audience. We must invest in the arts and cinema and empower our artists and creative professionals to realize their full potential and take our arts and films to greater heights.”

“Our media is the voice of our people, and it must fearlessly hold the government accountable for its actions and inactions. A strong, independent media is also a mark of a healthy democracy. We must empower our media to question, criticize, and scrutinize the government and the powerful without fear or bias.”

**Tshering Tobgay
PDP President**



The creative industries, including film and performing arts, wield significant influence in shaping culture and society. The industries hold within them the power to shape the very essence of Bhutanese society, fostering a sense of identity and pride, while also providing economic opportunities and creative outlets for the nation's youth. In recent times, Bhutanese cinema has demonstrated its remarkable potential by gracing prestigious international film festivals, including the Oscars. PDP believes that beyond their entertainment value, films and the arts play a pivotal role in promoting not only our stories and values but also in deepening our unique identity. It is therefore imperative to foster an ecosystem that values creativity, nurtures talent, and recognizes the profound potential of Bhutan's creative industries while harnessing the economic opportunities of the creative industries in Bhutan. We shall promote our films and arts through the following measures:

1

Promoting a flourishing film industry

Recognizing the valuable role films play, we will implement the following strategies to nurture a flourishing film industry:

- 1.1** Facilitate the construction of one movie theatre in every Dzongkhag in collaboration with Film Association of Bhutan/ private sector.
- 1.2** Initiate the development of a film city through a Public-Private Partnership model.
- 1.3** Support and facilitate post-production services to enhance the quality of films and music in Bhutan.
- 1.4** Establish National Film Development Fund sourcing from outside of government revenue to support artistic innovation, Bhutanese films taking part in International film festivals, and production of high-quality films and documentaries that will make it to international film festivals. The Fund will also be used to recognize and honor artists and creative professionals who have contributed significantly to the creative industries and towards nation building.
- 1.5** Facilitate international co-productions and collaborations by revising existing film regulations and signing co-production treaties with other countries.



1.6 Revamp the Film Review Board with distinguished board members with deep knowledge and appreciation for creative values and a liberal perspective on films when granting approval for public screenings.

1.7 Facilitate linkages between local filmmakers, artists and producers with those outside the countries and support Bhutanese artists and creative professionals to intern with international film production companies.

1.8 Support institutional visits, B2B meetings, capacity building and training of artists, crew and creative professionals.

1.9 Support capacity building and training of artists and creative professionals.

1.10 Strengthen copyright protection and intellectual property rights by making copyright violations and piracy as criminal offense through the amendment of the existing Copyright Act of Bhutan.

1.11 Reinstate Prime Minister Award to motivate and recognize talents in the film industry.

1.12 Facilitate arrangement of cinema theatres in foreign countries for screening of Bhutanese films considering the large number of Bhutanese residing abroad notably in Australia, USA and the Middle East.

1.13 Support the Over-The-Top (OTT) sector through:

- » Establishment of robust payment gateways, both domestic and international.
- » Provide affordable high-speed internet through lease line services across the country.
- » Support collaboration and partnerships between OTT and telecom companies to offer bundled services.
- » Support local content creation such as music videos and children's program and distribution.



2

Promoting a vibrant arts and culture

Culture and arts hold immense value for any society as they foster self-expression and imagination. The roles played by various forms of art, including painting, music, dance, theatre, and performing arts, are profoundly significant in nurturing the wellbeing of a healthy society. We are committed to empowering all forms of culture and art to reach their fullest potential in terms of expression and creativity. We will achieve this by implementing the following strategies:"



2.1 Fund a National Arts Competition to be organized by any private entity or relevant civil society organization to honor contributions of artists.

2.2 Support private initiatives in setting up enterprises that promote works of art through:

- » Specialized financial support.
- » Facilitating capacity building.
- » Facilitating establishment of linkages.

2.3 The Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA) shall be revamped into an institution for excellence in research and performing arts through the following:

- » Build a State of the Art institution for performing arts.
- » Regularise the career of the faculty and performers of RAPA with clear career advancement policy and job protection plan.

