





# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2019 - 2023)

National Assembly of Bhutan  
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# Table of contents

Foreword	01
Preface	03
Executive Summary	07
Background	11
Vision, Mission & Values	13
<b>Strategic Objective 1</b>	<b>15</b>
Strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat	15
Strategic activities	16
<b>Strategic Objective 2</b>	<b>27</b>
Improving the legislative capacity and processes of the National Assembly	27
Strategic activities	28
<b>Strategic Objective 3</b>	<b>37</b>
Enhancing the oversight capacity of the National Assembly	37
Strategic activities	38
<b>Strategic Objective 4</b>	<b>41</b>
Strengthening the National Assembly's Representation and Outreach capacity	41
Strategic activities	42
Resource mobilization	49
Implementation	51
Monitoring & Evaluation	53
NA Implementation Annex	54



# Foreword



**W**ith  
the

2018 successful election, we have moved into Third Parliament - a step

closer to maturing parliamentary democracy and achieving the far sighted vision and aspiration of His Majesty the King and the people. The National Assembly of Bhutan, as an important component of Parliament, has envisioned to “achieve the Kingdom of Bhutan’s overarching goal of Gross National Happiness enshrined in the Constitution through an inclusive and a vibrant democracy”.

Towards the fulfillment of its mandate, each successive parliament has always left behind a legacy of a road map condensed into Strategic Development Plan. The Strategic Development Plan(2019-2023) developed by Parliamentarians and Secretariat staff of second parliament is one such fine gift for change and continuity with dynamism. This strategic development plan would guide the National Assembly to set priorities, focus time, energy and

resources, strengthen operations and ensure that everyone in the legislative institution work towards the common goals. It will also help the assembly to establish agreement around intended results/outcomes and accordingly assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for everyone in the National Assembly of Bhutan to be very conscious in the implementation of this strategic plan.

We would like to acknowledge and express gratitude to all the Parliamentarians and Secretariat staff of Second Parliament for their genuine feedback and contribution in shaping this plan. We also would like to thank the UNDP Bhutan for their technical and financial support. This strategic plan document is a fine example of collaboration and the journey ahead is all about collaboration.

Best of Luck

Wangchuk Namgyel  
SPEAKER



# Preface



It is my great pleasure and pride to present the National Assembly Strategic

Plan (2019-2023). This plan is a follow up to the previous Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018) of Second Parliament which was a huge success with almost ninety percent of the plan activities being successfully carried out. This plan was also developed with numerous stakeholders consultations with the past members of the Parliament and the secretariat staff and individuals.

The Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 will be the roadmap for the next five years to ensure that the secretariat provides efficient and effective services to the Members of the National Assembly to further fulfill the vision and mission of the National Assembly of Bhutan. The Plan lays out the Mission and Vision of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the Four main Objectives of Strengthening the capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat, Improving the legislative capacity

and processes of the National Assembly, Enhancing the oversight capacity of the National Assembly and Strengthening the National Assembly's Representation and Outreach capacity and strategic activities to achieve these objectives. The plan also looks into resource mobilization and monitoring and evaluation of the activities. A road map and timeline for implementation has also been incorporated, which will assist the concerned Divisions to reassess and meet the planned activities. The Strategic Plan will be dynamic document as it will need to incorporate the changing needs of the National Assembly within the Plan period and prioritize accordingly.

The National Assembly will also be prioritizing e-parliament initiatives in line with the Government's objectives of reducing paper use and championing environment conservation. The Parliament will look into reducing papers during the sessions by using computing facilities and online file sharing and data management. In addition to the new activities the plan has also included long term activities and infrastructural development such

as upgradation of Fire Hydrants, CCTV, Heating and Cooling system , upgradation of Danish Interpretation System in the Hall amongst others. The National Assembly Secretariat as the agency responsible is committed to implement the strategic plan and make it a success. The success of the implementation of this document would eventually result in the achievement of the National Assembly's vision and mission that ultimately stand to fulfill the aspirations of the people. However, the National Assembly will need support from both government and potential international collaborators to help us in implementing this strategic plan and make it a success. Lastly, I would like to thank UNDP Bhutan for their support in developing this strategic plan and fielding an international consultant for the purpose.



Sangay Duba  
SECRETARY GENERAL

# Graphical Overview of the Strategic Development Plan





# Executive Summary



>> *The National assembly Hall*

The vision of the National Assembly of Bhutan is “To achieve the Kingdom of Bhutan’s overarching goal of Gross National Happiness enshrined in the Constitution through an inclusive and a vibrant democracy”. And the House’s mission is “To effectively carry out legislative, scrutiny, oversight and representational functions to fulfill the aspirations of the Bhutanese people”. To achieve the vision and mission, the National Assembly developed its Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018).

This Strategic Development Plan

(2019-2023) is a follow-on to that previous Strategic Development Plan. As a legislative body, the Strategic Plan is an expression of the National Assembly’s commitment to meet the expectations and aspirations of the people of Bhutan. The commitment signifies the Assembly’s recognition that Parliament is a manifestation of the beliefs and ideals of a nation. The Plan outlines the Assembly’s strategic objectives, strategic activities, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation approaches.

The Strategic Plan is divided into 6 Sections. Section 1 contains a brief background to the National Assembly and context of the Strategic Plan development.

Section 2 presents the vision, mission and core values of the National Assembly. They are fundamental to the existence of the House and guide its day-to-day functions and the long-term strategy.

Section 3 outlines the four strategic objectives for the period 2019-2023 that need to be achieved to ultimately realize the vision and mission of the National Assembly.

The First strategic objective is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat. Achievement of the vision and mission will depend significantly on the institutional capacity of the Secretariat. It is central to ensuring the National Assembly and its Members are able to fulfill their constitutional mandates to effectively legislate, provide oversight of the executive functions and represent the people. To achieve the strategic objective, the National Assembly will continue to improve its Secretariat's human resource capacity, carry out staff development needs assessments that lead to implementation plans, establish collaborations with inter-

national parliamentary institutions, strengthen organizational management, improve the library and conduct professional development trainings for MPs and the Secretariat staff.

Improving the legislative capacity of the National Assembly is the second strategic objective. Enacting laws is one of the central responsibilities of the National Assembly. To meet the objective, the strategic activities include the continued strengthening of the legislative support capacity of the Secretariat, increasing the understanding of Members of the legislative process, enhancing the capacity of MPs to sponsor bills. Further, the House will continue the strengthening of parliamentary committees, create an open and transparent legislative process, and develop a system to ensure interaction between the legislature and the government on legislative matters.

The Third strategic objective is to enhance the oversight capacity of the National Assembly. The House will continue to strengthen existing oversight mechanisms and train Members on providing effective oversight, and enhance the financial oversight capacity of Members and the support provided by Secretariat staff to Members in this regard. Other strategic activities include

developing knowledge materials on oversight for MPs and Secretariat staff, developing improved communication and work-flow with the government to increase oversight and strengthening research and analysis service for the Members.

The Fourth strategic objective is to strengthen the National Assembly's representation and outreach capacity. The House will put in place new mechanisms and deepen those that exist to develop a culture of informed public discussions during the legislative process, empower women members, conduct training and develop a manual on representation and leadership. The following activities will be carried out to increase outreach: expand the use of video conferencing facilities, develop programming on parliamentary affairs to be broadcast on radio and other media, improve mechanisms to work with local government authorities, engage the media and CSOs to reach out to the people, upgrade and make the website resourceful and interactive, and engage the youth.

Section 4 outlines the strategy to mobilize resources. The House is committed to work in close collaboration with partners, especially international organizations, interested to help Bhutan develop her Parliament.

Section 5 outlines how the National Assembly will implement the Strategic Plan. The Secretariat will develop the implementation roadmap for the Second Strategic Plan. It will outline strategic objectives, strategic activities, a timeline, and the divisions/units responsible. The National Assembly Secretariat headed by the Secretary General will implement the plan.

To see whether the National Assembly has achieved its strategic goals within the timeframe, Section 6 outlines the mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan.

### **Incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the priorities of the upcoming 12th Five Year Plan (12th FYP) into the Strategic Goals of the Parliament**

A key objective of this Strategic Development Plan is for the National Assembly to achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Vision 2030 and help further the priorities that will be part of the 12th Five Year Plan. There are items in the SDGs that fall squarely within the institutional responsibilities of the National Assembly such as making the National Assembly more accountable, responsive and

transparent. The National Assembly can also contribute to the SDG of fighting corruption at all levels. But the National Assembly's role in achieving other objectives in the SDGs and the 12th FYP doesn't end there. Parliament is recognized as an institution that can have a catalytic impact on the achievement of other SDGs. To that end, this Strategic Development Plan is designed to enhance the likelihood that the National Assembly will be a positive force and constructive partner with the National Council, the Royal Government of Bhutan, independent agencies, citizens, the media and civil society organizations. Working together, we can attain the goals embodied in the SDGs and the priorities of the 12th FYP to improve the lives of all citizens of Bhutan and make Bhutan's democracy a shining example for all.

# Background



>> *HIS MAJESTY The King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck signing the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 18 July 2008*

**B**hutan is a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy. The country transitioned to a parliamentary democracy exactly after 100 years of progressive monarchical rule. His Majesty the Fourth King introduced the new polity despite people being against it. For the first time in 2008, the nation went to the polls using universal suffrage to elect representatives to the Parliament. Article 10 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan states: “There shall be a Parliament for Bhutan in which all legislative powers under

the Constitution are vested and which shall consist of the Druk Gyalpo [King of Bhutan], the National Council and the National Assembly.” The Parliament is bicameral and has 72 members. The National Council consists of 25 members out of which 20 Dzongkhags (districts) elect one member each and His Majesty the King appoints five eminent persons. The Constitution specifies the National Council as an apolitical (non-partisan) Chamber. Apart from its legislative role, the National Council is the House of review. The

National Assembly has 47 members. People elect them directly from 47 constituencies in the country. They belong to two different political parties that form the ruling party and opposition.

The Constitution states: “The National Assembly shall have a maximum of fifty-five members, elected from each Dzongkhag in proportion to its population, provided that no Dzongkhag shall have less than two members or more than seven members...”

Under the current organizational and governance structure, the Speaker provides leadership to the National Assembly. The Secretary General heads the Secretariat. There are nine Parliamentary Standing Committees. The Secretariat has four divisions: Secretariat Services Division, Information & Communications Division, Legislative & Procedural Division, and Research & Hansard Division.

