



2021 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Bhutan

March 2022



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Foreword by the Resident Coordinator

For the 31 UN agencies, funds and programmes that work in Bhutan, the year 2021 was an historic milestone marking Bhutan's 50th anniversary as a member of the UN. Events in 2021 commemorated the unique development journey of a unique country over the past half a century.

This significant milestone invites us to review the accomplishments of the UN-Bhutan partnership and consider how we can strengthen our cooperation. The partnership envisions an expansion of our ambition for Bhutan and its people leaving no one behind.

We are at an inflexion point in history and the choices we make will result in either a breakdown or breakthrough to a greener, better, safer future for generations to come in Bhutan. Today's UN must be ready to handle tomorrow's challenges. The choice is ours to make and we will not have this chance again.

That is why the Common Agenda is, above all, a programme of action designed to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as agreed by UN Member States. To achieve this the UN in Bhutan is committed to pursuing development with values grounded in Gross National Happiness to leave no one behind which is at the heart of this partnership.

In 2021, through the global COVAX facility, the UN assisted the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to successfully vaccinate 90% of its eligible population in what was hailed as the world's fastest vaccine rollout. To ensure the safe reopening of schools, the UN provided practical advice in policy reform, financing requirements, safe operations to reach the most marginalized people and at-risk children. The UN also contributed to an Education in Emergencies COVID-19 Response Plan.

The UN, partnering with civil society organizations (CSO) helped young Bhutanese develop innovative solutions to challenges caused or worsened by the pandemic. In response to a 53% increase in reported

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases during the pandemic, the UN supported the Royal Government to establish shelter homes, 24-hour help-desk services, and advocacy campaigns coinciding with International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women. This action brought together decision and policymakers to invest in prevention of sexual harassment and GBV initiatives.

The UN has been fortunate to support the Royal Government and its people through the COVID response. I wish to commend the Royal Government of Bhutan for its tireless efforts on the immediate response to the pandemic as well as longer-term recovery measures. I'm also deeply moved by how Bhutan has come together in solidarity during this time. His Majesty The King's leadership has inspired and encouraged the people of Bhutan to unite as one nation to address these challenges.

To mark Bhutan's 50th anniversary as a member of the UN, employees of the UN in Bhutan are most grateful to His Majesty for gifting the Tsendrong-UN Garden to mark this special 50th anniversary. The UN was proud and honoured to be given the Druk Thuksey (Heart Son of Bhutan) medal in 2021 by His Majesty the King in recognition of the UN's service to the country and as an important partner in Bhutan's socio-economic development. This award will inspire every one of us at the UN to work harder going forward for the people Bhutan.

On behalf of the 31 UN agencies, funds and programmes working in Bhutan, I reiterate our commitment to the Royal Government and the people of Bhutan. In turn, your unwavering commitment to Bhutan's development - in line with the values of Gross National Happiness - will help ensure the UN remains ever fit for purpose.

Together, we listen; and together we act in partnership.


Karla Robin Hershey
Resident Coordinator
Bhutan

UN COUNTRY TEAM AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

On September 21, 1971, the Royal Government of Bhutan became the 128th member of the United Nations and the Office of the United Nations in Bhutan was established in early 1974.

Since then, the country has hosted many UN agencies, funds and programmes that together support the Government in delivering national development needs and improving the socio-economic conditions of the people of Bhutan. UN Bhutan currently comprises nine resident agencies and twenty-four non-resident agencies.

Resident Agencies



Non-resident Agencies

The 24 United Nations Non-resident Agencies (NRAs) are an integral part of the work that the UN does in Bhutan. Working through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the NRAs support the UN Country Team by adding diverse technical expertise to the initiatives under the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework.



The UNCT is committed to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2019–2023 in partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), with the overall goal to support Bhutan in being a just, harmonious and sustainable society where no one is left behind. To do so, the UN aims to achieve results in four strategic outcome areas by 2023:

Outcome 1: Enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision making.

Outcome 2: Vulnerable and unreached people have access to and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Outcome 3: National stakeholders strengthened to provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups.

Outcome 4: Bhutan's communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability.

Key Partners of the UN development system in the country

Royal Government of Bhutan



The Prime Minister's Office, National Assembly of Bhutan, National Council of Bhutan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gross National Happiness Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Department of Disaster Management, Office of the Attorney-General, Dratshang Lhentshog, Royal Civil Service Commission, Royal Monetary Authority, National Commission for Women and Children, National Statistics Bureau, Anti-Corruption Commission, National Environment Commission, National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology, Tourism Council of Bhutan, District Administrations, Royal Bhutan Police, Department of Law and Order, Election Commission of Bhutan, National Film Commission

Academia

Royal University of Bhutan, Wangsel Institute for the Deaf, Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law, College of Natural Resources, Paro College of Education, Royal Thimphu College, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan, Royal Institute of Management, Sherubtse College

Civil Society Organization

Civil Service Organizations Authority, RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan Youth Development Fund, Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, Ability Bhutan Society, Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children and Youth, Nazhoen Lamtoen, Disabled Persons Organization of Bhutan, Loden Foundation, Bhutan Nuns Foundation, Bhutan for Life, Bhutan Stroke Foundation, Bhutan Women Parliamentary Caucus, Phuensum Parents Support Group Bhutan, SAARC Business Association of Home Based Work, Bhutan Board for Certified Counselors, Bhutan Cricket Council Board, Bhutan Ecological Society, Bhutan Toilet Organization, Clean Bhutan, Greener Way, Handicrafts Association of Bhutan, Bhutan Cancer Society, Bhutan Kidney Foundation, GNH Centre Bhutan, Lhak-Sam, Royal Society for Senior Citizens, Royal Textile Academy, Lho-mon/ Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative, The Gyalum Charitable Trust Fund, Association of Bhutanese Industries, Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators, Film Association of Bhutan, Guide Association of Bhutan, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan, VAST - Bhutan, Center for Research on Bhutanese Society, Bhutan Taxi Association, Journalist Association of Bhutan, Evaluation Association of Bhutan, Bhutan Network for Empowering Women, Bhutan Transparency Initiative, Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care, Bhutan Media Foundation, Chithuen Phendey Association

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Asian Development Bank, Austrian Development Agency, Bhutan Canada Foundation, Bhutan Foundation, World Bank, Bhutan Red Cross Society, European Union Delegation to India and Bhutan, European Investment Bank, Helvetas, International Finance Corporation, International IDEA, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Korea International Cooperation Agency, SAARC Development Secretariat, Save the Children, Savings Bank Foundation for International Cooperation, SNV, World Wildlife Fund, Bangladesh Embassy, Indian Embassy, Kuwait Embassy, Consulate of France, Consulate of the Netherlands, Consulate of Sweden, Consulate of the UK, Austrian Embassy (New Delhi), British High Commission (New Delhi), High Commission of Canada (New Delhi) German Embassy (New Delhi), High Commission of the Republic of Singapore (New Delhi), Embassy of Switzerland to India and Bhutan (New Delhi), Embassy of Sweden (New Delhi), Embassy of the United States of America (New Delhi), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Norwegian Embassy (New Delhi)

PRIVATE SECTOR

Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fablab

Non-Governmental Organization

Bhutan Trust Fund for Environment Conservation

Chapter 1: Key developments in the country and the regional context



The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is situated within the overarching framework of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is in line with Bhutan's principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH) that calls for responsible, sustainable, equitable and inclusive development. The Royal Government's overall objective of achieving a 'just, harmonious and sustainable society through enhanced decentralization' strongly aligns with the concept of 'leaving no one behind.'