2.4 Explore the possibility of establishing culture/community centers in cities abroad where there are concentration of Bhutanese population such as in the New York, Perth, Canberra, Kuwait etc. These culture centers shall promote Bhutanese tradition, culture and language especially for the Bhutanese children living abroad.



3

Enabling the entertainment industry

The entertainment industry in Bhutan is experiencing remarkable growth, consistently serving society through a diverse range of mediums, including karaoke, LIVE music, and dance performances through the erstwhile drayangs. From exhibiting unique Bhutanese expressions to representing Bhutanese arts, tradition and culture, the potential of entertainment industry can be harnessed to benefit the economy and generate employment. Recognizing the role of the entertainment industry, we shall implement the following:



3.1 Review policies that govern entertainment enterprises and enable a governance environment that promotes establishment and operations of meaningful entertainment centers.

3.2 Review the ban on drayangs and conduct a comprehensive study to explore the possibility of reviving the industry while addressing and mitigating any perceived harms it may cause to its employees and society at large.

3.3 Support and promote performing arts such as dramas, theatre arts, paintings and music through special government support scheme.



4

Promotion of a vibrant and free media

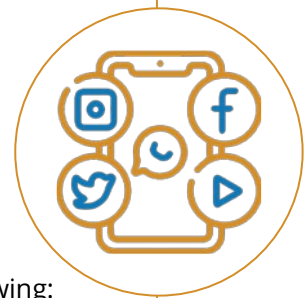
A robust and independent media is vital to the success of democracy. The media should fearlessly represent the voice of the people and hold the government accountable for its actions and inactions. Such a critical role for the media can only be realized when media outlets and journalists operate in an environment of freedom and autonomy, unencumbered by fear or bias. To empower our media, it is imperative that the government actively promotes free speech and fosters a secure space for journalists to access information, critique government policies and programs, and question both actions and inactions. PDP believes in empowering our media to fulfill its true purpose.

We will implement the following measures to nurture a free and vibrant media:

4.1 Free and independent Media:

A free and independent media is a mark of a healthy democracy. We shall promote free media through the following:

- » Ensure press freedom and protection of journalists by developing a Media Protection policy, which will be a guiding tenet for all government agencies and functionaries to follow in their interactions and dealings with media and the journalists.
- » The Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation Limited shall be designated as Public Service Broadcaster (PSB) as enshrined in the ICM Act of Bhutan 2018.
- » License a private television channel to promote diversity and plurality in broadcast news and entertainment programs.
- » Establish a Press Office under the Prime Minister's Office to promote access to information and facilitate regular interactions between government and media. The Press Office will proactively share and publish information to the public through government social media platforms and regular press briefings.



- » With the changing nature of media, the role of independent journalists has also become important in contributing to the nation building. We will officially recognize the role of independent journalists in our media and extend all support, including the ones that are extended to regular media personnel.
- » Citizen Journalism is an essential feature of the 21st century media. Through the Journalists' Association of Bhutan, we will promote citizen journalism by providing trainings and advocacy.

4.2 Access to information:

Timely access to information is crucial to a strong media. We shall promote access to information through the following initiatives:

- » Through an executive order, mandate all ministries and government agencies to proactively share public information.
- » Establish a Press Office under the Prime Minister's Office to promote access to information and facilitate regular interactions between government and media.
- » The Press Office will proactively share and publish information to the public through government social media platforms and regular press briefings.
- » Conduct monthly 'Meet the Press' during which the prime minister and cabinet ministers will directly respond to questions from the media.

4.3 Strong Media:

A strong and independent media fearlessly represents the voice of the people and holds the government accountable for its actions and in actions. We shall enable a strong media through the following initiatives:

- » Institute government journalism scholarships for higher studies to ensure that the country has a regular pool of qualified and professional journalists.
- » Organize internships programs for our journalists in international broadcast and newspaper outlets to develop capacity of our media personnel.
- » To recognize the contribution of the journalists and the media in the nation building process, the government will institute the 'National Journalism Award' that will be organized by the Journalists' Association of Bhutan annually.



Pledge

12

Governance -
A caring and people
centric governance





“One of the most significant obstacles facing our citizens and businesses is the burden of cumbersome and unnecessary regulations. Bureaucratic red tape and slow, lengthy processes continue to impede public service delivery. Our national goal of becoming a developed nation can only be realized if we eliminate all unnecessary regulations and ease cumbersome processes.”