The National Assembly Members have three primary roles to play: legislative, oversight and representational. The National Assembly Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan of 2008 stipulates that:

1. In order to support the activities and to manage the administrative affairs of the National

Assembly, the Secretariat of the National Assembly shall be established in the National Assembly.

2. The Secretariat shall assist the National Assembly in the fulfillment of its duties.
3. The Secretariat shall be an independent and non-partisan institution headed by the Secretary General.

The Strategic Plan will guide the National Assembly to focus its efforts that will enable it to fulfill its mandates more effectively. Therefore, the Plan will go a long way in articulating the vision and mission of the House.

# Vision, Mission & Values

To achieve the Kingdom of Bhutan's overarching goal of Gross National Happiness enshrined in the Constitution through an inclusive and a vibrant democracy

To effectively carry out legislative, scrutiny, oversight and representational functions to fulfill the aspirations of the Bhutanese people

**1. Professional values & Integrity:**

We the Members and Secretariat staff of the National Assembly will maintain and promote the highest level of professional values and integrity in our endeavor to promote the National Assembly as an epitome of democratic institution and to serve the people.

**2. Accountability and Result-oriented:**

We will be judicious in using resources and perform our duties to achieve commendable results.

**3. Ethical values:**

Integrity, honesty, empathy transparency, impartiality, probity, and neutrality will be the hallmark of our profession and responsibility.

**4. Democratic values:**

The National Assembly will champion promoting and deepening democracy by serving the people of Bhutan and abide by the Constitution of the Kingdom both in letter and in spirit.

**5. Consensus building:**

The National Assembly will work toward promoting national unity through consensus building in our unique democracy.

This successive Strategic Development Plan is the second Strategic Development Plan of the National Assembly of Bhutan and retains the vision, mission, core values and the four key Strategic Objectives found in the preceding Strategic Plan.

Specifically, the National Assembly's Strategic Objects for the period 2019-2023 are as follows:

1. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat
2. Improving the legislative capacity and processes of the National Assembly
3. Enhancing the oversight capacity of the National Assembly
4. Strengthening the National Assembly's representation and outreach capacity.



# Strategic Objective I

## Strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat

The Strategic Development Plan of the National Assembly 2014-2018 placed a priority on strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Assembly Secretariat. As recognized by the Constitution and the National Assembly Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the National Assembly Secretariat is critical to ensuring effective functions of the Assembly.

How effectively the Assembly Members carry out their legislative, oversight and representational roles depend on the level and quality of services the Assembly Secretariat is able to offer. The quality of Parliament will determine the future of Bhutan's democracy where the National Assembly is one of the most important political and institutional stakeholders. Further, the institutional capacity of the Assembly's Secretariat is important to implement this Strategic Development Plan.

Given the role and significance of the National Assembly, the foremost strategic objective is to strengthen the institutional capacity of its Secretariat. In the 2014-2018 period, the improvement and development of services for the Members was a priority. Considerable progress was made during the 2014-2018 period as will be detailed below. However, continued emphases must still be placed on strengthening the Secretariat for the Strategic Plan covering the period of 2019-2023.

# Strategic activities



*>>Orientation for the newly elected National assembly members, 2018*

## 1.1 Improving the human resource capacity

The Secretariat will continue to work with the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) to ensure that the specialized knowledge and skills required for parliamentary needs are considered. Building upon the agreement with the RCSC to provide 9 additional Committee Secretaries and 34 Assistant Research Officers (AROs), the Secretariat will work with the RCSC to ensure other needs of the Parliament are also met.

Even with the commitment to add Committee Secretaries and the hiring of the AROs, the Secretariat will require other staff with specialized skills. It is important that the staff that is hired bring the skills necessary to strengthen

the National Assembly that is consistent with the human resource mapping and needs assessment conducted by the Secretariat. The implementation of the human resource requirement projection will continue to be monitored and revised as necessary.

## 1.2 Staff development needs assessment and execution plan

The National Assembly attaches the highest importance to a planned and systematic staff development for the development of the House. Therefore, the Secretariat carried out a thorough staff development needs assessment and identified and prioritized 17 areas of needs. Seven needs have been addressed. The Secretariat will

continue implementing the recommendations in the staff development needs assessment and will work with the RCSC, the RGoB and other donors to identify financial support to implement the other 9 priority needs.

### **1.3 Strengthening the management of the Secretariat**

To offer quality services to the Members, an efficient and effective administrative management system is important and, as such, the organizational structure has been reviewed and streamlined.

Nevertheless, ongoing monitoring and review of the management structure can lead to continued improvements in the management of the House. To that end, the Secretariat will undertake a series of activities beginning with an organizational development exercise of the Secretariat. This exercise will contribute to a mid-term review of the current management structure and identify areas of improvement, especially as they relate to the organizational structure. As part of the ongoing review, the Secretariat will study the appropriate placement of the legal section in the organizational structure of the Secretariat as well as the appropriate placement of the AROs.

Implementing best management practices can also improve the performance of the Divisions and the Secretariat staff. The Secretariat will require each of the Divisions of the Secretariat to develop its own Strategic Plan. From these Divisional Strategic Plans, each Division will produce Annual Plans that are based

upon the Strategic Development Plan of the National Assembly 2019-2023. In addition, Secretariat staff will continue to develop individual work plans.

The Secretariat will continue to transition to a system that provides that staff perform specialized functions rather than generic services and will implement a proper performance monitoring and evaluation system.

As the number of staff expand, the management will ensure a conducive working environment for employees to excel in their responsibilities. The Secretariat will work with the RGoB to provide adequate and befitting office space and equipment for the Secretariat staff as well as the AROs. To increase the transparency of the House, the Secretariat will prepare and make public annual reports on disbursements made on behalf of the House, including the amounts, purpose and recipient of the funds.

### **1.4 Enhancing collaborations with international parliamentary institutions**

Bhutan joined the club of democratic nations as recently as 2008 following its first parliamentary elections. Modern parliamentary democracy continues to develop. Therefore, to keep abreast of international parliamentary best practices, collaboration with similar institutions abroad is crucial. To expose the Members of the National Assembly and its Secretariat staff to modern parliamentary traditions, the

Parliament of Bhutan became a full-fledged member of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2013 and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) in 2015. In addition, the Parliament of Bhutan hosted the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in 2017. These institutional collaborations both at the regional and international levels will be deepened and new collaborations established.

The Secretariat will explore the feasibility and advisability of membership and active participation in additional parliamentary associations and unions.

The 12th Five Year Plan sees the need for a full-time Parliamentary Protocol Officer to liaise with other parliaments and parliamentary institutions. The duties of the officer would be to assist with the visits of foreign delegates and visiting students during sessions and also handle all travels by the Honorable Speaker and Members of Parliament. The Secretariat of the National Assembly will work with the National Council and the RCSC to fill the position of Protocol Officer.

### **1.5 Ensuring the National Assembly has adequate human and budgetary resources**

According to the National Assembly Act of Bhutan 2008, the Secretariat is to assist the National Assembly in fulfillment of its duties and it is to be an independent and non-partisan institution. However, under the current context and institutional structure, the Secretariat

has neither human resource nor financial independence – the most important and fundamental components of institutional independence and autonomy. The RCSC undertakes the human resource allocation, while the Finance Ministry allocates the budget for the Secretariat. It is clear that true independence of the House is not realistic in the near term.

Therefore, the Secretariat will continue to work with the appropriate authorities to ensure that the National Assembly receives adequate human and budgetary resources from the RCSC and the Finance Ministry.

Key to this will be working with the RCSC to guarantee that the skills and knowledge specific to a Parliament are factored into hiring decisions through tailored ToRs and flexible hiring decisions.

Additionally, the National Assembly needs to address the issue of staff retention. Too often, qualified Secretariat staff and AROs are leaving the Parliament. When they leave they take with them a part of the institutional knowledge that is critical for a smoothly operating Parliament.

The Secretariat will undertake a study to ascertain why staff depart parliamentary service. This extends to the AROs as well as the Secretariat staff. The National Assembly, together with the National Council, will explore with the RCSC the possibility of making AROs permanent staff of the House. In addition to providing stability in the ranks of the AROs and

diminishing turnover, having the AROs available for the MPs from the beginning of the Parliament will help the MPs and the House get off to a quick start in the early stages of the Parliament.

Simultaneously, the National Assembly, in conjunction with the National Council will engage with the Royal Civil Service Commission to explore the possibility of creating a major professional/occupational group within the RCSC for Parliamentary Affairs. Having Parliamentary Affairs designated a major professional/occupational group will help establish the Parliament as a career destination for civil servants leading to an essential ingredient of successful Parliaments—institutional knowledge.

### **1.6 Ensuring that the National Assembly has access to quality economic analysis of the government’s budget and the impact of proposed legislation and policies**

The Secretariat, together with the National Council Secretariat, will undertake a study on methods used by Parliaments to ensure an independent source of analysis on budgetary and financial issues in proposed budgets and legislation. This information will help the Members of the Parliament make fully informed decisions on budgetary and fiscal issues before the Houses.

### **1.7 Providing a conducive work environment and adequate facilities, infrastructure and equipment**

The National Assembly is aware and recognizes the importance of providing

a conducive working environment and adequate facilities for the Members and staff to carry out their mandates. Today, there is a physical distance between the Secretariat and the Members. The Secretariat is housed in the Parliament building, while the offices of the Members are located in a private building. The offices are small and two Members share one room. Because of the distance, regular interaction between the Secretariat and the Members is hampered. The Secretariat remains committed to resolving this problem as soon as possible. It will shift MPs offices to the main Parliament building.

Working with the RCSC, 34 graduates with Bachelor’s Degrees were selected and appointed as Assistant Research Officers (ARO). These AROs are above and beyond the staff support provided by the Secretariat to the Members. A ToR was developed for the AROs.

The hiring of AROs, while representing a significant improvement in the resources available to members, also presents issues as relates to physical space. The Secretariat will work with the RGoB to ensure that the AROs are provided with office space and equipment befitting their positions.