Bhutan remains a largely rural nation, with two-thirds of people residing in villages. Critically however, internal migration and urbanisation have increased. Projections vary as to how soon and by what degree Bhutan will be urbanised, with one estimate at over 50% urbanisation by 2040. The year 2040 is seen as an important turning point as this is when the demographic dividend window will start closing, the working-age population will start declining, the elderly population will start increasing and the urban population will surpass the rural population. Such demographic dynamics points to the need for greater investments in the development needs of young people, care for the elderly population and a strategy for addressing increasing internal migration and urbanisation.

As a globally recognised leader in sustainable development and environmental stewardship, Bhutan gives balanced importance to the health and wellbeing of the planet and to the needs of its people. This is embodied in its development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and the protection of the environment is further enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental duty of all the people of Bhutan for the benefit of present and future generations. In its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to tackling climate change, Bhutan has committed to remaining carbon neutral, with greenhouse gas emissions not exceeding carbon sequestration by its forests.



While Bhutan is one of the smallest economies in the world, it is also one of the fastest growing. A combination of prudent fiscal and monetary policy, as well as robust investments in hydropower has largely facilitated its growth over the years. While the economy was severely impacted by COVID-19, the Royal Government remains focussed on Bhutan's planned graduation to lower middle-income status by 2023.

While the country managed the pandemic well during 2021 from a health perspective, it had a serious impact on key economic sectors such as tourism, which contributes to more than 9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the biggest contributor to youth employment. In response, the UN supported the Royal Government with projects that created opportunities for a green recovery, boosting domestic tourism and related employment and increasing community resilience through mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism development.

Bhutan saw an all-time low of minus 10.8% in its economy amid the pandemic which is a 16% drop compared to a growth of 5.46% in 2019.

However, primary sectors like agriculture, livestock and forestry recorded a growth of 4.57%, an increase of more than 3%. To support the country's immediate needs and long-term recovery from the pandemic, the UN, with support and guidance from the Royal Government, prioritized the reprogramming of the 2021 Joint Annual Workplan, adapting it to the immediate needs of the country in response to the pandemic.

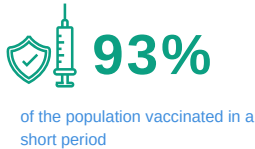
In the third year of implementing its Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2019-2023, this repurposing focussed on support to the Royal Government to ensure continuity of essential social services, economic recovery to ensure no one is left behind and developing innovative approaches to building Bhutan back stronger.

The UN continued to support the Government's efforts to contain the pandemic, contributing to the two-dose vaccination of adults (90%) and children aged 12-17 years (93%) or 76% of the total eligible population. The UN also provided comprehensive emergency support and delivered public health messages to help protect the most vulnerable and develop a stronger and a more resilient health system in the country.

Chapter 2: UN development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

Key indicators that show the socio-economic impact



Bhutan continued to respond efficiently and effectively to the pandemic during 2021 under the exemplary leadership of His Majesty The King and supported by the Royal Government. From the onset of the pandemic to the successful double-dose vaccination of almost its entire eligible population, Bhutan has been a beacon of hope in the region during these challenging times.

The UN supported the Royal Government’s efforts to contain the pandemic, strengthening the resilience of health systems through the establishment of the Bhutan Vaccine System (BVS) that contributed to vaccinating 93% of the population in a short period.

In line with the evolving needs of the Royal Government, the UN also repurposed its priorities to support pandemic response and recovery efforts, while continuing to work on building livelihoods, human capital development, strengthening institutional capacities and systems across nutrition, food systems and disaster risk management.

While Bhutan managed the health impacts successfully, the socio-economic impacts continued to be significant. The tourism industry - a major source of revenue and employment for the country - once more remained shut for the entire year. The GDP contracted for the second time in a row by; 10% in 2020 and 3.7 % in 2021.

The unemployment rate reached 5 %, with youth unemployment soaring to a record high of 22.6 %, with female youth hit the hardest. The Druk Gyalpo’s (His Majesty’s) Relief Kidu Fund was extended for another year and continued to be a vital economic lifeline for the most affected.

In response, the UN helped shape a joint UN-Royal Government platform which brought together various stakeholders to co-design a portfolio of solutions to address youth unemployment. The platform catalyzed the partnership to transform the digital job ecosystem, which in turn became an investment priority of the Royal Government.

Amid the pandemic, the country experienced the triple burden of malnutrition with co-existence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overnutrition. Non-communicable diseases accounted for 69% of Bhutan’s disease burden and 71% of deaths. National lockdowns and prolonged school closures due to the pandemic caused disruption to the school-feeding programme, affecting the growth and development of students in their formative years.



In response, the UN and the Royal Government, together with other development partners, finalized the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025) to guide multi-sectoral nutrition-related interventions both within and outside the Royal Government. In addition, the UN Food Systems Dialogue published a bold and progressive pathway document for restructuring Bhutan's food system forming the basis for revising Bhutan's Agriculture Strategy 2030.

Strict pandemic restrictions and protocols continued to pose challenges for service delivery especially for the many scattered communities residing in mountainous terrains. However Bhutan's recent focus on the digitization of certain government services helped ensure health and judiciary services were made accessible to vulnerable groups, ensuring no one was left behind.

The UN played a pivotal role in Bhutan in supporting the Royal Government with disaster risk management to enhance national resilience to climate change and other disasters.

Despite challenges imposed by COVID-19, the UN supported the Royal Government in disaster preparedness and response in the areas of governance and coordination, data, logistics, emergency telecommunication and food security.

The mid-term review of the 12th Five-Year Plan (FYP) intensified the focus on the nation's recovery from COVID-19. The UN, along with other development partners, engaged in this high-level exercise led by the Royal Government to repurpose investments toward core priorities in line with the Economic Contingency Plan (ECP). With a vision to build forward better, prevention of violence against women, protection of livelihoods, the welfare of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and mental health, among others, were identified as key priorities.

The UN also supported the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) and developed the Second Nationally Determined Contribution.

2.2. Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs

Outcome 1: Data and Policy

By 2023, there is enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making.

Lead Agency



Participating Agencies



Bhutan continues to focus on strengthening its institutions to become more capable, producing timely and reliable statistics and data and is working on delivering quality statistics to data users and the general public, in support of evidence-based decision making.

With support from the UN, the Dashboard to Enhance Wellbeing of All (DEWA) continued to significantly strengthen the capacity of the Royal Government, ensuring Bhutan's Voluntary National Report of the SDGs was more evidence-based. This report was presented for the second time at the High-Level

Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2021.