Tshering Tobgay
PDP President



Good governance is at the heart of a successful democracy, impacting all aspects of society. Good governance must be an integral feature of how governments formulate and execute policies and development activities. PDP shall promote good governance through efficiency, people centric policies, accountability, and responsive public service delivery. To uphold and promote these principles, PDP shall undertake the following:

1 Public service delivery

1.1 Undertake a comprehensive study of all public service delivery interfaces to identify and eliminate redundant, unfriendly, and unnecessary regulations and processes that burden the general public in their interactions with government agencies.

1.2 Develop public service delivery standards in all affairs of government and people interactions and enact it as Citizen's Charter, which will serve as a minimum right of the citizens in receiving public services.

1.3 Establish a single access point for efficient and effective service delivery guided by Service Delivery Standards.

1.4 All officials discharging public service will be trained on friendly and accountable public service delivery to ensure that the public they serve are satisfied.

1.5 Conduct periodic assessments and service delivery ratings of public service agencies, and ensure the publication of these findings. Public service agencies and their heads will be evaluated by the public for the quality of services they deliver.



1.6 An Ombudsman or a Parliamentary Committee shall be established in the National Assembly to discuss, improve, and create public awareness to take public service delivery to the highest level in the country.

1.7 Government shall guarantee free media access to ensure that enhanced public service delivery is not just a pledge of the government but of the whole government functionary as a whole.

1.8 Harmonize all national laws and regulations to enable public to obtain public services efficiently and as a matter of right rather than being favored by the government.

Some specific interventions to improve public service delivery:

- » Ensure Members of Parliament assume full responsibility for addressing concerns and complaints raised by constituents residing within their respective constituencies, elsewhere in Bhutan, or abroad and ensure their accessibility through use of various social media platforms.
- » Commission an empowered committee to review problems faced by public and the businesses in our integrated gateways and immediately remove unnecessary regulations and ease out processes that burden the general public, truckers, and businesses.
- » Empower the Gewog Administration to approve the construction of traditional houses within a day in the villages without the need for detailed drawings. If needed, government will provide a general code for village house construction.
- » Allow felling of trees within one's own *thram* without having to seek approval from the Department of Forests and Park Services.



- » Do away with the need to convert *kamshing* into *Khimsa* for the purpose of constructing a house.
- » Allow conversion of a plot from the orchard into *khimsa* for the purpose of house construction (Non-commercial) to those without land for house.
- » Strengthen and empower the Dzongkhag Lease Committee (DLC) to allocate land for businesses through a dedicated window.
- » Streamline and ease the exit and entry processes in the border gateways for easy and smooth entry and exit of people and goods.