### **Workplace issues**

While ToRs have been developed for Secretariat staff and for the AROs, some concerns have been raised that MPs are requiring AROs to perform activities outside the scope of the ToRs. Admittedly, the tasks required of staff in a

Parliament are quite fluid, but there is general acceptance that requiring staff to perform some duties, such as running personal errands for MPs, should not be a part of the Secretariat Staff and AROs responsibilities. This raises the larger issue of a lack of an employment grievance system within the National Assembly. The Secretariat will propose a confidential, internal grievance system for Secretariat Staff and AROs if they feel that they are being required to perform duties that are not in keeping with the ToRs or are required to engage in non-official activities on behalf of the MP. The confidential internal system will also be available for staff who feel that they are subject to harassment of any sort.

The National Assembly will sensitize Members and staff on the appropriate and ethical use of all official resources (including staff) and educate Members and staff on any implemented grievance procedure.

### **Safety issues**

#### *Upgrading the Fire Hydrant and Fire Alarm Systems*

Currently, the fire hydrant pump house is equipped with only electric motor driven pump that is powered by the power supply from the National Assembly Building. This will cut off the water supply if the power to the National Assembly building is cut off. Therefore, a new service connection of a new dedicated power line for hydrant motor is being proposed.

It is also proposed to install a Diesel Engine driven Fire Pump set, shifting and repair of fire alarm system as an alternative provision to the existing pump set in case of power shutdown or problem with electric motors.

The current network interface card of the fire alarm system monitor is defunct which is being operated through control panel that is cumbersome to the operators. Replacement of new card and re-programming of the system is required.

Installation of one unit of double hydrant points and three units of single hydrant points in between the NA and NC office is also proposed.

#### *Upgrading the CCTV*

The present CCTV has become obsolete and experiences frequent system failure thereby disrupting the constant security surveillance. It is proposed to upgrade the analogue version of CCTV to IP CCTV.

#### *Infrastructure*

##### *Upgrading the DIS sound system*

The Danish Interpretation System (DIS) sound system is very old, having been set up in 2007. The DNP Maintenance Unit has proposed replacing the software as well as all of the cameras in the hall.

##### *Construction of skylight roofing at the NA courtyard*

The inner courtyard in the Gyalong Tshogkhang is used to host working lunches and refreshments during the sessions. It is also a congregation place

for the Members of Parliament during the breaks. However, since the courtyard is open air, it cannot be used during summer on account of rain and in peak winter on account of cold weather.

The NAS proposes to have a skylight roofing over the courtyard so that this open space can be used at all times by the Parliament

#### *Installation of Central Heating and Cooling system*

The National Assembly building does not have internal heating and cooling system. The current heating and cooling system inside the hall is not effective. Therefore there is a need to upgrade and install such a system over the period of five years.

#### *Vehicles*

The NAS proposes to buy up to three Hiace buses to respond to increased demand from committees to make field visits, examine government implementation plans and conduct oversight. These smaller buses will be more environmentally friendly and less expensive to operate compared to the existing 19-seater coaster buses.

### **1.8 Transforming to an e-Parliament**

There is no doubt that Information Communication Technology (ICT) applications can support all of the key functions of the Parliament from legislating and conducting oversight to facilitating the representational role of MPs.

ICT can also be deployed to enhance

management and support of the National Assembly website, HR system, the financial management system, financial disclosure of members and staff, and create and manage a digital archive of parliamentary documents. In addition, the National Assembly website could host and support websites for individual members and committees.

Other applications for ICT relating to plenary functions, such as minutes of plenary sessions, plenary calendars and schedules, plenary speeches and debates, plenary voting, bill status and tracking, amendment status and tracking, database of laws passed by parliament and questions to the Government not only make the National Assembly more efficient, but can also have the potential to make the National Assembly more transparent and open. The Secretariat will undertake a survey of needs of the institution, taking into consideration international best practices and the ways that ICT can support the institution.

The Secretariat will look to expand the information and data that is already made public.

The Secretariat will undertake a study of the feasibility of deploying a computer system that provides MPs with access to documents via monitors installed on MPs desks in the Chamber. In an effort towards going paperless and moving to e-parliament, the secretariat is exploring the feasibility of using a desktop virtualization system that enables multiple

users to simultaneously share a single operating system.

This will centralize the management of the operating systems, software applications, and deployed thin clients. There will be less disruption to the service to end users as updates can be executed and tech support provided more quickly and efficiently. This is more like an intranet document management system. Ideally, users will access required information (daily schedules, announcements, relevant documents and Acts) from a single server by using a device that can be accessed in the Hall by the Members. This will reduce the usage of paper and members can browse or read without having to carry a printed copy in the assembly hall.

The Secretariat will work with the RCSC on fulfilling staff requirements necessary to make a full transition to an e-Parliament.

Other applications for ICT in transforming the National Assembly to an e-Parliament will be discussed at the appropriate place in this Strategic Development Plan.

A key to a successful transition to an E-Parliament will be the hiring of an ICT Officer, as envisioned in the 12th Five Year Plan. The Secretariat will work with the RCSC to fill the position as soon as possible.

### **1.9 Strengthening the library**

To remain abreast of the fast changing global parliamentary practices and to keep the National Assembly relevant and responsive to the needs of the people and their aspirations, knowledge and information are critical for the Members.

Their legislative, oversight and representational roles require a lot of evidence-based knowledge and information. A state-of-the-art library is of paramount importance.

The National Assembly acknowledges that the needs of the Library are still great and, in many ways, unmet. The National Assembly commits to developing an action plan to review its Library collection and provide the framework for acquisition of resources for the library and effective delivery of research services for the Members, Committees and staff. The Library will focus on the collection of resource materials on Parliaments, including subscriptions to international journals.

Given the distance between the headquarters and the constituencies of many Members, creating an e-library will provide the most effective solution. Staff will be trained on e-library services.

The Library can also utilize ICT to create and manage a digital archive of parliamentary documents, manage library resources and create an online catalogue.

The National Assembly will also explore joining regional parliamentary organizations, such as The Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific (APLAP).

### **1.10 Feasibility of Joint Services with the National Council**

The National Assembly will begin discussions with the National Council on combining services that may be more efficiently performed by a single unit. These services include, but are not limited to the Library, Research, Human Resources, ICT, in-house parliamentary training, legislative drafting, security, and any potential budget analysis unit. The National Assembly and National Council will look to international best practices on services that may be jointly provided as well as options for management structure for any services that are jointly provided.

### **1.11 Continuous professional development trainings for Secretariat staff**

Continuous professional development trainings are critical to deepen the knowledge, performance and effectiveness for MPs and Secretariat staff.

After elections in 2018, the National Assembly saw an influx of new MPs that lack a deep knowledge of parliamentary affairs. In addition, the Secretariat staff experiences regular turnover. The situation calls for well-structured, rolling professional development programs for both Members and Secretariat staff.

The Secretariat will develop a professional development plan to be implemented during the 2019-2023 period. Some of the broad fields of training for the Members will include the legislative process, oversight mechanisms, representation, policy analysis, research, and how Parliament can work with external stakeholders, civil society and the media. Secretariat staff will require continual specialized training on how to effectively run a parliamentary secretariat and support the Members in fulfilling their mandates.

When Members or Secretariat staff participate in ex-country workshops and conferences, every effort must be made to capture the benefits of those experiences and make them available to the all Members and staff. Consequently, the Secretariat will develop a reporting and distribution mechanism so that valuable knowledge is recorded, shared and mainstreamed into the processes of the Secretariat.

### **1.12 Gender mainstreaming in the National Assembly**

Half of Bhutan's population is female. Gender has become a cross cutting issue. At the moment, there is a meager representation of women in Parliament (8% in 2013, a drop from 13% in 2008). The National Assembly commits to make efforts toward making the institution a favorable place for women parliamentarians and Secretariat staff to work in the future.

Trainings on women in leadership will be conducted for MPs and Secretariat Staff.

Gender training will be held involving both male and female Members and the Secretariat staff. Strategies will be developed on mainstreaming gender during the legislative process and when undertaking oversight.

The National Assembly is also sensitive to ensuring that female staff of the Secretariat are treated equitably. As such, the Secretariat will undertake an assessment of the distribution of roles and responsibilities of Secretariat staff and AROs between men and women. In addition, the Secretariat will examine the distribution and adequacy of office space between women and men.

In addition, the National Assembly will allocate sufficient resources (both in space and access) to provide for day care and areas for maternal needs of Members and staff.

### **1.13 Collaborative training with existing organizations**

While the original Strategic Development Plan envisioned the creation of a Parliamentary Training Center, it was decided that it was not economically feasible to establish such a Center. However the need for Members and Secretariat to competently and efficiently deliver services to the people still remains. To upgrade skills and knowledge of the Members and staff, there has to be a platform offering op-

portunities for learning and training.

Therefore, during this Strategic Plan period the National Assembly will work with the National Council to examine the possibility of developing an in-house training capacity of the Secretariat. This could include establishing a Training Department or creation of a training program and curricula within an existing department. The Secretariat will also explore the use of self-directed educational opportunities that are available through such sites as AGORA and Web-EX for the professional development of Secretariat staff.

In collaboration with the National Council, the Secretariat will study the possibility of creating relationships with existing institutions, such as the Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law, to establish training programs that can provide specialized training necessary for parliamentary work.

Collaborative programs with both the public and private institutions could train the Members on how to perform their legislative, oversight, and representational roles effectively. The Secretariat staff could be trained and educated on how to run a parliamentary secretariat and support parliamentarians to fulfill their responsibilities as people's representatives.

Key to making such collaborations work is ensuring that the trainings be recognized by the RCSC as part of the professional development of Secretariat staff.

The Secretariat will work with the RCSC to ensure that such recognition takes place for any member of the Secretariat staff who successfully completes an approved training program.

### **1.14 Anti-Corruption**

The Parliament must lead the way in ensuring citizen's confidence in the integrity of all government officials, including Members and staff. The Good Governance and House Committees will consider changes to laws and rules to establish a Code of Conduct for Members and staff and will also develop a method of Financial Disclosure for Members and appropriate staff that is easily accessible and available for inspection to the public and media and is available on-line.

The Anti-Corruption Commission's Asset Declaration Rules of 2017, the Gift Rules of 2017 and the Model Guideline on Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector 2017 will be included as part of the Code of Conduct and Financial Disclosure.

Training on the Code of Conduct, Financial Disclosure, other requirements for MPs and covered Secretariat Staff as well as training on risk-management will form part of any induction program. These trainings will also be provided on an on-going basis.

The National Assembly will engage with the National Council to produce a single disclosure regime for both Houses.