The UN supported the Royal Government in producing a thematic report on young people in Bhutan, examining the issues and challenges faced by youth, suggesting the implementation of more effective policies and additional investments. The report recommended establishing a dedicated National Youth Fund as one of the flagship projects of the SDGs 2030. An outline of 'The Current Situation and Future Prospects of the Elderly: Bhutan Ageing Report, 2022' was also developed by National Statistics Bureau with the support of the UN.

The UN assisted the Royal Government in establishing the Bhutan Statistical Database System as a means of upgrading the existing Local Government portal



support was provided to strengthen agricultural monitoring and reporting systems by developing the Mobile Operational Data Acquisition Platform for future improvements.

The UN assisted the Royal Government in establishing the Bhutan Statistical Database System as a means of upgrading the existing Local Government portal. Similarly, support was provided to strengthen agricultural monitoring and reporting systems by developing the Mobile Operational Data Acquisition Platform which monitors performance, determines where and when to take action, assesses results of these interventions and informs plans for future improvements.

In partnership with the Royal Government, the UN was also able to form the first National Logistics Preparedness Working Group. As a result of these convening efforts by the UN, a National Action Plan was developed which will further enhance the country's logistics preparedness in the face of future disasters and emergencies.



Outcome 2: Essential Social Services

By 2023, vulnerable and unreached people access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Lead Agency



Participating Agencies



Despite the challenges of the pandemic, progress was made in protecting and supporting children, adolescents, women and hard to reach population groups with equitable, accessible quality healthcare and education services together with improved nutrition.

Bhutan launched its COVID-19 vaccination program on 27 March 2021 and by the end of the two-week, nationwide vaccination campaign, Bhutan achieved a vaccination rate of more than 93% among the adult population, becoming one of the highest vaccinated countries within a record period. Despite supply shipment disruptions, the UN ensured all routine vaccines were procured and delivered on time with a minimum of six months stock. Contributing to the smooth and effective vaccine roll out was the UN's support of the Bhutan Vaccine System (BVS) enabling the registration of eligible populations, pre-screening questionnaires, recording of immunizations and the reporting of Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) online and in real-time.

To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the UN supported the training of health-care workers in emergency simulation exercises, strengthened surveillance and contact tracing and supplied Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), laboratory supplies, COVID-19 testing kits and infection control supplies.

This helped to reduce the risks of infection in the population, resulting in zero infection or death amongst health workers. The enhanced testing, early detection and timely management of cases also reduced related morbidity and mortality rates.

Electric cookers were provided to the Royal Government replacing wood-based cookers to improve the health and well-being of cooks, maintain kitchen hygiene standards, meet increased feeding requirements in line with COVID-19 protocols for hospital in-patients and attendants and reduce the dependency on LPG by hospitals.

With assistance from the UN, the Royal Government scaled up its support for the Prevention of Essential Non-Communicable Diseases (PEN) across the five districts of Gasa, Dagana, Mongar, Bumthang and Lhuntse following the initial successful implementation in four pilot districts of Wangdiphodrang, Tsirang, Zhemgang and Punakha.

The UN also helped close the gap between evidence and action, encouraging more health professionals to use evidence-based approaches to practice. As part of this work, the UN supported the development of national Health Service Standards, Health Workforce Standards, the Human Resources for Health Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Nursing and Midwifery Plan to align with evolving workforce needs in the country.



20,824
YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN SKILLING AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMES



54,463
CHILDREN, PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES



616
ACCESSED CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.



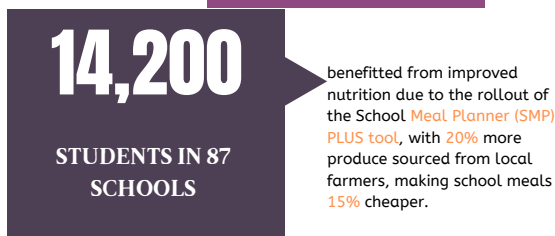
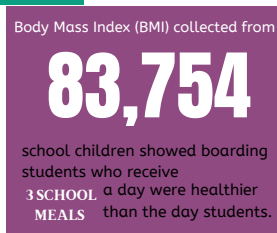
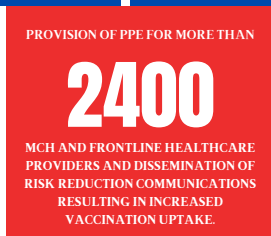
597
SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS, INCLUDING MONKS AND NUNS CAPABLE OF IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE, ABUSE, AND NEGLECT AS A RESULT OF TRAINING IN STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



26
THE UN CONTRIBUTED TO CERTIFICATION OF OPEN DEFECACTION FREE STATUS IN 26 BLOCKS



58,260
PEOPLE BENEFITTING FROM 100% IMPROVED SANITATION

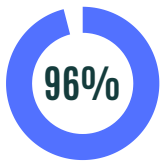


In addition, the UN and other development partners continued to support the Royal Government in expanding equitable access to education, with a focus on enhancing quality inclusive education for vulnerable children. The UN supported the government to enable six additional schools to become schools for Children with Disabilities, providing access to special education for an additional 150 students with disabilities.

The School Feeding and Nutrition Management Handbook was also endorsed to guide planning, implementation and programme management and function as a resource for capacity strengthening of staff.

Following the pandemic and the closures of schools, contact teaching resumed in early 2021 with the UN-supported 'New Normal Curriculum' in place. The UN assisted in carrying out the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers training which equipped all teachers to better use information and communications technology in delivering the new curriculum.

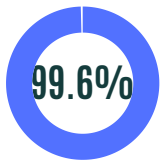
Building on the National Parenting Education Programme, the UN supported the Royal Government in piloting the Caring for Caregiver package across three districts, with Bhutan becoming the first country in Asia to pilot this programme. The UN also played a key role in convening multiple stakeholders to develop the Multi-Sectoral ECCD Strategic Action Plan and Early Childhood Intervention Package. In addition, close to 9,000 pre-schoolers were provided with COVID-19 preventive items such as soap, disinfectant and hygiene communication materials, as ECCD centres reopened safely in March.



of the population obtained improved access to sanitation facilities of students covered by the National School Nutrition programme.



of population (combined adults and children 12-17 years) vaccinated with double dose



of the first priority group vaccinated with the booster dose

The UN supported the Royal Government to empower young people and adolescents with the information, knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices about their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) by conducting a Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Schools Program in communities and monastic institutions and supported the development of policies and guidelines for implementation in these institutions and in CSOs. The UN also helped ensure the continued education of young people in SRHR and GBV prevention, through support for the Y-PEER network across 19 colleges and vocational institutions and the development of an e-course training module that benefited more than 436 young people.



A total of 9,381 children in 20 schools and 5,289 children in 65 monastic institutions benefitted from quality WASH services.

installation of mass handwashing stations in 48 Primary Health Facilities and five Youth Centers



Supplied soap and hand-hygiene communications to 105,033 people, including 95,321 children in 475 schools.