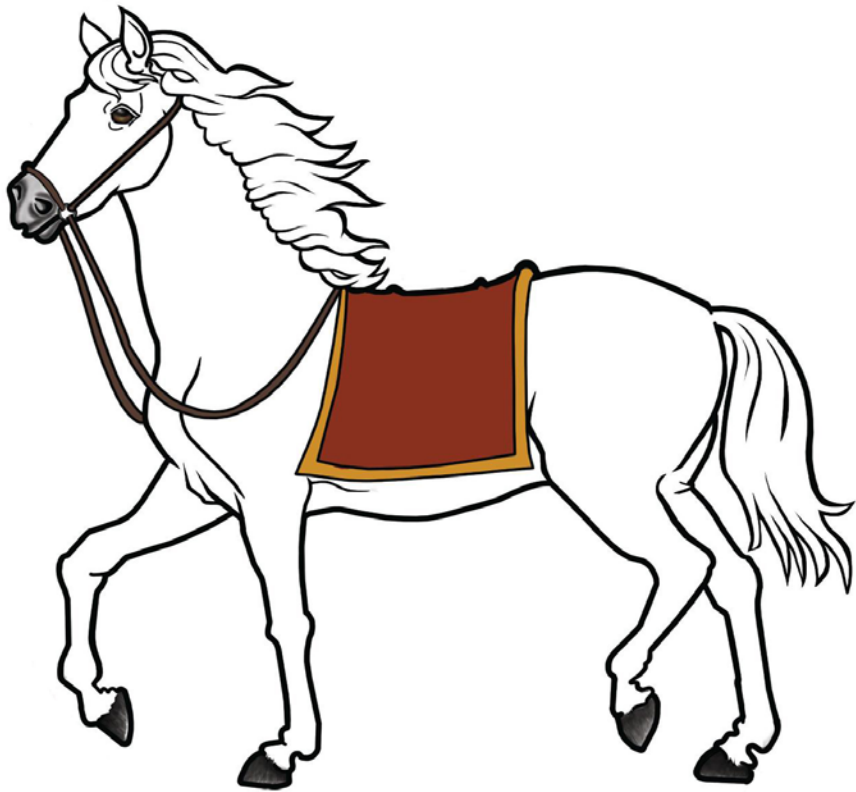
2

Civil Society Organizations

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in deepening democracy and overall betterment of society by complementing the efforts of the government and bridging gaps in service delivery, advocacy, and policy implementation. CSOs are also at the forefront of addressing the specific issues faced by vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population. They advocate for the rights of women, children, minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups. PDP recognizes the important role played by the CSOs and shall promote conducive policy and legislative environment for the CSOs to undertake their role in the society. To this end, we will:

- 2.1** Identify clusters of CSOs focusing on specific thematic areas and facilitate collaborative partnerships with relevant ministries and government agencies to jointly implement key development initiatives in those areas.
- 2.2** Provide training and capacity-building programs to strengthen the skills and knowledge of CSO members in areas such as project management, fundraising, advocacy, and governance.
- 2.3** Supports CSOs in diversifying their funding sources, including grants, donations, and partnerships with government agencies, private sector organizations, and international donors.





Pledge

13

Pledges for
Day One in Office





In the first meeting of the Lhengye Zhungtsho, the following decisions will be endorsed:

1. Announce the following:

- » Saturdays shall be 'off-days' where teachers and students do not have to come to the schools.

2. Issue an executive order to revise the tenancy agreement for the residents of Changjiji colony to allow them to occupy the apartments until their retirement.

3. Do away with the system to collect Nu.10 for Bhutanese entering the country at the Phuentsholing gateway.

4. Announce the establishment of Economic Development Board (EDB) with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson. The EDB with cross sectoral membership shall take up the role to steer our economy for revival and subsequent flourishing.

5. Announce the establishment of a high-powered task force to develop the implementation plan for 15 billion economic stimulus program (ESP). Amongst others, ESP will be used in the following sectors:

- » Banking sector to inject liquidity, enable loan deferments, reduce interest rates, create other loan scheme to boost the economy.
- » Set up special loan schemes to support special groups such as farmers, women, youth, persons with disabilities.
- » Special investments for economic growth of the Rural areas.
- » Creation of a specialized credit window dedicated for the CSIs.

6. Commission a comprehensive review of the business regulatory processes including at the exit and entry gateways. Require the review to be submitted in three months with concrete recommendations to remove all barriers and to ease the conduct of the businesses.

7. Instruct the relevant agency to revise the FDI policy to make it business friendly and to attract FDIs in large numbers and to allow FDI in small and medium sector.

8. Instruct the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to review the IWP and develop a performance measurement system specific to the needs of the teachers in consultation with RCSC.



9. Review the SDF regulation for tourists in the southern border towns to explore possibility of allowing tourists within the bordering towns without the levy of SDF.
10. Issue office order to all the Bhutanese embassies abroad to submit recommendations and ideas on how the embassy can promote inbound tourists to Bhutan.
11. Issue office order to the relevant agencies to develop a separate action plan to achieve inbound tourist number to 300,000 annually. The plan may include reviewing of the SDF and any other regulatory processes that needs to be changed. The plan should be developed in consultation with all tourism stakeholders.
12. Establish a sub-committee of Lhengye Zhungtsho (Cabinet) with working members from relevant agencies to work on regularization of contract employees.
13. Instruct relevant agencies to undertake feasibility study for the construction of five Airstrips in strategic locations across the country.



NA Elections 2023-24

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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