Finally, the Secretariat will lend support to Members who wish to pursue the creation of a local chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

### **1.15 Induction of new Members**

The Secretariat will prepare and conduct an induction session for Members at the beginning of each Parliament. The materials developed can be given to Members who arrive in the middle of the Parliament.

Even though the Parliament in Bhutan is relatively new, the induction should rely on the expertise of Members and staff who have served in the National Assembly and can provide insights into the workings of the National Assembly and its Committees.





## Strategic Objective II

### Improving the legislative capacity and processes of the National Assembly

Law making is one of the core functions of the National Assembly. The institution is vested with the constitutional power to initiate, amend, reject and approve the laws of the country. Therefore, the legislative mandate is central to the existence of the National Assembly. The Assembly will enhance its legislative capacity. To do this, the strategic activities include providing and facilitating training for parliamentarians in drafting legislation, research, policy analysis, reviewing the draft laws and amending the existing ones. For the Secretariat staff, the capacity of research and information support service provision to the Members will be a priority.

# Strategic activities

## 2.1. Continuous review of the Rules of Procedure

The National Assembly recently revised its Rules of Procedure to bring them into conformance with the National Assembly (Amendment) Act of Bhutan 2014.

Reviewing the Rules of Procedure is an on-going process within any Parliament and usually falls within the jurisdiction of a Standing Committee pursuant to those Rules or a Standing Order, No such standing mechanism exists in the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly.

Much like draft legislation, changes to the Rules of Procedure should be examined by a Committee (either standing or ad hoc) to completely vet any proposed changes to the rules prior to consideration by the House. To that end, the National Assembly will create a mechanism for review of proposed rules changes prior to their consideration by the House.

## 2.2. Strengthening legislative support capacity of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for providing the services that support the legislative activities of the National Assembly and its Committees.

Successfully providing these services requires sufficient, capable staff in all of its Divisions. An important step for the National Assembly will be the hiring of a full-fledged Chief Legislative Officer, as identified in the 12th Five Year Plan. The Secretariat will work closely with the RCSC to fill this important position as soon as possible.

### *Support of the Plenary*

The National Assembly has begun using ICT in the Research and Hansard Division and will continue to expand its use to bring the National Assembly's use of ICT to best practices, including a legislative records and management system. Additional resources, both human and financial, are required in the Research and Hansard Division and the Secretariat will continue to work with the RCSC to fill vacancies.

As in other areas, ICT offers the potential of increasing the transparency and accountability of the institution in plenary matters. Already the National Assembly posts on its website information such as draft legislation, amendments, votes and other information. In addition, the National Assembly could make

available other information such as real-time audio streaming of plenary proceedings.

### *Support of Committees*

The addition of 9 Committee secretaries will add substantially to the working of the Committees and the hiring of 34 AROs will assist MPs in their committee work, as well.

The Secretariat will continue to work with the RCSC to fulfill the personnel requirements that were determined in the Human Resources Assessment that was conducted by the Secretariat and shared with the RCSC. The National Assembly (amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2014 provides that “each committee shall be provided with a committee secretary, a legal Assistant and a Draftsperson with adequate equipment and befitting office space.” Clearly this requirement is not being met but should remain a goal of the National Assembly to be implemented over time.

Harmonization of laws is a priority in the 12th Five Year Plan and is a Core Mandate of the Agency Key Results Area (AKRA) for the Parliament. To that end, the need for legislative officers with law drafting skills is an urgent priority for the National Assembly and National Council. As such the Secretariat will work closely with the RSCS to bring on legislative

officers with the appropriate skills.

### *Research and other support*

Quality research is key to producing quality legislation. Research is often provided by committee staff. At other times, the research is produced by a Research Division. The Research Section in the National Assembly is charged with conducting field and desk research for members. In some bicameral parliaments research for members and Committees, as well as self-initiated research, is produced by a common Research Department. A prime benefit of a common Research Department is cost-savings as both the National Assembly and National Council can each call upon a single expert. As discussed in 1.10, the National Assembly will consult with the National Council on creating a common Research Department as part of its discussion on Joint Parliamentary Services. In the meantime, the Secretariat commits to provide evidence-based research findings and information to ensure that Members are fully briefed on the subjects the legislation covers.

In many Parliaments, Committees often avail themselves of experts that are not permanent employees of the Parliament to supplement the technical and subject matter expertise of committee staff. The Secretariat will develop a roster of experts that are

available to assist the Committees and will consult with the appropriate ministry to develop a mechanism to pay for consultants.

Committees also utilize details or secondments from various Ministries to assist in their work on specific legislation. These assignments are usually temporary and last for a specified period of time. The Secretariat will work with the RCSC and RGoB to determine the feasibility of secondments of experts from the Government to Committees.

The National Assembly will also explore the use of interns from recognized universities and other institutions in Bhutan. Not only would interns provide support for the Secretariat, MPs and Committees, but internships also afford a tremendous learning opportunity for university students and career opportunities for others by developing a keen understanding of Parliament. Quite often individuals participating in an internship program end up wanting to make a career out of public service and can help provide a stream of qualified individuals into the Secretariat.

### **2.3 Educating Members on the legislative process**

The current legislative process in a modern parliamentary system is

new to any incoming Member. Even if a Member has been in Parliament for a number of years, they still require support during the legislative process - in the run-up to and during parliamentary sessions. The Secretariat will continue to organize workshops, trainings and information sharing sessions for the Members on how the legislative process works. As in the past, Parliamentary experts will run the workshops. A comprehensive and easy-to-use guide on legislative process will also be developed for the Members.

The culture of MPs initiating legislation is absent in Bhutan. Up until now, the government agencies concerned drafted all the bills to be tabled for deliberations. To promote deliberative parliamentary democracy and harness the potential of the Members, the Secretariat organized trainings on drafting legislation and a handbook on drafting legislation was developed.

### **2.4 Strengthening parliamentary committees**

The National Assembly has nine standing committees. The Secretariat recognizes the role of the committees as they are mandated to consider and examine draft legislation in-depth. With the commitment to hire 9 additional Committee Secretaries, all committees will eventually have dedicated commit-

tee secretaries. The Secretariat will continue to work with the RCSC to bring on the additional Committee Secretaries in a timely fashion. In the meantime, officials from the four divisions of the Secretariat will continue to support the committees. The National Assembly is committed to supporting the committees to become vibrant and effective in the legislative process. The Secretariat will work toward training the committee secretaries as they are assigned to the National Assembly, especially in providing research services.

The Parliament commissioned a study on the effectiveness of the committees and the committee structure. That study has been referred to the House Committee for review. Upon completion of that review and approval by the National Assembly, the Secretariat will implement the recommendations.

The National Assembly would also benefit from standardization of work products from across the Committees. The Secretariat will undertake a review of templates required for various types of committee reports.

Committees would also benefit from developing an annual work plan. The plan would contain proposed legislative and oversight initiatives from the Committee as well as

anticipated policy and legislative initiatives from the Government. The Committee would use these work plans to identify specific needs, such as outside expertise or field visits, and would allow the Committees to budget for and plan their work flow throughout the year. The work plans will be submitted to the House Committee.

The Leadership in the National Assembly Secretariat will work with the Government to ensure that the Government's anticipated legislative and policy agenda is communicated to the National Assembly in a timely manner.

Continued trainings for Secretariat staff will continue in the specialized areas that form the core of legislative activity such as report writing, legislative drafting and research.

Strengthening of the Committees will not only be focused on parliamentary skills.

The Secretariat staff and the MPs need continuous workshops and symposia on the issues facing Bhutan—especially as they relate to the issues raised in the SDGs and the 12th FYP.

The Secretariat will work with development partners, CSOs, universities



>> RAA presentation to PAC members and others MPs.

and experts in Bhutan to develop a vigorous and ongoing program of workshops, roundtables and symposia on the issues of greatest importance to Bhutan.

### **2.5 Clarity about the impact of proposed legislation**

The potential social, environmental, financial and economic impact of draft legislation and policy should be a key consideration by Members when scrutinizing draft legislation. The Parliament will aim to work with the various Ministries and Agencies to ensure that the Government submits summaries of the potential social and economic impact of Bills and their conformance with the Sustainable Development Goals

and the priorities of the 12th Five Year Plan to the Parliament at an early stage of consideration of any proposed legislation. The Standing Committees will use these Impact Assessments that will accompany draft bills as part of its deliberations on Bills. These assessments will also be made available to all MPs by the Secretariat and made public on the National Assembly's website.

The Secretariat will work with the Committees to develop standardized templates that will serve to inform the members and the public on the impact of proposed legislation and will be used by all committees upon reporting to the National Assembly.

## **2.6 Gender Responsive Budgeting and Gender Sensitive and Gender Neutral Legislative Drafting**

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfillment of women's rights. It entails identifying and reflecting needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets.

There is increasing recognition by governments and multilateral institutions that budgetary policies have different impacts on men and women.

Parliament can play a key role in ensuring that the national budget formulated by the Government allocates sufficient funds to ministries and departments involved in programs and projects addressing gender equality issues. To this end, the Parliament will request that the Government formulate and submit a Gender Responsive Budget and trainings will be provided for MPs and staff on gender responsive budgeting.

Likewise, Parliament can recommend reallocation of resources to expenditure items such as education and health that have a direct benefit

to marginalized groups like women and children and examine tax laws and revenue measures and their impact on vulnerable groups such as women.

In oversight, Parliament can monitor the utilization of allocated resources, and whether the stated objectives have been achieved. To assist in this oversight, trainings will be provided for analyzing programs and policies and their impact on women and vulnerable groups.

The Parliament should also see that any legislation is drafted in a gender sensitive and gender neutral fashion and Committees should ensure that any draft legislation reported from committee is gender sensitive and gender neutral. In addition, gender sensitive and gender neutral drafting should be a component of any legislative drafting program.

Finally, while harmonizing existing law, the Committees should ensure that any revision of law is done in a gender sensitive and gender neutral fashion.

## **2.7 Creating an open, transparent and participatory legislative process**

The National Assembly is committed to ensuring a legislative process that is open and transparent. This is especially important in light of

Sustainable Goal 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and SDG 16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms). SDG 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels) will be enhanced with a fully open and transparent legislative process.

As stated previously, e-Parliament offers tremendous potential for the National Assembly and the Committees. The Secretariat, as part of the assessment of transition to an e-Parliament in 1.8 will work to maximize the potential of ICT to make the National Assembly and its activities readily accessible to citizens and the media.