In addition, the UN supported the revision of the National Midwifery and Family Planning Service Standards to include specific guidelines on the provision of Family Planning Services to the adolescent and LGBTIQ community, in an effort to create a more inclusive service delivery program for vulnerable populations.

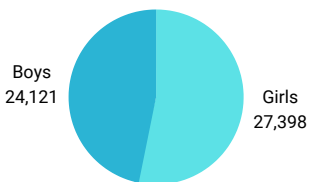
The UN also assisted in developing case management guidelines for Child Protection and Gender-based Violence and in addition a multi-sector Ending Violence Against Children campaign focusing on physical and sexual violence, online safety and mental health was finalized in preparation for a roll-out in 2022 with the UN's support.

To reach the most vulnerable, the UN supported CSOs to deliver targeted approaches to livelihood support. For example, the UN supported the Disabled People's Organization to create four small businesses for 30 People With a Disability (PWD) - 15 of which were women. This strengthened the focus among Development Partner's to ensure no-one is left behind.

The UN continued to engage with the Royal Government on reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and with the UN's support, the first-ever Civil Society Report and Children's Report were successfully submitted to the Committee

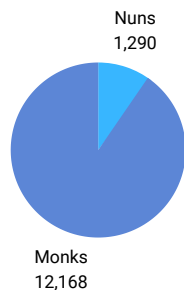
UN's support to WASH Services since the COVID-19 Pandemic

Schools



Total schools: 213

Monastic Institutions



Total monastic institutions: 250

Outcome 3: Governance

By 2023, national stakeholders strengthened to provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups.

Lead Agency



Participating Agencies



In 2021, continued to support the Royal Government in further exercising the principles of responsive democratic governance at the national and local levels and intensified efforts to find programmatic and policy solutions to create an ecosystem supportive of economic opportunities for the most vulnerable groups, curb corruption and combat Gender-Based Violence.

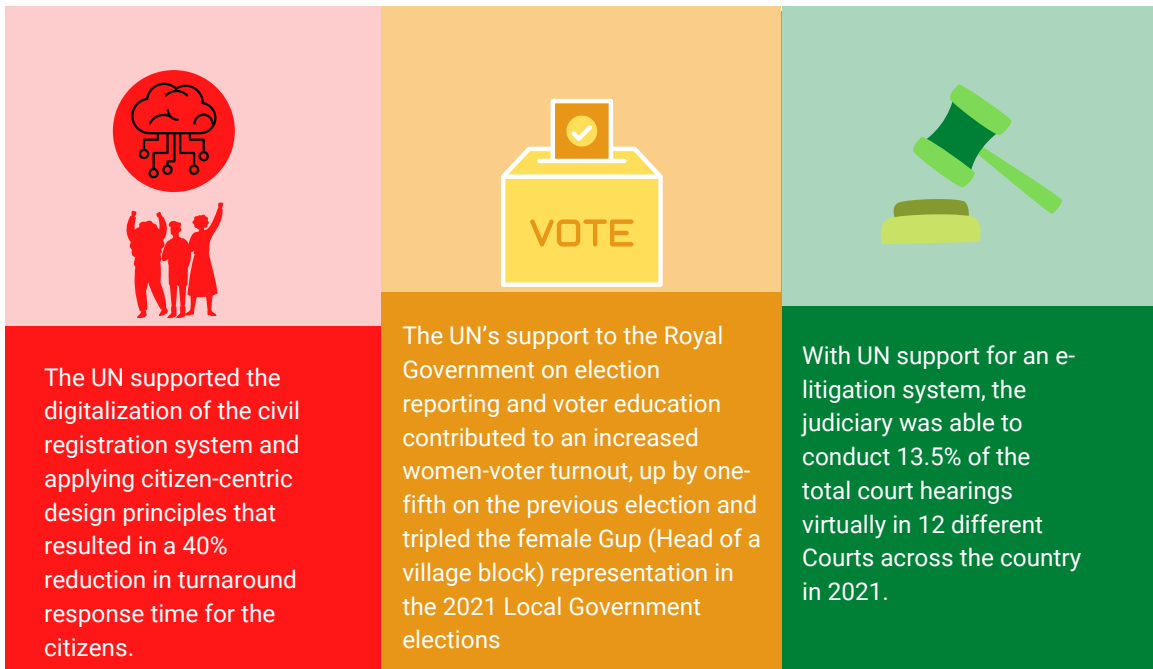
The UN provided ongoing support in regards to public sector innovation, as the centrepiece of governance reform for the Royal Government in 2021 and helped enhance the capacity of institutions to provide uninterrupted, equitable delivery of critical public services. The UN supported the development of a digital service evaluation platform that enabled collection of real time feedback from service users to strengthen service delivery processes. As part of the initiative, citizen-centric design principles were applied, resulting in a 40% reduction in turnaround response time for citizens.

The UN's support to the Royal Government on election reporting and voter education contributed to an increased women-voter turnout, up by one-fifth on the previous election and tripled the female Gup (Head of a village block) representation in the 2021 Local Government elections. By utilizing the UN's global expertise and knowledge, the UN

Bhutan was able to help the Election Commission create an enabling environment for women's participation in the election.

The UN also supported the introduction of an e-litigation system which helped ensure continued access to legal services during the pandemic, benefitting over 300 people. With UN support, the judiciary was able to conduct 13.5% of the total court hearings virtually in 12 different courts across the country. Specific interventions were also supported targeting vulnerable women, contributing to empowering women seeking legal support who were otherwise at risk of being left behind. The UN supported the Royal Government to establish the country's first official Legal Aid Guidelines and helped deliver a pilot program providing legal aid to ten vulnerable women by engaging professional lawyers to assist. This pilot program instilled confidence in the Royal Government to adopt a national legal aid system which the UN will support in 2022.

Building on the UN's past work on the Justice Sector Strategic Plan, the CSO engagement programme for anti-corruption, justice and governance was finalized and the CSO Amendment Bill 2021 was tabled at the Parliament.



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With UN support for an e-litigation system, the judiciary was able to conduct 13.5% of the total court hearings virtually in 12 different Courts across the country in 2021.

The UN supported the Royal Government in developing the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality, ensuring the effective implementation of the Gender Equality Policy. The UN also provided technical expertise to ensure the female perspective was included in the drafting of 10th Periodic Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) report. This secured a strong commitment by the Royal Government and stakeholders in the preparation of a high-quality report scheduled for submission to the CEDAW Committee in March 2022.

Support was given to the CSO and private sectors to create more female-friendly work environments, with the UN assisting in an assessment of four major private sector companies. The outcome of the exercise helped establish an ongoing dialogue with the private sector for a more inclusive, healthier and fairer work environment for a more inclusive, healthier and fairer work environment for women. Several training programs were held targeting 140 business leaders and other officials from across the private sector. The programme resulted in a new commitment to create company-specific policies for equality in the workplace.

The UN supported the Royal Government to establish macroeconomic forecasting models, which will aid in making decisions relating to budget projections, macroeconomic forecasts, and fiscal sustainability. The models

were co-created with 27 government officials providing them with skills and knowledge for developing and using the system.

