Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19 in Bhutan

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Perspective Planning Division
Gross National Happiness Commission
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Outline

• SDGs Localization – Setting the Context
• Status of SDGs
• Status of SDGs - Theme of HLPF 2021
• Impact of COVID-19 on progress of SDGs
• Measures to contain COVID-19
• Challenges to achieve SDGs
• Way Forward to accelerate SDGs
SDGs Localization - Setting the Context

- GNH & SDGs - Both seeks to enhance People’s wellbeing and Happiness
- Alignment of SDGs in our national plans and programmes does not pose a challenge given the similarities between our development philosophy of GNH and SDGs.
## Status of SDGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
| **1 NO POVERTY**    | **National Income Poverty Rate reduced to 8.2 per cent in 2017 from 23.2 per cent in 2007**  
Multidimensional poverty of 5.8 per cent, down from 12.7 per cent in 2012. | On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021                                           |
| **2 ZERO HUNGER**   | **High level of food sufficiency (more than 97 per cent)**                                                                                                                                              | On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021                                           |
| **3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** | **Decrease in mortality and morbidity with life expectancy up from 37 years in 1960 to over 70.2 years in 2017.**  
Childhood stunting reduced from 33.5 in 2010 to 21.2 per cent in 2015 | On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021                                           |
| **4 QUALITY EDUCATION** | **Net primary enrollment rate nearing 100%**  
Gender parity achieved up to higher secondary level. | On-Track Not Theme for HLPF 2021                                     |
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<td><strong>5 GENDER EQUALITY</strong></td>
<td>Women’s participation in parliament increased from 8% in 2013 to 15% in 2018. Gender parity achieved up to higher secondary level.</td>
<td>On-Track Not Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</strong></td>
<td>99.5 per cent of people have access improved water sources (2017)</td>
<td>On-Track Not Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>About 63 per cent of households have 24 hours access to drinking water.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</strong></td>
<td>99.9 per cent of people have access to electricity</td>
<td>On-Track Not Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</strong></td>
<td>High GDP growth rate, 5.46 per cent in 2019. However, this has changed with the onset of COVID-19.</td>
<td>On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ease of doing business ranking improved from 124 in 2008 to 75 in 2017 but got deteriorated to 89 out of 190 countries in 2020.</td>
<td>On-Track Not Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vulnerability Baseline Assessment conducted identifying 14 vulnerable groups. However, increasing Gini Coefficient from 0.36 in 2012 to 0.38 in 2017.</td>
<td>On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sustainable Consumption &amp; Production Action Plan developed for implementation</td>
<td>On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
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<td><strong>13 CLIMATE ACTION</strong></td>
<td>Bhutan committed to remain carbon neutral.</td>
<td>On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</strong></td>
<td>Not Relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 LIFE ON LAND</strong></td>
<td>70.46% of the country under forest cover. Constitutional requirement to maintain 60% forest cover for all time to come. More than half of the country is protected areas.</td>
<td>2021 On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</strong></td>
<td>Sound governance and policy, utilization of ODA-successfully implementing international green finance. Innovative approaches to domestic financing solutions.</td>
<td>On-Track Theme for HLPF 2021</td>
</tr>
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Impact of COVID-19 on progress of SDGs

1. Health
   - Overwhelming Health System
   - Disruption in normal health service delivery
   - Stress on limited human & financial resources

2. Education
   - Complete closure of school and educational institutions for 6 months (March-Sept. 2020)
   - Schools still closed for grade PP-VIII
   - All ECCD centres still closed

3. Economy
   - GDP for 2020 projected to grow at negative
   - Tourism and its allied sectors stand still
   - Border closure and travel restriction
   - Construction and manufacturing sectors affected due to labour and material shortages,
   - Disruption in transport and supply chain
   - Rising unemployment
Measures to contain COVID-19

1. Health
   - Started institutionalised COVID-19 surveillance system at all the Point of Entry (POEs) beginning January 2020
   - Started compulsory 21 days quarantine facility sponsored by government for all overseas returnees.
   - Adopted the 3 Ts (Test, Trace and Treat) strategy
   - Set up 54 Flu clinics across the country to enhance early and easy detection of the virus, and also to keep flu cases away from the mainstream health facilities thereby safeguarding them from the pandemic.
   - Trained all health workers in infection control measures such as donning and doffing of PPEs, case management for COVID-19, COVID-19 testing and basic surveillance.
   - Trained frontline workers like *Deesups*(volunteers) and armed force personnel on basic surveillance and infection control measures.
   - Recruitment of 25 general doctors, 16 lab personnel and 86 nurses available in the job market to ensure adequate health personnel to manage the pandemic.
   - 7 days compulsory quarantine for all people coming from southern Bhutan (Red Zone)
Measures to contain COVID-19

2. **Education**
   - Developed and implementing Education in Emergency (EiE) Phase I & II
   - Online teaching-learning (TV, Radio, social media, You Tube, google classrooms)
   - Supply of Self Instructitional Materials (SIM) for children in remote place.
   - Developed and implementing Adapted Curriculum based on Key Stages
   - Teacher preparation to implement Adapted Curriculum
   - Internet package at consessional rate
   - Provision of smart phones
   - Re-opened schools/educational institutions for grade IX onwards
   - Relocated students from high risk area to other region
   - Psychological services through Counselling Services
Measures to contain COVID-19

3. Economy – Fiscal and Monetary measure and interventions
   - Tax deferral
   - Loan deferral,
   - Waiver on rental of government properties,
   - Concessional access to finance
   - The His Majesty’s Relief Programme (Relief Kidu) – Cash transfer and Interest Payment Relief measures
   - The economic contingency plan I (tourism, construction and Agriculture)
   - Higher share of capital budget for FY 2020-21
   - Government has introduced a National Credit Guarantee Schemes through the Banks to:
     i. Boost export by investing in import substitution,
     ii. Promote innovation and technology and
     iii. Create jobs to absorb displaced and unemployed.
   - Implementing Flagship Programmes well aligned to SDGs
Challenges to achieve SDGs

- Eradicating poverty in all its forms
- Poverty levels in rural areas are significantly higher – 93 per cent of the country’s multidimensionally poor are in rural
- Climate change impacts crops and agricultural infrastructure
- Increasing NCD and stunting
- Quality of Education
- Inequalities, both economic and social (income, gender, voilence)
- Lack of reliable data
- Inadequate resources and capacity
Way Forward to accelerate SDGs

1. Undertaking comprehensive study on the status of SDG through participating in VNR 2021.

2. Finalizing SDG tracking and monitoring dashboard.

3. On the economy as a whole, Bhutan is developing 21st Century Economic Roadmap of a 10 years time frame underpinned by innovation and technology to achieve high income society goals.

4. In order to ensure successful implementation of SDGs, a financing needs assessment that establishes estimated cost of SDG implementation will be carried out.

5. Bhutan will require additional international support, to recover its economy, especially the sectors that have been impacted the most by the pandemic, but are critical and play a pivotal role for Bhutan’s economy (Eg. tourism, manufacturing and construction, agriculture, health, education and water).
THANK YOU