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Department of Multilateral Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan



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PRESS RELEASE

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) will organize a **Regional Capacity Building Workshop on LDC Graduation** in Thimphu, from 14-16 November 2017.
2. The purpose of the workshop is to help countries understand the technicalities concerning graduation criteria, potential costs and challenges, and harnessing post-graduation conditionality to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Most importantly, this will provide a platform for exchange of knowledge and experiences between countries that have graduated and those that are graduating from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category.
3. Over 50 participants from LDCs of the region namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor Leste and Vanuatu will participate in the three-day workshop.
4. Graduation from the LDC category converges well with Bhutan's ultimate vision of self-reliance. In view of the steady socio-economic progress that Bhutan has been making since the first five year plan in 1961, Bhutan was considered eligible for graduation for the first time in 2015. At the current trajectory, though still vulnerable, Bhutan is likely to be found eligible for graduation for the second time in 2018, implying complete graduation by 2022.
5. Bhutan is one of the 47 LDCs, a group identified as having unique structural challenges that make achieving development progress and sustaining it over the long-term difficult. Of the 47 countries, 16 including Bhutan, also fall into the category of Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), characterized by a lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from global markets and high transit costs.



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