As part of a major effort to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP), the Royal Government adopted the landmark Bhutan Penal Code (Amendment Act) in 2021. The amendment strengthened Bhutan's capacity to effectively prevent and counter TIP and to protect and assist survivors, in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

The UN was also at the forefront of a multi-stakeholder response to TIP with a range of impact-oriented activities and initiatives. The UN organized a capacity building workshop for judiciary officials, following the launch of an official training manual. The training was developed with the objective of enhancing the capability and skills of judges to effectively detect TIP cases and implement anti-trafficking legislation.

The National Prevention and Response Strategy was also drafted and the UN supported the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) to prevent and counter TIP in Bhutan.

The UN supported the capacity building of 187 multi-stakeholder frontliners across 9 districts on the implementation of the SOP to address TIP in Bhutan. Supported by the UN, 4223 youth were provided with knowledge on TIP reporting mechanisms and support services available in the country through 17 awareness programs across various educational institutions.

Outcome 4: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

By 2023, Bhutan's vulnerable communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss.

Lead Agency



Participating Agencies



With about 57% of the population depending on agriculture for a living, climate change is a major threat to the livelihoods of many people in Bhutan and ensuring agricultural production and food security is a priority for the Royal Government. The UN continues to support it with climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction programmes.

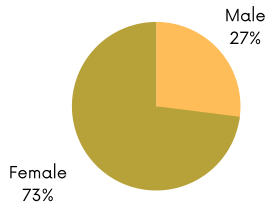
Agriculture was identified as one of the three main sectors in the Royal Government's Economic Contingency Plan towards a COVID Recovery and the UN's work in the area of climate action was focused on

the agricultural sector. The UN supported the Royal Government to help the farming population become more resilient to climate induced shocks, through the scaling up of climate resilient technologies and practices. One of UN's strategies for climate-resilient food systems is to support food self-sufficiency and foster a renewable natural resources sector while ensuring sustainable resource management in Bhutan's 12th-Five-Year Plan.

In 2021, the UN supported Bhutan's efforts at transforming the food system through appropriate climate adaptation of farming systems. This included the distribution of green technologies to over 2,000 smallholder farmers in the districts of Trongsa and



147 farmers' groups comprising of 1311 farmers secured access to sustainable income through market linkages to schools and hospitals.



Of the 1311 farmers 73% was female

Zhemgang, saving farmers both time and money, helping safeguard Bhutan's biodiversity and reducing the pressure on Bhutan's natural resources.

Another 40,367 people now have secure access to climate-proof irrigation channels that enable crop diversification, resulting in greater income opportunities – due to climate resilient infrastructure supported by the UNDP and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

More remote communities can gain access to a marketplace for their agricultural goods and services due to 316 kilometers of climate-resilient farm roads and gewog connectivity roads.

To date, a total of 19,354 men and 41,521 women benefited from climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable natural resource management technologies.

With support from the UN, targeted efforts were made to build the capacity of more women to take a lead role in agricultural activities. The UN supported the Royal Government with the delivery of training programs in soil fertility, sustainable land management, agriculture water management, protected cultivation technologies and seed production technologies. This climate-resilient irrigation scheme greatly reduced the workload of women as they no longer spent time doing routine maintenance work, creating time for more profitable economic activities.

In 2021, the UN Food System Summit 2021 state level dialogues resulted in the submission of Bhutan's pathway document, "Food Systems for Gross National Happiness – transformative pathways for Bhutan." The UN also supported the revision of the Renewable Natural

Resources (RNR) Strategy 2030, in line with UN plans to support development of a holistic food system approach in Bhutan. The strategy aims to ensure food and nutrition security, boosting the GDP contribution of the RNR sector, business and employment generation, rural prosperity and urban wellbeing, sustainable natural resource management and Bhutan's carbon neutral status. The UN also supported the drafting of the RNR marketing strategy, steering the RNR sector towards market-oriented production and inclusive business opportunities for market and value chain development.

In addition, the UN supported 10 youth groups to establish vegetable production and marketing initiatives as part of the Royal Government's COVID-19 recovery initiatives. This support was instrumental in meeting local vegetable needs during the pandemic when supplies were disrupted.

Support was also given to building the meteorological and weather forecasting capacity of the National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology, enabling tailored climate products and services for farmers, helping them make critical decisions, climate informed decisions regarding agricultural practices.

The UN also provided one drone to the National Land Commission to enhance their capacity on the use of drones in surveying inhospitable and unfriendly topographical areas. The aerial images from the drone were integrated with surveying workflows to perform various surveys, mapping and remote sensing analysis. The drones also contributed towards early warning



systems and helped strengthen the capacity of agencies such as the National Center for Hydro-Meteorology. Moreover, the UN helped develop the National Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management and established the National Logistics Preparedness Working Group.

To maintain carbon neutrality is the cornerstone of Bhutan's climate policy. The UN therefore provided targeted policy and programme support and developed an enhanced 2nd Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), informed by low emission development strategies in key priority sectors of human settlement, transport, industry and agriculture. The NDC was submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and will serve as an investment framework. Noting uncertainties posed by climate change impact on energy security and to diversify into alternate renewable energy sources, Bhutan's first grid-tied solar plant was trialed in the district of Wangduephodrang and 29.35 tCO₂/year was avoided through a transition to electric vehicles.

The UN also supported the development of Bhutan's first National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The NAP was informed by gender sensitive vulnerability assessments undertaken in the priority sectors of Agriculture, Forest and Biodiversity, Health, and Water. In addition to setting the adaptation priorities for the medium to long term, the NAP served as an important national instrument to mobilize international climate financing. To support implementation, a concept note on "Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Engagement in Local Government" (CARE-LG) to upscale the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) was submitted and approved by The Global Environment Facility (GEF) to prepare a USD 8.9 million project enhancing adaptation in the water sector. The UN also supported Bhutan's 'Direct Access to Climate Financing' for locally led adaptation, by assisting the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation's (BTFC) accreditation with the Green Climate Fund.

Despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19 protocols, the UN supported the Royal Government in disaster preparedness and response in the areas of coordination, logistics, data collection and emergency telecommunications. Initiatives such as impact analysis through the increased communication capacity of



28% of the total farming population (127,072) can now tackle poverty through sustainable management of their natural resources - thanks to inclusive, multi-hazard and risk-informed systems and capacities in place.



86,705 have benefitted from this sustainable management of natural resources.

407,955 hectares of forest area under a participatory management regime, through the implementation of 26 Local Forest Management Plans which are now operational.



Another 40,367 people now have secure access to climate-proof irrigation channels which in turn enables crop diversification, resulting in greater income opportunities - due to climate resilient infrastructure supported by the UN

More remote communities can gain access to a marketplace for their agricultural goods and services due to 316 kilometers of climate-resilient farm roads and gewog connectivity roads.



To date, a total of 19,354 men and 41,521 women benefited from climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable natural resource management technologies.

