

**CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF LDCs AND FRIENDS OF LDCs ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS IN THE LDCS
27th to 28th June 2017**

**INTERVENTION BY COUNSELOR KARMA CHOEDA UNDER SESSION I:
IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS IN LDCS**

1. Let me start by, first, thanking the Office of High Rep for organizing this important consultation and for their continued advocacy of the LDC group.
2. It's good to be here among fellow LDCs and friends of LDCs. We, of course, have great appreciation for their continued support to the LDCs.
3. This session dealing with the issue of localizing the SDG is extremely important, after all transformative change must take place at the local and national level.
4. Localizing SDGs is about empowering local people to have a say and part in their own development.
5. I want to thank distinguished presenters for their insights on the issue. Let me offer few contributions from our national experience.
6. First, political commitment is extremely crucial. In our case, the government continues to place tremendous importance on delivering development at the local level.
7. The current government has made "*empowering people by devolution of power to the center to the people*" as their main mandate.
8. Second, political commitment must be backed by good policy framework and effective legislation.
9. Good governance and decentralization have been main pillars in our development journey, which have greatly facilitated people's participation in development.
10. These principles of democratic and decentralized governance are formally enshrined under article 22 of the Constitution.
11. Further, the Local Government Act 2009 mandates the formation of local governments for the development, management and administration of areas under their jurisdiction.
12. Third, integration of the SDGs and the IPOA in our development plans at the national level is key. In our case, given the similarities between our

development philosophy of GNH, integration of the SDGs and IPOA into our development plans and programme has been easy.

13. Fourth, being an early mover helps. Bhutan is one of the early mover countries for SDG implementation in the Asia-Pacific region.
14. Fifth, participation of all stakeholders in the planning process. We approach development planning in five-year cycles. And in our planning process, we have adopted an inclusive, consultative and a bottoms-up approach where all the stakeholders, including private sector, CSOs, youth and people at the grassroots are engaged in the planning as well as implementation.
15. Sixth, advocacy and consultations: extensive consultations and sensitization and awareness creation on the SDGs were conducted for government officials, parliamentarians, youth, and people's representatives at the Local Government, private sectors and Civil Society Organizations.
16. A word on parliamentarians. In a democratic set up, where increasingly parliamentarians are playing an important role in nation's development, particularly in their own constituencies, it is imperative that they are fully engaged in the government's efforts on localizing the SDGs.
17. Final point on national experiences, in addition to political and administrative decentralization, Bhutan has initiated financial decentralization measures, which provides for annual grants to all local governments based on population size, geographic area and poverty levels.
18. A certain percentage of the total budget goes to the local governments. Additionally, local governments at the district and block level enjoy full autonomy over the use of these annual grants for local development activities.
19. In the 12th plan, government is doubling the share of resources allocated to the Local Governments. From the current share of 30% of capital allocation, it is going to be increased to 50% which is at par with the resources allocated to the central agencies.
20. In terms of challenges, there is still an urgent need to further strengthen and consolidate the institutional and human capacity at local levels.
21. Today major portion of development activities are undertaken by the local governments. We need to further exploring allocating more resources to the local governments.
22. There are serious challenges on the availability as well as quality data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. We need to strengthen our statistical management system, including reconciliation of local and national data.

Strengthening the capacity of national statistical office and strengthening greater collaboration within government agencies to improve and streamlining data collection system is necessary.

23. Related to the issue of data is the need to strengthen monitoring and coordination within and among the agencies.
24. Finally, the biggest challenge has to do with resources. While there has been seamless integration of the SDGs into the national and sub-national development plans and programmes, Bhutan faces critical challenges of mobilizing the resources required to finance development projects at the local and national level.
25. So international support and assistance from all our development partners are going to be extremely crucial.
26. We do not look at development as a zero sum game, but working towards a win-win situation where we are able to bring about shared prosperity and that LDCs are able to achieve true transformation in the SDG era.
27. I thank you.