The National Assembly already has in place many transparency measures. Votes of Members, the agenda and resolutions are examples of materials that are made available on the Assembly's website. Other items, such as the Petitions System and Questions are not functional. The website contains a portal for public feedback on proposed legislation.

The same level of information is not available for the Committees. As much of the work of the National Assembly takes place in the Com-

mittees, it is important that the Committee process be as open and transparent as possible.

In many Parliaments, the Parliament's website will host Committee web-pages with information on pending legislation, committee reports, press releases, upcoming activities such as public hearings or business meetings. In addition, information available also includes testimony from witnesses, a record of how members voted, transcripts of public hearings, submitted testimony and open meetings. If the hearing or meeting has been recorded, that audio or video file is available for streaming.

To maximize the transparency and openness of the Committees, the Secretariat will establish Committee web pages that are accessed through the National Assembly's web page.

### *Social Media*

The Committees can also use social media to communicate information about their work, mandate and processes, as well as the Committee's position on issues. An interactive website can accommodate submissions and comments from the public, with the Committee publishing its findings and results and responding to submissions and comments received.

The Secretariat will develop a plan to expand the National Assembly website to make public the legislative information from the Plenary and the Committees. As much as possible, any information made available should be in a format that is searchable.

The Committees can use social media to interact with the public to improve the legislative process. Further, the Secretariat recognizes the potential for the Members to interact with civil society, the public and the media when deliberating bills for opinions and feedback via such platforms. The Secretariat will develop a system that will enable interaction between the people and the Members during the process of deliberation of bills.

#### *Public Hearings and other Consultations*

Public Hearings are a mainstay in modern parliaments and a key tool for Committees to gather information and hear from experts, citizens, civil society and the government on legislative and oversight matters before the Committee. A manual on Public Hearings was produced and trainings conducted.

Committees should be encouraged to make increased use of public hearings and trainings on the conduct of public hearing will be ongoing.

The House would benefit from a standardization of format of information required to be included in a Committee report on a public hearing and the Secretariat will work with the Committees to develop a template.

The House Committee (or appropriate body) will undertake a review of the rules of procedure that pertain to conduct of public hearings, especially as they relate to the rights of witnesses.

The Secretariat will also convene regular meets with Committee Secretaries and interested members to discuss issues that arise during the conduct of public hearings. It is important to have such a peer-to-peer forum especially as the usage of public hearings increases.

#### *Committee updates*

In order for Members of the National Assembly to keep abreast of Committee activities, and as a contributor to transparency, the Secretariat will develop options on ways to inform the Membership of the activities of the committees on a regular basis.

## **2.8 Developing a system to ensure interactions between the legislature and government on legislative matters**

Bhutan's democratic Parliament is only ten years old. The current Parliament is the third one. So far, the government has drafted all the legislation tabled for deliberations in the Parliament. To improve on the conduct of one of the core functions of the National Assembly – scrutinizing the legislation – the Secretariat is committed to establishing a procedural mechanism that will enhance and professionalize the interactions between the government and the National Assembly during the legislative process.

A first step is to work with the Government and ensure that it submits its legislative agenda for the upcoming year. This agenda will inform the development of Committee work plans that incorporate anticipated government programs and legislative initiatives. It will also involve the National Assembly in ensuring that the objectives of the SDGs and the 12th FYP are incorporated into the National Assembly's decision-making process. Committees should be required to hold hearings on the upcoming legislative programs of portfolio Ministries and departments.

In addition, to ensure quality legislation, the Secretariat will mobilize funds and train civil servants involved in drafting bills. Periodic conferences and seminars will also be organized to facilitate interactions and the sharing of information among the Members and government officials tasked with drafting bills.

As a part of Activity 1.13—Collaborative training with existing organizations, the National Assembly will engage with recognized law schools, such as the Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law to establish or participate in a training program on legislative drafting. Successful completion of a program would strengthen the legislative drafting skills of Secretariat staff as well as other RCSC drafters assigned to the various Ministries.

## Strategic Objective III

### Enhancing the oversight capacity of the National Assembly

Constitutionally, the legislature of Bhutan is the highest decision-making body. The executive branch is accountable to the Parliament. The National Assembly being one of the two houses of the Parliament has the oversight function as one of its primary mandates apart from legislative and

representational. At the moment, the Parliament has a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that is largely responsible for ensuring effective financial oversight. The National Assembly's current oversight role is largely confined to overseeing the government's public expenditures and effective oversight in other areas needs to be strengthened. Article 10 (2) of the Constitution states: "Parliament shall ensure that the Government safeguards the interests of the nation and fulfills the aspirations of the people through public review of policies and issues, Bills and other legislations, and scrutiny of State functions". The Secretariat is committed to support the House and its Members by putting proper mechanisms in place to expand the oversight function to include oversight of the impact, effectiveness of implementation of policies and legislation.

# Strategic activities

## **3.1 Strengthening the existing oversight mechanisms and training Members on oversight functions**

Currently, the Parliament holds the government to account through written and oral questions when the Parliament is in session. The Members question ministers on issues they collect from the people during their constituency visits. The Secretariat will organize rolling training programs for the Members on how to effectively use the oversight function and conduct a review of existing oversight mechanisms. In addition, any induction program of new Members will include modules on the role of oversight in a democracy.

The Secretariat developed a guidebook for the Members on how to oversee the government. The guidebook has been distributed to the members and will be useful as they fulfill their oversight responsibilities.

Finally, a guidebook on drafting of Parliamentary Questions will be developed and training will be provided to Members and staff.

## **3.2 Strengthening parliamentary standing committees to play an effective oversight role**

The National Assembly is fully aware that oversight through committees could be one of the most effective mechanisms available for Members. During this Strategic Plan period, the House will continue to accord high importance to training Committee Chairs and Members on conducting oversight.

The Secretariat is committed to providing support services to the committees to carry out their oversight responsibility. Committee secretaries will be deployed to National Assembly standing committees. They will also be trained and educated on the oversight role of Parliamentarians.

In addition, Committees should include anticipated oversight in their annual work plans. This will assist in projecting the anticipated work loads of Committees and provide guidance on resources required for oversight activities of the Committees.

### **3.3 Enhancing the financial oversight capacity of Members and the Secretariat staff**

One of the most important oversight functions of the National Assembly is to oversee the executive's financial expenditure. Both Members and staff need to be capacitated in this field and the existing oversight tools and committee inquiry mechanisms to be continuously improved. In fields such as finances, members rely heavily on expert advice from Parliament staff

This training is critical for the MPs and staff of the Public Accounts Committee and Finance Committee but it is equally important for the other Committees so that the standing Committees can engage in effective programmatic oversight. It is crucial the staff understand and are efficient in rendering oversight support services to the Members. The Secretariat will continue to conduct trainings for both staff and Members on the government budget, budget cycle, budget policies, financial management, understanding audit reports, oversight and analysis.

In addition, the Secretariat will work with the National Council and the PAC and request staff from the Royal Audit Authority be detailed to the PAC to assist in its work.

The Secretariat will collect materials

on oversight functions of Parliaments for study and reference by the Committees. The materials will be available through the Library.

### **3.4 Enhancing the oversight capacity of Members and the Secretariat staff on the implementation of the 12th FYP and the SDGs.**

One of the key oversight areas that all Committees should be involved in is continuous oversight of the implementation of the 12th FYP and the SDGs. Members and staff should be well-versed on the objectives of the programs and well-schooled in the tools of oversight. The idea is to provide the National Assembly, the government and the public with valuable information on progress being made, highlight shortcomings and suggest improvements to programs and service delivery.

Specialized trainings will be provided on conducting oversight of the SDGs and the objectives of the 12th FYP.

### **3.5 Collaboration with government on the oversight function**

The Assembly recognizes the importance of its collaboration with the government to ensure it is able to carry out its oversight functions over the executive. The Assembly will review the existing mechanisms that outline the modalities of collaboration between the National Assembly

and the government and related agencies. The Assembly will work with the government, autonomous, constitutional and corporate agencies and establish clear procedures regarding providing information to the National Assembly in the course of undertaking its oversight mandate.

### **3.6 Collaboration with Civil Society and the Media when conducting oversight**

Civil Society Organizations often have a ground-eye view of government programs and services. As such, they can be the source of invaluable information on whether programs and services are being provided in an effective and efficient way. The Committees should deepen their relationship with CSOs as they conduct oversight.

The Committees will deepen their relationship with CSOs as they conduct oversight and the Secretariat will provide trainings on ways that Committees can engage and collaborate with CSOs when conducting oversight.

The Media can also be an effective ally when Committees conduct oversight. The media often reports on stories or issues that may become the subject of Committee oversight. Likewise, when the Committee is conducting its oversight, the media

can act as an important tool in educating the public on government programs and policies as well as potential problems.

The Committees will deepen their relationship with the media as they conduct oversight and the Secretariat will provide trainings on how the Committees can engage with the media while conducting oversight.

### **3.7 Strengthening the research and analysis service**

To exercise the National Assembly's oversight mandate – to hold the government to account – it requires a high level of research and analytical 'back office' support. It is anticipated that the 9 additional Committee Secretaries will assist in providing quality research and analytical services to the Committees and Members as they conduct oversight. In addition, the AROs can provide assistance to individual members as they exercise their oversight responsibilities. Beyond the Committee Secretaries and AROs, the Secretariat will work with the RCSC to place research and policy analysis professionals at the Secretariat. These professionals will also render quality research and analytical services to the Members to play their oversight role.

## Strategic Objective IV

### Strengthening the National Assembly's Representation and Outreach capacity

**A**part from legislative and oversight roles, the National Assembly is mandated to represent the people. Parliamentarians are bestowed with the will of the people expressed through casting their adult suffrage during the elections. It is the responsibility of parliamentarians to ensure a fair, ef-

fective and inclusive representation of the people.

The Secretariat acknowledges the responsibility of the National Assembly to serve as a link between the people and the government. The Members ought to communicate with the electorate to inform them about the activities they carry out and that of the government functionaries. The concerns of the people need to reach to the government and legislature to be reflected in the national legislation and policies. Therefore, the Secretariat is committed to facilitate and support the House and its Members in their efforts to take Bhutan's Parliament to the people.