By replacing conventional taxis with electric vehicles, 29.35 tonnes less of carbon dioxide was used as part of a UN-supported low emission transport project.



disaster responders were also supported, providing training in the development of standard operating procedures in emergency communications for frontliners. With UN support, the Government also developed an Emergency Health Financing Strategy in Response to the pandemic, aimed at helping the Ministries identify financing measures for the health sector and put in place clear institutional arrangements and legislation for public financing during emergencies.

To ensure better social outcomes at a local level, a budget and expenditure analysis of the local government annual grant system was conducted by the Royal Government with the support of the UN, while at the same time the UN assisted in the development of a social security system for monks and nuns to improve livelihoods and social security coverage in the country.

2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda



SDG Joint Fund

The Joint Programme of the SDG Fund aims to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by strengthening the overall financing ecosystem of Bhutan and leverage more resources that can target SDG progress. Specifically, the programme assesses the financing landscape, reviews existing policy frameworks and identifies institutional arrangements and financing mechanisms that can help support key milestones of the SDGs within the timeframe of the 12th Five Year Plan and over the longer horizon of the 2030 Agenda.

The UN, through this Joint Programme, supported the Royal Government to carry out an assessment of the annual grant system in terms of achieving local government key result areas, as aligned with national plan and SDGs. The assessment recommends that Local Government needs a clear guideline on the allocation of annual grants for different sectoral priorities and better coordination between the district and sub-district authorities by reviewing the division of responsibilities framework, among others.

The findings of the assessment, once complete, will help the Royal Government revise the guidelines and enhance the ownership and accountability of the Local Governments for the use of funds.

The UN also supported the development of a sustainable social security scheme for one of the most vulnerable groups - monks and nuns under the Dratshang Lhentshog (Central Monastic Body), the oldest institution in the country. On this basis, a complete comprehensive assessment and recommendation of setting up a sustainable pension system has been submitted to the Royal Government. Once approved, this will provide crucial social security to improve livelihoods and increase social security coverage in the country.

The proposal for the development of a pension system has also improved the understanding of the key government officials in the context of providing meaningful social security to monks and nuns, who anchor society's spiritual and cultural ethos in Bhutan for peaceful and harmonious living. In the last quarter of 2021, the Central Monastic Body had in-principle committed Nu.50 million (approx. USD 675,000) as seed-fund in setting up a sustainable pension system.

In support of creating employment for Bhutan's educated youth, this joint programme also supported the development of a strategic blueprint for resource mobilization for the film and related industry. This strategic roadmap will support professionalizing the Bhutanese film and related industries which are currently operating largely in an informal manner, provide job opportunities for the young people, enable access to



finance, the adoption of technology, identify skills needs and gaps and bring about much needed diversification to the economy through creative industries. It also provided the newly established National Film Commission (an autonomous agency tasked with building a strong and vibrant creative media sector in the country) with much-needed guidance on the future of the film industry including an enabling policy environment.

The Royal Government is currently undertaking two financing strategies for priority sectors in preparation of the 13th Five Year Plan (2023-2028). The next plan, like the current plan, will be aligned to the SDGs and has an overarching focus on the economy and human capital.

Through this programme, the UN will support the Royal Government to develop sustainable and innovative financing mechanisms for Bhutan's Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Sector and support the Royal Government with the development of a financing strategy for health emergencies. This programme is aligned with the Royal Government's COVID response and recovery plan supporting resource mobilization through innovative financing strategies, supporting risk informed fiscal policy that incorporates learnings from the impact of pandemics on the government's fiscal position, introducing and strengthening social protection of the vulnerable population; and assessing impact of COVID on key sectors for evidence-based response measures.

Development Partners Group

The Development Partners' Group (DPG) is a valuable platform for finding opportunities for synergies and partnerships amongst the development partners in the country and plays a catalytic role in aiding transformative development in Bhutan. It presents opportunity for development partners to learn and understand latest development updates and priorities of the country. In 2021, the UN led a series of bi-monthly DPG meetings on important topics to deliver results together with Bhutan's bilateral and multilateral partners. Topics ranged from the socio-economic response plan of the UN during COVID-19, Bhutan's vaccination roll-out plan, food systems pathways for the development of agriculture as well as a presentation on Bhutan's Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook made by the Ministry of Finance focusing on the risks and challenges, both externally and internally, in the context of negative growth in the economy.

The Royal Government also presented on redefining Bhutan's climate ambition with its second Nationally Determined Contributions highlighting key follow-ups and opportunities for partnerships within the DPG. Areas of collaboration and partnership included supporting Low Emission Development plans and strategies, the National REDD+ (reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Strategy and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy.



2.4. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

The Operations Management Team (OMT) worked closely with all UN agencies in Bhutan to uphold the expectations of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and implement the principles of Delivering as One (DaO) to reduce costs and increase quality and efficiency in common business operations at the country level.

In 2021 the focus of business operations was to:

Promote a continuous learning culture

In June 2021 the One UN Purpose Lab was launched, a coaching programme on living and leading with purpose, consisting of representatives from all UN agencies in the country with the aim of creating a space for people to grow together, to discuss, debate, decide and deliver outcomes that go the extra mile and to create leaders with purpose. Through the learnings from the lab, individuals were able to experiment, practice and replicate the tools in their respective professional and personal space.

The initiation of One UN Purpose Lab resulted in:

- Participants identifying their personal purpose for life, and life-giving goals.
- Strong partnerships being built and more bonding between the agencies.
- A commitment to contribute to and promote delivering as One UN. The cohort prepared an action plan to promote Delivering as One and to foster more partnership amongst agencies which will be implemented in 2022.

Due to the success of this group, the UNCT has approved a second One UN Purpose Lab with the theme 'Impacting the Lives of Youth'.

Staff wellbeing

The OMT also establishment a proper child-care facility complete with a lactation room in the UN House with the support of UNICEF for the first year and for 2022 and there is now a sustainable source of funding (thanks to multiple agency contributions) to continue. This initiative supports the UNSDG 3- Good health & Wellbeing and UNSDG 5- Gender Equality by reducing staff stress relating to child care and promoting work life balance.

Workplace environments are an essential factor for increasing productivity and for improving overall well-being. In order to foster a healthy and vibrant atmosphere, these spaces were enhanced with new roofing over the exterior space of the cafeteria to accommodate more people for informal meetings and coffee breaks and to create more space for people to interact with each other. In addition, beautification and greening of the gardens were done to create a pleasant outdoor environment.

The first Peer Support Volunteer (PSV) Group was also established last year during the pandemic along with other mental health initiatives to provide a first level support mechanism for staff support. The PSV provided basic informal psychological support to complement the formal counselling process available.

Sustainable infrastructure and the greening of UN House

·Greening initiatives: Since 2015 the UN has been implementing many greening initiatives such as the installation of a solar heating system, paper recycling, elimination of PET bottles, rainwater harvesting, installation of energy efficient windows, introduction of e-signatures, waste segregation and water-efficient fixtures. In 2021 the 83KV grid rooftop solar PV system was launched and an additional 7.6 KV was installed on the roof of the cafeteria. As a result the office was able to offset 40% of its electrical power use and 33% was exported to the grid system.

