SDG Breakthrough and Challenges in Bhutan

Royal Government of Bhutan
10th October 2023
Overview

- Localizing and Implementation of SDGs in Bhutan
- SDG progress
- Some factors of success and lessons learnt
- Challenges
- Way forward
Localizing and Implementation of SDG in Bhutan

- Bhutan’s representation in the SDG Open Working Group in 2013 and became one of the early mover countries in the Asia Pacific region for SDG localization – identified by United Nations Development Programme in September 2015.
- Alignment of GNH (SDG+) and SDGs.
- SDG Sensitization Workshop on Oct 30 2015 (National Level) and Local Government : 2016
- Integration of SDG into FYP framework. 11 (prioritized 3 SDGs) and 12 FYP (Integrated 16 SDGs-(except for SDG 14 life under water)
**Adoption of SDG Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Number of Indicators</th>
<th>% Share</th>
<th>Number of Indicators</th>
<th>% Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully adopted</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially adopted</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant but not adopted</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>244</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>247</strong></td>
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*Bhutan’s second Voluntary National Report, 2021*
- 58 percent (72 indicators) for which sufficient data is available is making progress.

- Made significant progress (50%+ of measured indicators) for achieving SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG3 (Good health and well-being), SDG6 (Clean water and sanitation) and SDG7 (affordable and clean energy).

- Good performances in SDG2 (Zero hunger), SDG4 (Quality education), and SDG12 (Responsible consumption and production).

- Regressing trends in 50% of measured indicators with respect to SDG8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation and infrastructure), and SDG13 (Climate Action).

Source: National SDG Trends, Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway, United Nations ESCAP.
### SDG Progress - Some key statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year on Year GDP Growth, 2018-2022</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall GDP</td>
</tr>
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Source: National Accounts statistics, NSB
Due to:

- Covid layoffs impacting livelihoods
- Revision of national poverty line ($3.2/day)
Due to:

- Covid layoffs,
  - return of workers from abroad and limited scholarship opportunities to study abroad
  - limited admission capacity of national colleges and
- Increasing number of graduates and youths.

National Labour Force Survey 2022
Some factors of success and lessons learned

• Integration into national system and planning frameworks for ownership, implementation and monitoring
• Dedicated flagship programs to address cross cutting issues of national concerns. (Health, Tourism, Organic agriculture, CSI development, Digital Drukyul, Waste, Education) which has helped the realization of SDGs
• Government’s targeted programs beyond FYP and policies (ECP, NRF, reprioritization of 12 FYP)
• Concerted efforts of Government in covid containment measures (A response in unity and solidarity)
• Taken a long-term approach to development, focusing on sustainability and resilience.
• Partnership for development. (Assistance of development partners)
• Engagement of stakeholders (Inclusive participation and whole of government approach)
• Awareness and capacity building for SDG
Challenges

• Covid implications on implementation progress and steady recovery
  ○ Slowdown in economy – tourism, construction, manufacturing.
  ○ Displaced large number of people from jobs depriving of livelihood;
  ○ Income of daily wage earners disrupted due to lockdowns;
  ○ Disparities in education of children due to digital divide;

• No robust and real-time data for review and monitoring

• Limited use of the “SDG language” in the process of adopting the FYP planning framework

• Financial and Technological resources

• Human Capacity and twin demographic challenges; Low fertility rate and out migration of productive citizens

• LDC graduation and its possible implications.

• Vulnerable to climate change, and other economic shocks (Price volatility, trading, dependency on one sector)

• Last mile challenges: Bhutan has made significant progress in reducing poverty, but there are still some people who are living in poverty. The government is working to address these last mile challenges.
Way forward

- Reform and transformation of public sectors (Ongoing Process)
- Integration and prioritization of SDG into 13 FYP
- Review of progress and further localization of SDGs
- Sustained awareness-raising and capacity-strengthening programmes to enable greater SDG fluency and implementation
- Mobilizing resources beyond grants and conventional financing approaches including from private sectors.
- Strengthen partnerships with other countries, international organizations, and civil society organizations to achieve the SDGs.
- Continue to invest in education, health, and other social sectors to ensure that all Bhutanese have access to quality services.
- Diversify economy to make it more resilient and to create more jobs.
- Continue to invest in measures to build resilience to the impacts of climate change.
Thank You