# Strategic activities

## 4.1 Creating a culture of informed public discussions during the legislative process

It is the responsibility of parliamentarians to represent all of their constituents including those living in far and scattered villages. It is a challenge for the Members to be aware of the views of their constituents during the legislative and decision-making processes. The National Assembly is committed to improving the existing mechanisms and establishing new appropriate channels for Members and the electorate to interact during the legislative process. The channels will include both physical and virtual. This is especially important as the National Assembly plays a key role in leading the public debate and discussion on the 12th FYP and the SDGs. To facilitate these critical discussions, the Secretariat will develop a multi-faceted approach to foster debate and understanding of the issues facing Bhutan.

Expanding the use of the video conferencing facility (Virtual Zomdu) will be one of the priorities during this Strategic Plan period to connect parliamentarians and the people on legislative matters, especially when the Parliament is in session and the Members are not able to be in their

constituencies. The facilities help parliamentarians meet and discuss issues of importance in “real time”. The facilities will also serve as a medium through which representatives could seek views and opinions from the people on diverse issues. A survey was conducted of Members to ascertain how Members use the Virtual Zomdu, identify reasons why Members may not be maximizing use of the facility and develop recommendations on ways to increase its usage. The Secretariat will examine the results of the survey and implement such changes that will result in increased usage of Virtual Zomdu.

It is important to note that the Virtual Zomdu facility will not substitute the regular visits (twice in a year) that the Members make, but will be in addition and provide impetus to ongoing interaction between Members and the public.

Additionally, the National Assembly can help create a culture of informed public discussions by scheduling debates in the Plenary on a regular basis. This is especially important when it comes to creating an informed public and developing a consensus that will contribute to achieving the SDGs and the priorities

of the 12th Five Year Plan.

Committees can host round table discussions, hold public hearings and engage Civil Society Organizations and media in discussing the issues of greatest importance to Bhutan. The Secretariat is committed to facilitating such activities.

Members are mandated to visit their constituency at least twice in a year. The Secretariat is committed to providing the necessary support to the MPs to ensure that the constituency visits are successful.

The National Assembly will study the feasibility of establishing constituency offices at the Dzongkhag level and will discuss with the RGoB, the RCSC and partners the resources that would be required.

#### **4.2 Empowering women National Assembly Members**

There are only seven female parliamentarians in the National Assembly. Even combining the two chambers, there are only eleven female MPs in the current Parliament. The National Assembly recognizes that the legitimacy of the institution is tied to ensuring that its members are broadly representative of the people.

To achieve this aim, the National Assembly will create awareness among the people on the importance of women leadership and plan a rolling program on representation and leadership specifically for the women Members.

In addition, the Secretariat will ensure that women National Assembly Members are represented on national and international panels and study tours.

The National Assembly will also establish a working relationship with the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC).



*Hon'ble Norbu Wangzom, Jomotshangkha Martshala making her point in the house*

### **4.3 Training on representation and leadership**

To ensure parliamentarians are effective in providing leadership and articulating the views of their constituents, the National Assembly recognizes the need to train the Members on representation and leadership. Throughout the Strategic Plan period (2019-2023), there will be periodic trainings for the Members to acquire knowledge and hone their skills in representation and leadership. A module on representation and leadership should be included in any induction program. In addition, ongoing trainings and workshops will educate the Members on what representation and leadership actually mean. A comprehensive guidebook on representation and leadership in accordance with international parliamentary best practices befitting Bhutan's parliamentary traditions will be developed. An international parliamentary expert with a national expert as his counterpart will develop the guidebook to ensure the sight of Bhutan's parliamentary traditions is not lost.

In addition, the Secretariat recognizes that some Members may desire training on the art of debate and public speaking and will seek to arrange for trainings on ways that Members can enhance their communication and debating skills.

### **4.4 Improving mechanisms to work with local government authorities**

The National Assembly recognizes the importance of local government authorities and is aware they are an effective link between the Parliament and the people at local level. The National Assembly will improve the existing communication mechanisms with the local government to take Parliament to the people.

Establishing the relationship with local government authorities takes on increased importance as the drive to localization gathers momentum. The Secretariat will provide trainings and workshops to Members and staff on the concept of localization and devolution of authority to local governments.

To assist the National Assembly in its work and developing relationships with local governmental institutions, the National Assembly will establish a working relationship with the Department of Local Government.

### **4.5 Liaising with the media to represent constituents**

The National Assembly recognizes the importance of the media and a strategic collaboration with it will improve the outreach of Parliament in educating people on the work it undertakes. The Secretariat

will continue to organize trainings for Members on making use of the media to represent and lead their constituents. Trainings will also continue on how to interact and talk to the media/ journalists.

As a House of the People, the National Assembly should be accessible to the people and the media. The role of the media is critical in any democracy and an understanding of parliament is essential for any journalist covering the National Assembly. The National Assembly would welcome programs that train journalists in reporting parliamentary affairs as this would help establish the National Assembly as relevant, accessible and transparent to the people.

The Secretariat will strengthen its Information and Communications Division to strengthen the Assembly's working relationship with journalists. It will also collaborate with the media in disseminating parliamentary information. It will make concerted efforts to brief and educate the media on the work of the National Assembly and its governance structures.

#### **4.6 Collaborating and engaging with civil society organizations**

The interaction and collaboration between the Parliament and civil society organizations in Bhutan is

absent. The National Assembly of Bhutan acknowledges that civil society organizations are effective channels and space for parliamentarians to communicate and interact with the people. Furthermore, civil society organizations will play an important role in the implementation of the SDGs and the priorities of the 12th FYP.

Therefore, the Secretariat will develop a strategy detailing the procedures and mechanisms for collaboration between the National Assembly and civil society organizations. The aim of the collaboration is to broaden the level of consultations and professional working relationship between parliamentarians, the Committees and CSOs. Also, the Secretariat will initiate dialogue with CSOs to orient them on the National Assembly's work and to explore how best they can get engaged in improving its functions.

The National Assembly will establish a relationship with the Civil Society Organization Authority to help the Assembly, the Committees and the Members build their relationships with CSOs that can be of use in pursuit of fulfilling their legislative, oversight and representational roles.

#### **4.7 Providing programming on Parliamentary Affairs to radio and other media.**

Given that many constituencies are highly scattered it is difficult for the Members to reach out to the people they represent on regular basis. The mandatory visits (twice a year to their constituencies) are important but more needs to be done to create a vibrant democracy. As stated in 2.5, the Parliament conducted a feasibility study on establishing radio and television stations. An alternative radio start-up study was also carried out to immediately start a radio station with the existing infrastructure in the National Assembly building. Neither of these efforts were deemed feasible.

In lieu of establishing a radio station, the Secretariat will develop programming on parliamentary affairs to be broadcast on radio and other media.

#### **4.8 Upgrading the website and expanding the National Assembly presence on social media**

The National Assembly will continue to upgrade its website to make it resourceful and interactive. International best practice in parliamentary communication will be taken into account while upgrading the website. The website will provide platforms for the people and their representa-

tives to engage in virtual interactions to discuss issues and concerns. The upgraded website will go a long in making the work of the National Assembly transparent and accessible.

It will contain information on legislation, budgets, plenary deliberations, committee proceedings and other relevant information on the ongoing work of the House. For the Members, the website will provide the latest information and knowledge on parliamentary affairs. The Secretariat will train its ICT staff to ensure the website remains updated and dynamic and will work with the RCSC and the RGoB to provide adequate resources to make the National Assembly's website and presence on social media an important link to citizens.

The explosion of social media offers an opportunity for the National Assembly to expand its engagement of citizens on various issues on various platforms. The Secretariat will establish a National Assembly presence on social media platforms and ensure that they are maintained and that the content is regularly updated.

#### **4.9 Youth education and engagement**

Given a huge youth population in the country, the National Assembly

of Bhutan accords the youth great importance. The House is aware the future of Bhutan's democracy pivots on the level of education the youth get on democracy. The Secretariat is committed to educate the youth in parliamentary processes and affairs.

The House will continue its work with Bhutan's Children's Parliament that organizes mock parliamentary deliberations and continue collaborating with local CSOs and relevant government agencies on this activity.

It will educate young people on democracy by encouraging National Assembly Members to visit schools during their constituency visits. The Secretariat will work with the Education Ministry to establish a program to bring students to the Parliament as part of an ongoing program to educate students on democracy.

The secretariat will also develop activities and materials to make the National Assembly and its work accessible to the youth and will work with the relevant government and non-government agencies to identify appropriate programs that educate the youth on parliamentary affairs.

The activities outlined in 4.8, especially as they relate to expanding the National Assembly presence

on social media, offer tremendous opportunity to connect and engage with the youth of Bhutan.

#### **4.10 Constituent concerns**

A regular part of representation duties involve constituents seeking the assistance of their Member of Parliament. No formal mechanisms exist in the National Assembly for an individual member to assist their Constituents.

The Members should be able to rely upon a established process to have their constituent's problems addressed. The Secretariat will examine methods to formalize the process by which Members can assist their constituents and report its recommendations to the House Committee for consideration. As part of this examination, consideration should be given to developing a mechanism that elevates constituent issues to the Plenary.

The National Assembly will work with the Ministries to establish Parliament Relations Departments with the responsibility to respond to and resolve constituent issues.



# Resource mobilization



*Finance Minister Mr. Namgay Tshering presenting the Annual Budget Report to the Parliament*

**T**he National Assembly is aware that the possibility of achieving the strategic objectives depends equally on human and financial resources. While the human resource picture has improved over recent years, more resources will be needed to achieve the strategy. The

human resource requirement will be presented to RCSC on a continuing basis during its ongoing organizational development exercise.

On the financial resource front, the strategic activities will be included in the National Assembly's annual plan-

ning and budgeting for the Finance Ministry to consider. In addition, partnerships with international organizations assisting parliamentary development will be established. The National Assembly will also hold a donor coordination meeting to present this Plan to development partners and seek their assistance in its implementation.

To achieve the strategic objectives, which in turn, will help achieve its vision and mission, the National Assembly will need specific techni-

cal expertise and capacity. The Secretariat will look at collaborating with Parliaments in the region and other international organizations. Trainings, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, and apprenticeship with foreign Parliaments will be undertaken.

Given Bhutan's commitment and aspirations to deepen its young democracy, the National Assembly is optimistic about sourcing funds to realize its ambitious strategy for 2019-2023.