·UN Carpool system: In line with UNSDG 13- Climate Action, the OMT established a common carpool system consisting of 3 cars (2 hybrid and one electric vehicle). Using low-level emissions, these cars provided by UNDP, UNICEF and WFP, reduced harmful gas emissions, minimized vehicle use through an effective carpooling option and encouraged less fleet maintenance for smaller agencies who can now rely on larger organizations for transportation.

Bhutan's commitment to International Peace and Security



UN Peacekeeping helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Integrating police and troops from around the world with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

In September 2014, Bhutan joined the UN peacekeeping operations and since then peacekeepers have been dispatched regularly to destinations across the world. Since then Bhutan has been contributing peacekeepers to various UN peacekeeping operations, representing Bhutan's desire and willingness to give back to the UN. Bhutan was also the first troop contributing country to sign a Rapid Deployment Level Agreement with the UN in 2017. As per the agreement, Bhutan annually pledged a Force Protection Company consisting of a military unit of 200 troops in the highest state of readiness to be deployed within sixty days of receiving a notification from the UN.

Bhutan is currently ranked 84 out of the 123 contributing countries. Additionally, 230 Bhutanese peacekeepers completed their assignments as of December 2021.



Commemoration of Bhutan's 50th anniversary as a member to the UN



On the 21st September 2021, Bhutan marked its 50th anniversary as the 128th member of the United Nations. Over the years, the country has been home to many UN agencies, funds and programmes that together, have supported the Royal Government of Bhutan in delivering national development needs and improving the socio-economic conditions of the people of Bhutan. This special occasion was marked by a series of year-long activities including events, dialogues, advocacy campaigns and the launch of a commemorative book, charting Bhutan's journey as a member state from 1971 through to 2021.

It was also the first time that, led by UN Bhutan, three UN country teams of Bhutan, Nepal and India and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) came together to celebrate International Mountain Day in multiple parallel events across the three countries.

Building on Article 5 of the Constitution of Bhutan, which states that it is the fundamental duty of every Bhutanese to protect its natural environment and that each Bhutanese is a trustee of the country's natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, this collaboration was aimed at creating awareness and a call to action to other countries to adapt environmental protection clauses to ensure the conservation of its natural environment for all generations to come. This joint event was also designed to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and the vulnerability of the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

Youth representatives from Bhutan, Nepal and India took part in a youth dialogue moderated by a leading journalist from Bhutan to share their hopes and fears about their future in a world challenged by climate change. Other activities included advocacy campaigns and the livestream of a panel discussion with the three UN Resident Coordinators and the Director General of ICIMOD. These activities highlighted the importance of the Hindu Kush Himalaya as a region responsible for providing precious water supplies to the world and contained a special focus on the melting of glaciers.

This anniversary year culminated in a visit to UN House by Her Majesty, Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, Queen Mother and UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador to mark UN Day and the first inaugural visit to UN House by His Majesty The King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. The UN was also gifted 1.2 acres of land by His Majesty as part of the 50 year commemoration. Officially known as the 'Tsendrong-UN Garden' the land will be developed into a green recreational space as part of a larger network of parks, green spaces and gardens in the capital. Work is scheduled to commence in the first half of 2022.

Following His Majesty's visit, the UN Bhutan became one of the first international institutions ever to receive the highly coveted Druk Thuksey award from His Majesty for exceptional contributions to Bhutan's socio-economic development as part of the 2021 National Day celebrations.

2.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

Voluntary National Review

In keeping with its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, Bhutan volunteered for the second time to present its Voluntary National Review to the UN's High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). In the HLPF, the Royal Government described the overall implementation of the SDGs, how COVID has affected Bhutan's development progress and some key measures taken to overcome these challenges.

The VNR report is focussed on transformational processes that build on past achievements and draw lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and for Bhutan this involves working to "build back better" while also moving ahead towards LDC graduation.

Since Bhutan's philosophy of Gross National Happiness resonates strongly with the SDGs and forms the basis of the FYPs, its priority concerns are being addressed through the 12th FYP. These are the "last mile challenges" of improving key social outcomes, building economic resilience, and managing the impacts of climate change. This was also a key basis for negotiating Bhutan's graduation as the 12th FYP comes to an end, as these will have a big impact on the three LDC criteria most integral to a successful graduation.

So far, broad-based progress has been made across all SDGs, and efforts are ongoing to enhance key social and economic outcomes while upholding environmental commitments and managing the impacts of climate change. SDG awareness, indicator adoption, and data availability have all improved since the first VNR was presented in 2018.

Lessons Learned

Projects funded through global programmes were difficult to modify to the ever-evolving situation and the process of repurposing funds for a COVID-19 response proved to be long and cumbersome. Indeed many processes took longer than expected due to the challenges presented by the pandemic including procurement processes, seeking clearances and government approvals and the mobilizing of funds which in some cases resulted in activities remaining unfunded in the 2021 Annual Work Plan.

The closure of Bhutan's international entry and exit points and extended quarantine requirements (up to 14 days) impeded the implementation of some programs. For instance, it was not possible to bring in international experts at a time when it was most needed and this affected the completion of geotechnical assessments designed to mitigate critical landslide areas. Likewise, training that required hands-on, practical experience had to be postponed. The pandemic also affected the marketing of perishable agricultural products, notably vegetables, which was compounded by an under-developed private sector in areas such as product processing and development, logistics handling and on-farm post-harvesting.

While the pandemic presented challenges for some in terms of project implementation, for others it became an enabler. The pandemic served to highlight the capacity of the CSO sector to reach remote and scattered populations with essential service delivery and the provision of care during disasters and in times of emergency. It also provided an opportunity for a new and efficient modality that involved releasing funds directly to the CSOs for emergency implementation on the ground. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for fostering trilateral partnerships between the Royal Government, the UN and the private sector such as the successful development of the Gaykid City Bus application tool.

2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

13th Five Year Plan

In 2021, the Royal Government held its first consultative meeting with the UN to discuss conceptual and priority areas for the 13th Five Year Plan. The UN will continue to support the Royal Government and has shared a list of 13 UN agencies offering support including for the SDG Joint Fund by pitching innovative financing strategies in key sectors to support resource mobilization for the upcoming 13th Five Year Plan. Currently, the Royal Government is considering and undertaking various financing strategies for priority sectors in alignment and preparation of the 13th Five Year Plan (2023-2028). The next plan, like the current plan, will be aligned to the SDGs and has an overarching focus on the economy and human capital.

Civil Society Organizations

The Civil Society Organizations in Bhutan are key development partners to the UN. The UN, through its Democracy Fund, supported the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy with USD 110,000 to strengthen democracy by enabling elected leaders, educators and underserved groups (women/girls, taxi drivers, people with disability etc.) to enhance analytical skills. This project is in coherence with the national priority to deepen democratic culture through enhancing civic awareness, democratic governance, & citizen participation in decision-making. The UN also continued its partnership with Loden Foundation, through Bhutan Dialogues - a public forum for deep dialogues, discourse and mindful listening focused on some of the country's development issues and challenges.

