

Bhutan's national development is unique and has been guided by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which emphasizes holistic well-being, equity, environmental sustainability and good governance, these values align seamlessly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GNH framework has provided a strong foundation for inclusive and resilient development, enabling Bhutan to localize and contextualize SDGs in a manner that is culturally relevant, and people centered. This integration of SDGs into national and local plans has been supported by our visionary leaders, Bhutan's political commitment and institutional coordination under the 13th Five Year Plan, which aims to transform Bhutan into a high-income Gross National Happiness economy by 2034.

Over the past four years, Bhutan has made notable progress across SDGs. In health, primary healthcare services have helped reduce maternal mortality to 53 per 1,00,000 live births, under five mortalities to 19.5 per 1,000 births and 99% immunization coverage have been ensured. In gender equality, legal reforms and expansion of services for survivors for gender-based violence have been significant, though gaps remain in women's economic participation and leadership. Bhutan is now focusing on economic diversification; however, youth unemployment and emigration continue to remain a huge concern. As one of the carbon-negative country, Bhutan continues to lead in climate action and remains steadfast in its promise to protect the country's biodiversity in the future. Additionally, Bhutan have also made significant progress in SDG 17 through strengthened public private collaborations and the start of the visionary Gelephu Mindfulness City.

While Bhutan is already making significant progress and civil society organizations are already contributing to policy dialogue and joint field initiatives with the government counterparts, the collaboration needs to be strengthened. There is a need to formalize CSO seats in national SDG steering committees and ensure CSO participation in both international and regional reporting and peer review processes for SDGs. It has become important more than ever for our country, where CSOs and the government co-design, co-host and co-implement initiatives both at the grassroot and national level. CSOs and the government can forge a truly inclusive partnership, which will amplify and accelerate equitable, sustainable progress in Bhutan.