## Implementation

**T**he Secretariat will develop the implementation roadmap for the Strategic Development Plan. It will provide strategic directions in developing annual work plans. The implementation roadmap will use the strategic objectives, strategic activities outlined in the Plan to outline a timeline for implementation and identify the responsible

division/unit for each of the activity areas. The implementation roadmap will be a dynamic document, as the Strategic Plan will need to incorporate the changing needs of the National Assembly within the Plan period and prioritize accordingly. The National Assembly Secretariat headed by the Secretary General will implement the Plan.





## Monitoring & Evaluation

**B**ased on the implementation roadmap and annual work plans, the progress and the status of the strategic objectives and activities will be assessed and monitored. The directorate of the Secretariat will spearhead the implementation of the Plan with quarterly written updates to the Secretary General, who in turn will update the Speaker on the progress of its implementation. The Secretariat will write an annual report reflecting the progress of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It will distribute the report to the Members and post on its website for the public to read.

At the end of the Strategic Plan period (2023), the National Assembly will carry out a thorough review and evaluation of the Plan. Based on the findings of the evaluation, a new Strategic Plan will be developed to ensure the House is able to meet the demands of its Members to carry out their constitutional mandates and fulfill the aspirations of the people of Bhutan.

### ***Assumption and risks***

The success of the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan of the National Assembly of Bhutan (2019-2023) will depend on the ability to mobilize the required financial resources, commitment of potential international partners, and the assignment of political importance to the National Assembly as a parliamentary institution. On the other hand, political leadership over the Strategic Plan from the Members of Parliament led by the Honorable Speaker and implementation commitment of the Secretariat staff guided by the Secretary General will have a crucial role to play. And the allocation of sufficient human resource both in terms of quantity and quality and the cooperation of other stakeholders are equally important. Anything short of what is required to implement the Strategic Plan might render it futile.

# NA Implementation Annex

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe					
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023	
Strategic Objective 1--Strengthening the Secretariat								
1.1. Improving the human resource capacity	i. Continued implementation of the human resource requirement projection. Monitor and revise as necessary.	HR Section	X	-	-	-	-	
1.2 Staff development needs assessment and execution plan	i. Continued execution of recommendations found in staff development needs assessment	HR Section	X	X	X	X	X	
	ii. Continue consultations with RCSC, the RGoB and development partners to identify resources to implement priority needs.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X	
1.3 Strengthening the management of the Secretariat	i. Undertake organizational development exercise of the Secretariat	SSD	X	-	-	-	-	
	ii. Ongoing assessment of improving the management system.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X	
	iii. Implement performance and monitoring system.	HRC	X	X	X	X	X	
	iv. Require each Division to produce an annual work plan based upon the NA's SDP	All Division	X	X	X	X	X	
	v. Require individual work plans for each staff of the Secretariat	All Staff	X	X	X	X	X	
	vi. Secretariat prepares and makes public annual reports on disbursements made on behalf of the House, including the amounts, purpose and recipient of the funds.	All Division	X	X	X	X	X	

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
1.4 Enhancing collaborations with international Parliamentary institutions	i. Explore feasibility and advisability of membership and associations with additional parliamentary associations and unions.	Secretariat Services	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. The Secretariat of the National Assembly will work with the National Council and the RCSC to fill the position of Protocol Officer.	SSD/ With HR Implementation	X	X	X	X	X
1.5 Ensuring the National Assembly has adequate human and budgetary resources	i. Continue work with the RCSC to ensure that skills and knowledge specific to a Parliament are factored into hiring decisions through tailored ToRs, flexible hiring decisions, etc.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Work with RGoB to ensure that the National Assembly is provided resources commensurate with budget requests from the National Assembly	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Secretariat undertakes a study on staff retention.	HR	X	-	-	X	-
	iv. NA and NC engage RCSC to explore the possibility of creating a major professional/occupational grouping in the RCSC for Parliamentary Affairs.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
	v. Engage with RCSC on making AROs permanent staff of the House.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
1.6 Ensuring that the National Assembly has access to quality economic analysis	i. Examine options to ensure that Parliament has access to quality economic analysis of the government's budget and impact of proposed legislation and policies.	Finance committee Services/ Committee Section		X	X	X	X

**LEGEND:**

SSD - Secretariat Service Division.  
RHD - Research & Hansard Division

LPD - Legal & Procedural Division  
ICD - Information & Communication Division

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
1.7 Provide a conducive work environment and adequate facilities, infrastructure and equipment	i. Continue relocation of MPs office to Gyalyong Tshokhang (Parliament Building)	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Undertake study of physical space and equipment requirements of AROs and liaise with RGoB on how to address the issue.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
	iii. Develop a confidential system for Secretariat staff and AROs to register employment issues and have them addressed.	HR and ICD	-	X	-	-	-
	iv. Sensitize MPs and staff on appropriate and ethical use of all official resources and educate members and staff on any implemented grievance procedure.	SSD	X	-	X	-	-
	v. Upgrade Fire Hydrant and Fire Alarm systems	RBP		X	X	X	X
	vi. Upgrade CCTV system	RBP		X	X	X	X
	vii. Upgrade DIS (Danish Interpretation System)	DNP	X	X	X	X	-
	viii. Construction of skylight roofing at the NA courtyard	With MoWHs					
	ix. Complete construction of Dry Wall around the Parliament building	SSD					
	x. Installation of heating/cooling system	DNP		X	X	X	-
	xi. Purchase of Vehicles	SSD		X	X	X	

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
1.8 Transitioning to an e-Parliament	i. Undertake survey of needs of the institution, taking into consideration international best practices and the ways that ICT can support the institution, including management, resolution and bill management tracking system, work-flow, plenary and committee work.	ICD	-	X	-	-	-
	ii. Determine required equipment and staff needs.	ICD	X	X	-	-	-
	iii. Work with RCSC on fulfilling staffing needs and RGoB on equipment requirements.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iv. Examine what information and data generated can be made public.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Examine feasibility of deploying a computer system that provides MPs with access to documents via monitors installed on desks in the Chamber.	ICD	X	-	-		
	vi. Work with the RSCS to fill the position of ICT Officer	ICD					
1.9 Strengthening the Library	i. Improve the existing library	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Continue development of the E-Library	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Create and maintain digital archive of Parliamentary documents	ICD	X	X	X	X	X

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
	iv. Create online catalogue	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Focus on collection of resource materials on Parliaments, including subscriptions to international journals	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. Join regional library associations	ICD	-	X	-	X	-
1.10 Joint Services with the National Council	i. Engage the National Council to discuss feasibility of establishing joint parliamentary services, including the management structure for jointly-provided services.	SSD	-	X	X	X	X
1.11 Continuous professional development trainings for Secretariat Staff	i. Develop and execute professional development training plan	All Division	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Professional development and exchanges for staff conducted.	All Division	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Develop and implement a reporting and distribution mechanism so that valuable knowledge is recorded, shared and mainstreamed throughout the Secretariat.	All Division	X	X	X	X	X
1.12 Gender mainstreaming in the National Assembly	i. Trainings on women in leadership for female/male MPs and Secretariat staff.	HR	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Trainings for MPs and Secretariat staff on mainstreaming gender during the legislative process and when undertaking oversight.	HR	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Assessment of distribution of roles and responsibilities of women in Secretariat staff.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
	iv. Assessment of distribution and adequacy of OFFICE space	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
	v. Allocate sufficient resources (both in space and access) to provide for day care and maternal needs.	SSD	-	X	-	-	-
1.13 Developing internal education and training programs and building collaborative training programs with existing organizations.	i. Work with National Council to examine possibility of developing an in-house training capacity of the Secretariats.	SSD	-	-	X	-	-
	ii. Identify possible outside partners and programs for collaborative education and training.	SSD	-	X	X	X	X
	iii. Establish relations and discuss specific skills and curricular required	SSD	-	X	X	X	X
	iv. Liaise with RCSC to ensure that training programs are appropriately recognized as part of professional development and training for secretariat staff.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
1.14 Anti-Corruption	i. Develop a Financial Disclosure regime for MPs and appropriate staff that includes publication and that is easily accessible and available for inspection to the public and media on-line	LPD & SSD		X	X	X	

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
	ii. Develop policies for the National Assembly based upon the Anti-Corruption Commission's Asset Declaration Rules of 2017, the Gift Rules of 2017, and the Model Guidelines on Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector (2017)	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
	iii. Work with the National Council to develop a single Financial Disclosure regime covering both Houses.	SSD	-	X	-	-	-
	iv. Develop a training program on Ethics and Anti-corruption, including training on financial and asset disclosure, avoidance of high risk situations and conflicts of interest.	SSD	-	X	-	-	-
	v. Lend support to Members who wish to organize a chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)	Secretariat Services with relevant committees	-	-	-	X	-
1.15 Induction of New Members	i. Secretariat prepares and conducts an induction session for Members at the beginning of each Parliament.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
	ii. Secretariat prepares materials that can be given to Members and staff who begin service in the middle of the Parliament.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
Strategic Objective 2--Improving the legislative capacity and processes of the National Assembly							
2.1 Continuous review of the Rules of Procedure	i. House Committee examines existing mechanisms for amending the rules of procedures and suggests options for the National Assembly.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
2.2--Strengthening legislative support capacity of the Secretariat	i. Work with RCSC to hire a Chief Legislative Officer	SSD With HR		X	X		
	ii. Continue utilization of ICT in the Research and Hansard Division to maximize productivity and services to increase transparency and accountability and support Plenary and Committee operations.	RHD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Continue to work with RCSC to fulfill personnel requirements of the Secretariat in support of Research and Hansard Division.	HR with LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	iv. Continue to work with RCSC to fulfill personnel requirements of the Committees. High priority will be given to Legislative staff with drafting skills to work on Harmonization of Laws pursuant to the 12th Five year Plan	HR with RHD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Explore ways for Committees to utilize short-term outside expertise including incentives for Committees to use short-term experts.	All Division	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. Discuss with RCSC and RGoB ways to detail members of the civil service to Committees for short term assignment.	HR with LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	vii. Develop an internship program with universities and other organizations in Bhutan	HR and Divisions		X	X	X	X