In 2021, the government undertook two major milestones for enhancing and strengthening civil space in the country including the amendment of the CSO (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021 by the Parliament of Bhutan, and the completion of Guidelines for CSO-Government collaboration for which the Prime Minister expressed support during the CSO-Government Meeting held in November 2021. These efforts significantly

contributed in strengthening civic space for a vibrant democracy. The UN Bhutan supported the development of the CSO-Government collaboration guidelines.

Tsendrong - UN Garden and other contributions

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bhutan's membership to the United Nations, a national task force was formed, comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Gross National Happiness Commission and the UN Bhutan, which planned and oversaw a year-long schedule of activities. As part of this commemoration, His Majesty The King of Bhutan graciously allocated a piece of prime city land as a permanent feature in the capital to remind generations of future Bhutanese of the significance of the UN-Bhutan partnership.

The space has been designed to offer an inclusive, 'nature-for-all' wellbeing space, focused on People with Disabilities (PWDs) and their universal user-experience. The park will also cater for elderly, pregnant women, and children and will provide a space for health and mental wellbeing with outdoor spaces for people to gather. During the design and development phase, consultations were carried out with members of Disabled People's Organization of Bhutan, youth, staff associations of UN Bhutan and contributing non-resident agencies. Contributions for funding the garden development were made by over 13 different resident and non-resident UN agencies

In addition, USD 872,000 was mobilized as part of the Joint SDG Fund and USD 3.4 million from UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries. The UN Technology Bank funds supported the delivery of technology and professional training for the 'Hear, Listen, and Speak Program', designed to establish a continuum of care for hearing loss and ear disorders for children 0-14 years of age. The project aligns with government mandates to strengthen child health and education services in Bhutan and reduce the impact of disability on people's quality of life.

Financial Overview

In 2021, financial delivery was divided into two six-month reports reflecting changes made in line with the Royal Government's repurposing of funds towards response to COVID-19 immediate needs. Therefore, the AWP 2021 was revised during the Mid-Year Review including new activities. Furthermore, in the second half of the year the country moved out of an extended period of lockdown and more program implementation was possible.

The figures below represent the financial delivery for 2021 by UN Outcome Group:

January - June

UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Total expenditure against planned budget
Data & Policy	113,000	14,500	13%
Essential Social Services	10,080,808	7,423,431	74%
Governance	490,037	247,728	51%
Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management	7,198,004	5,397,188	75%
TOTAL	17,881,849	13,082,847	73%

July- December

UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Total expenditure against planned budget
Data & Policy	52,500	52,500	100%
Essential Social Services	9,469,724	8,931,084	94%
Governance	731,595	578,763	79%
Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management	7,025,571	6,591,397	94%
TOTAL	17,279,390	16,153,745	93%

The table below represents the One Program Financial Delivery for 2021 at the agency level:

January - June

Agency	Total Planned Budget	Regular Resources	Other Resources	Gap(to be mobilized)	Expenditure of 2021	Achievement (%)
FAO	742,964	-	742,964	-	742,964	100%
ITC	408,000	-	408,000	-	204,000	50%
UNDP	6,168,678	158,200	6,010,478	-	4,562,602	74%
UNEP	129,096	-	129,096	-	-	0%
UNFPA	382,000	382,000	-	-	105,049	27%
UNICEF	3,112,086	128,000	2,984,086	5,000	1,804,244	58%
WFP	1,174,000	-	1,174,000	-	38,601	3%
WHO*	5,561,921	2,045,460	3,516,460	-	5,561,921	100%
ESCAP	6,000	6,000	-	-	6,000	100%
UNCDF	137,623	-	137,623	-	23,266	17%
UNODC	54,481	-	54,481	-	34,200	63%
TOTAL	17,876,849	2,719,660	15,157,188	5,000	13,082,847	73%

July- December

Agency	Total Planned Budget	Regular Resources	Other Resources	Gap(to be Mobilized)	Expenditure of 2021	Achievement (%)
FAO	396,574	-	396,574	-	377,086	95%
ITC	1,157,156	-	1,157,156	-	1,157,156	100%
UNCDF	74,560	-	74,560	-	44,649	60%
UNDP	5,411,876	658,712	4,753,164	-	5,316,209	98%
UNEP	235,900	-	235,900	-	-	0%
UNFPA	491,081	420,472	70,609	-	413,757	84%
UNICEF	2,713,522	349,000	2,364,522	-	2,534,662	93%
UNODC	105,300	105,300	-	-	50,000	47%
WHO*	5,561,921	2,045,460	3,516,460	-	5,561,921	100%
WFP	1,131,500	10,000	1,121,500	-	698,306	62%
Total	17,279,390	3,588,944	13,690,445	-	1,615,3745	93%

*NOTE: The financial delivery of WHO is being reflected for the entire year of 2021 in all the tables

Chapter 3: UNCT key focus for next year



As the UN Bhutan looks ahead to 2022, it remains firmly committed to supporting Bhutan's recovery from the impacts of the pandemic with the steady implementation of the Sustainable Development Partnership Framework, with an emphasis on response and recovery activities. The UN will continue to provide assistance to the government's national vaccination program, with support for the roll-out of the nationwide booster campaign and vaccinations for children aged 5-11 years scheduled for early in the year.

The pandemic has highlighted the need to pay close attention to fast-evolving data on mental health, suicide rates, youth unemployment and domestic violence. The UNCT will also maintain high-level advocacy for mental health to remain a national priority, for the introduction of more child-focussed social protection measures and for the rights of people with a disability to be enshrined through the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

While in 2021, the Government excelled in containing the spread of the virus it was harder to avoid the major economic impacts of the crisis. As such, a shrinking fiscal space could put Bhutan's transition from 'Least Developed Country' status at risk along with the country's macro-economic recovery. The UNCT will therefore work in an agile and adaptive manner to respond to such an uncertain and fast-evolving context, with a focus on support for innovative financing, data management and disaster preparedness including development of the DEWA dashboard to provide integrated socio-economic development data and preparations for a Disaster

Simulation exercise. In addition, work will commence on a partnership mapping exercise and action plan for the development of a focused resource mobilization strategy.

In the year ahead, the UN will also focus on preparation of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) which will include an evaluation of the current UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF). This process is designed to determine priorities for the next programming cycle in line with the UN 2030 Agenda and will be linked to national development priorities. Important focus areas of the CCA will include education and skilling, youth unemployment and economic recovery.

To mark World Environment Day in June 2022, a series of national-level consultations will be held by the UN as part of Stockholm 50 - a crucial international environmental meeting held as part of the Decade of Action. This national-level consultation will contribute to a regional and global report that will help ensure an inclusive, green, and sustainable future for Bhutan embedded in the SDGs and the philosophy of Gross National Happiness.

The UN Bhutan is proud of all its achievements over the last 50 years and looks forward to many more years of working in close partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan and other development partners. While 2021 was yet another challenging year, the UN Bhutan is grateful for the assistance, solidarity and support of all.

2021 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Bhutan



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