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
2.3--Educating Members on the legislative process	i. Workshops and trainings of Members on legislative process (including the rules of procedure in the National Assembly and committees, budgeting, steps required for enactment of legislation, etc)	LPD	X	-	-	-	-
	ii. Develop and publish an easy-to-use guide on legislative process.	LPD	-	X	-	-	-
	iii. Continued training for MPs on how to draft legislation	LPD with HR	-	X	-	-	-
2.4--Strengthening parliamentary committees	i. Provide enough staffing to support the committees	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Train committee secretaries and other committee support staff in basic legislative staff functions such as research, report writing and legislative drafting	LPD & SSD	-	X	X	-	-
	iii. Implement recommendations from study on effectiveness of the committees and committee structure.	LPD	X	-	-	-	-
	iv. Secretariat works with Committees and develops standardized templates for committee work products, such as committee reports.	LPD	X	-	-	-	-
	v. Committees produce annual work plans, together with budget requirements, that are submitted to the House Committee	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. National Assembly leadership works with Government to ensure timely delivery of Government's anticipated legislative and policy agenda on an annual basis.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
	vii. Develop a continuous program of programs and symposia that deepens the knowledge of MPs and staff on the issues facing Bhutan, especially as they relate to the SDGs and the 12th FYP	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
2.5--Clarity about the impact of proposed legislation	i. Work with Government to identify information required for MPs to make informed decisions on draft legislation and have that information contained in transmittal report with any draft legislation sent to the Parliament.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Develop a standardized required content for Committee reports on reported legislation that informs the membership of the budgetary, gender, SDG and 12th FYP impact of the reported legislation and any recommended amendments.	LPD	-	X	-	-	-
2.6--Gender Responsive Budgeting and Gender-Neutral and Gender-Sensitive Legislative Drafting	i. Request that the Government formulate and submit a Gender Responsive Budget	Finance Committee	-	X	X	X	X
	ii. Provide training for Committee MPs and Staff on Gender Responsive Budgeting	Secretariat with LPD	-	X	-	-	-
	iii. Provide training for MPs and Committee staff on analyzing programs and policies and their impact on women and vulnerable groups.	HR	-	X	X	-	-

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
	iv. Provide training for MPs and staff on gender-sensitive and gender-neutral legislative drafting	HR	-	X	-	-	-
	v. While harmonizing existing laws, Committees should focus on amending those laws to make them gender-sensitive and gender-neutral.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
2.7-- Creating an open and transparent legislative process	i. Maximize the potential of ICT to make the National Assembly and its activities readily accessible to citizens and the media.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Extend the information that is available at the Plenary level to the Committees by creating Committee WebPages, publishing committee votes, transcripts, testimony, bill text and amendments.	ICD with Committee Affairs		X	X	X	
	iii. Capture Plenary and Committee meetings and hearings in multiple formats and make those available on the websites and social media.	ICD with Committee Affairs		X	X	X	
	iv. Make public hearings and other consultations with the public routine as ways to interact with the public and improve the legislative process.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Examine rules of procedure as they relate to public hearings, especially as they relate to the rights of witnesses.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. Standardize materials to be included in committee reports on public hearings.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
	vii. Secretariat convenes regular meetings with Chairs and Secretaries to discuss issues that arise during the conduct of public hearings.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	viii. Secretariat develops options on ways to inform the Members of the activities of the committees.	ICD with Committee Affairs	-	X	-	-	-
2.8 Developing a system to ensure interactions between the legislature and government on legislative matters	i. Require Government to submit legislative agenda for the upcoming year.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Require Committees to hold annual hearings on the upcoming legislative programs of portfolio Ministries and Departments.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Committees hold meetings with Government and other stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the SDGs and the 12th FYP are incorporated into the National Assembly's decision-making	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	iv. Establish a mechanism that facilitates ongoing consultation between the Committees and the Government on proposed draft legislation.	LPD	-	X	X	X	X
Strategic Object 3--Enhancing the oversight capacity of the National Assembly							

**LEGEND:**

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
3.1 Strengthening the existing oversight mechanisms and training Members on oversight functions.	i. Rolling programs and trainings for members to conduct oversight functions.	HR	X	-	-	-	-
	ii. Review the existing oversight mechanisms		-	-	X	-	-
	iii. Develop a module on oversight for induction programs for MPs	LPD	X	-	-	-	-
	iv. Distribute Oversight Manual.	LPD	X	-	-	-	-
	v. Develop guidebook on drafting of Parliamentary Questions and provide training to Members and staff on Questions	RHD	-	X	-	-	-
3.2 Strengthening parliamentary standing committees to play an effective oversight role	i. Continued deployment of committee secretaries and other staff.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Committee secretaries trained to provide oversight support services to members.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Require that oversight objectives of the Committees be included in the Committee's annual work plan	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
3.3 Enhancing the financial oversight capacity of Members and the Secretariat staff	i. Trainings and workshops on the government budget, budget cycle, budget policies and financial management for the members.	SSD	-	X	-	-	-
	ii. Trainings and workshops on understanding audit reports oversight and analysis for members.	SSD	-	X	-	-	-
	iii. Improve the existing oversight tools and committee inquiry mechanism.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022- June 2023
	iv. Collect enough materials on oversight functions of Parliament for study and reference.	RHD and ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Strengthen Public Accounts Committee by providing research support and trainings to the staff.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. Work with National Council to request staff from the Royal Audit Authority be detailed to the PAC to assist in its work	LPD		X	X	X	X
3.4 Enhancing the oversight capacity of Members and the Secretariat staff on the implementation of the 12th FYP and the SDGs.	i. Provide trainings and workshops on the SDGs and 12th FYP objectives and methods to ensure that programs, policies and budgets are in alignment with objectives.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-
3.5 Collaboration with government on the oversight function	i. Review the existing mechanisms of collaboration between the House and government on oversight functions	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Establish clear procedures on government agencies providing information to the House for oversight purposes.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
3.6 Collaboration with Civil Society and the Media when conducting oversight	i. Committees develop relationships with CSOs and media to gather and disseminate information relating to oversight.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
3.7 Strengthening the research and analysis services required for effective oversight	i. Research and analysis professionals with required oversight skills recruited to provided effective support services to the members to effectively conduct oversight.	RHD		X	X	X	

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe								
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023				
Strategic Objective 4--Strengthening the National Assembly's Representation and Outreach capacity.											
4.1--Creating a culture of informed public discussions during the legislative process	i. Develop multi-faceted approach to foster discussion and understanding of issues facing Bhutan, especially as they relate to the 12th FYP and the SDGs.	Research and hansard	-	-	X	X	X				
	ii. Set aside debate time in the Plenary for debate on the SDGs and the 12th FYP	Research and hansard	X	X	X	X	X				
	iii. Facilitate Committees and Task Forces convening multi-stakeholder forums for increasing citizen awareness, dialogue and buy-in of the SDG and 12th FYP priorities.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X				
	iv. Use video-conference facility (virtual zomdu) to represent constituents in the legislative process and take parliament to the people.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X				
	v. Conduct study on Member usage of Virtual Zomdu and develop recommendations for increasing usage.	ICD	X	-	-	-	X				
	vi. Conduct feasibility study on establishing constituency offices.	SSD	-	-	X	-	-				
4.2--Empowering women National Assembly Members.	i. Create awareness among the people on the importance of the leadership of women.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X				
	ii. Leadership and representation trainings for women MPs.	SSD	X	-	-	-	-				
	iii. Ensure that women National Assembly Members are represented on national and international panels and study tours.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X				
	iv. Ensure that women National Assembly Members are provided Leadership opportunities.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X				

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
	v. Continue ongoing relationship with National Commission on Women and Children	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
4.3 Training on representation and leadership	i. Trainings and workshops for the members on representation and leadership.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Manual on representation and leadership developed.	LPD	-	X	-	-	-
	iii. Trainings on debate and public speaking provided.	SSD	-	X	X	-	-
4.4 Improving mechanisms to work with local government authorities	i. Improve the mechanisms to work with local government authorities on parliamentary affairs.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Trainings on the concept of localization and devolution of authority to local governments for MPs and staff.	RHD	-	X	-	-	-
	iii. Establish ongoing relationship with the Department of Local Government.	RHD	X	X	X	X	X
4.5 Liaising with the media to represent constituents	i. Conduct trainings for the members to use the media to represent the people. Trainings on how to talk to journalists.		X	-	-	-	-
	ii. Establish working relationship with journalists reporting parliamentary affairs.	SSD with ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Strengthen Communications department in the Secretariat to produce materials highlighting the work of the National Assembly and the Committees.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X

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Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
4.6 Collaborating and engaging with civil society organizations	i. Work with CSOs to enable members to carry out their representational role.	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. National Assembly and Committees work with CSOs to elicit opinion and views and orient the CSOs to the work of the Committees and National Assembly	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. National Assembly and Committees work with Civil Service Organization Authority	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
4.7 Providing programming on parliamentary affairs to radio and other media	i. Develop programming on parliamentary affairs to be broadcast on existing media	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
4.8 Upgrading the website and expanding the National Assembly presence on social media	i. Existing website upgraded	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Website optimized to engage in two-way dialogue with citizens and stakeholders	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Materials that contribute to transparency and openness available in user-friendly format that is searchable. Materials should be from both the Plenary and Committees.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iv. National Assembly establishes an active social media presence on multiple platforms.	ICD	X	X	X	X	X

Activity	Inputs	Responsible Division/Unit	Timeframe				
			July 2018- June 2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-June 2023
	v. Adequate staffing resources allocated to website and social media outreach.	ICD with HR	X	X	X	X	X
	vi. Training provided for staff.	HR with ICD	X	X	X	X	X
4.9 Youth education and engagement	i. Educational program for youth on parliamentary affairs developed in collaboration with relevant government and non-government agencies.	LPD & SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Members visit schools to educate youth on Parliament	LPD & SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Utilization of social media platforms to connect to and engage with youth.	LPD and ICD	X	X	X	X	X
	iv. Work with Education Ministry to establish a program to bring students to the Parliament as part of a program to educate students on democracy	LPD	X	X	X	X	X
	v. Continue work with Bhutan's Children's Parliament	LPD	x	x	x	x	x
4.10 Constituent concerns	i. Examine ways to more efficiently resolve constituent issues.	SSD	X	X	X	X	X
	ii. Work with Ministries to establish Parliament Relations Departments with responsibility to respond to and resolve constituent issues.	RHD	X	X	X	X	X
	iii. Develop a mechanism to elevate constituent issues to the attention of the Plenary	RHD	X	X	X	X	X

**LEGEND:**

SSD - Secretariat Service Division.  
RHD - Research & Hansard Division

LPD - Legal & Procedural Division  
ICD - Information & Communication Division

