

### C. Resolution on the review report on Satong and Gungtong

The National Council calls on the Government to the following recommendation and stresses the need for comprehensive, collaborative and consolidated efforts to generate greater impacts in the society.

#### A. Policy

Resolution	Identified agency	resolution
<p>1. Balanced regional development. The imbalance in the socioeconomic development outcome is evident from the disparities in poverty and migration patterns across the country. While the migration process cannot be stopped, the situation of socio-economic changes like poverty, Satong and Gungtong can be improved through creation of economic opportunities and augmenting infrastructure and services particularly in the rural areas. In this regard, it is critical to seriously pursue balanced regional development to enhance equitable socio-economic development and ensure improved access</p>	<p>MoHA</p>	<p>For equitable and balanced regional development, the Government has embarked on the implementation of the 13th FYP, which encompasses various LG key result areas, such as citizen-centric public services, vibrant local economy, improved health, and quality education. The plan also purports to provide common minimum infrastructure at Gewog/Thromde and Dzongkhag level through equitable resource allocations, using the resource allocation framework, which takes into account a set of criteria, including population, area, poverty, climate, and transportation.</p> <p>The Government has also earmarked 10% of the Annual Grants and Small Development Grants (SDG) in the 13 FYP to be allocated for the improvement of identified common minimum infrastructure in the Dzongkhag Thromdes to allow for the development of Dzongkhag Thromdes across the country, as it is done in other countries to divert migration to other alternative cities and towns, avoiding overpopulation and congestion in a single big city, and for balanced regional development.</p> <p>Furthermore, through the central programs and projects, the 13th FYP also aims to improve the essential public services, such as health, education, infrastructure, irrigation, crops protection, farm mechanization, and telecommunication networks, which will be implemented in collaboration with the LGs, enhancing the quality of rural life and livelihoods, thereby reducing rural-urban migration.</p>

<p>to essential amenities such as roads, communication, electricity, healthcare, education and ICT services. The government calling for districts to project annual GDP in the 13th FYP is one good initiative to expand economic opportunities.</p>		
<p>2. Fallow land conversion policy Recognizing that about 66,120 acres of arable land is lying fallow and forgoing potential production of 15,486 MT of paddy and 81,921 MT of maize, it is of paramount importance to revert fallow land into productive agriculture use to achieve food self-sufficiency. For a land scare country with increasing dependence on food imports, increasing agricultural land abandonment will further result into increased vulnerability of food security. Therefore, there is an urgent need to come up with the fallow land conversion policy at the earliest. Initiatives such as commercial or contract farming, fallow</p>	<p>NLCS</p>	<p>We would like to inform that the National Land Commission Secretariat has not yet undertaken any specific activities related to the reversion of fallow land for agricultural purposes, or for reducing food imports, or enhancing food security. However, we are keen to collaborate with relevant agencies should they initiate efforts in this area. In particular, we would be willing to assist by providing access to our land type database to support their work.</p>

<p>land bank, incentives/cost-sharing support, etc. could go well in the fallow land conversion policy.</p>		
<p>3. National rice policy: Rice holds a great significant in Bhutanese culture, tradition, religion and farmers' livelihood. Although the rice is not the largest produced cereal, it is the most widely consumed cereal in the country. The per capita consumption of rice is estimated at 150 kg of milled rice per year. The annual requirement is over 100,000 MT per year, and in 2023, Nu. 3 billion worth of rice was imported. However, the rice production has declined over the years from 86,385 MT in 2017 to 40,745 MT in 2022, a decline by 112%. Similarly, the rice cultivation area has decreased from 51,368 acres in 2017 to 22,683 acres in 2022 and fallow wetland increased from 7820 acres to 8957 acres during the same period. This has resulted in the decrease of rice self-sufficiency from</p>	<p>MoAL</p>	<p>The rice self-sufficiency has decreased over the years from a close to 47 % in 2017 to 25 % in 2024. The reduction in self-sufficiency rate has been due to reduction in paddy production from 86,385 MT in 2017 to 40,745 MT in 2022, a decline by 112%; decrease in rice cultivation area from 51,368 acres in 2017 to 22,683 acres in 2022 and fallow wetland increase from 7820 acres to 8957 acres during the same period. Thousands of acres of our prime rice producing land was lost to urban development in Paro airport area, Babesa, Kuruthang and Bajo. Besides, farm labour shortage, human wildlife conflict, lack of irrigation, climate change etc has also contributed towards reduction in rice production.</p> <p>Currently, about 93,257 MT of rice amounting to Nu. 3.059 billion is imported from India, 75 % of rice requirements. On a positive note, rice productivity has increased by 4.2% from 2006 to 2022 with the actual national average productivity increase from 1.1 MT/acre in 2006 to 1.8 MT/acre in 2022 which is attributable to the adoption of improved rice production technologies.</p> <p>Given the high cost of domestic rice production, due to challenges mentioned above, it is cheaper for Bhutan to import rice. However, for food security particularly during emergencies, a self-sufficiency of 35 % by 2034 is being targeted with per capita consumption at 144 Kg/year. To achieve this, paddy production needs to be increased from 41,000 MT in 2022 to 53,000 MT by 2028 and 64,000 MT by 2034 and wetland from 22,683 acres in 2022 to 29,000 acres in 2028 and 36,000 acres in 2034.</p> <p>Accordingly, a high-level Steering committee has been constituted for national land zoning, which will also look into protected chhuzhing land to achieve 35 % rice self-sufficiency.</p>

<p>40.8% in 2018 to 25.2% in 2022. The current 31,640 acres of wetland (including the fallow wetland) is not adequate to grow enough rice. It will give only 52,522 MT of paddy at an average yield of 1.66 MT/acre or 21,008 MT of milled rice. The country will still fall short of more than 80,000 MT of rice. Therefore, a separate National Rice Policy is crucial to provide focused policy framework for identification and conservation of rice landscape and enhance domestic production to achieve rice self-sufficiency.</p>		<p>Besides, in the first year of 13 FYP, 5 schemes are being implemented by MoAL, 41 new schemes and 71 scheme renovation are being implemented by LG, besides 18 schemes spill over from 12 FYP. These interventions are expected to ease the irrigation issue which would help in boosting paddy cultivation in the country.</p> <p>In order to address the HWC concerns the government has made the biggest investment plan of 5.1 billion to establish chainlink fencing. In the current fiscal year, 80 chainlink schemes are planned with total budget of Nu. 667 million, covering all 20 districts.</p> <p>The government is also exploring loan from government of Japan to procure farm machineries to address the farm labour shortage. In addition, the Ministry in collaboration with the relevant agencies is also working out the possibility of engaging foreign workers in agriculture and paddy cultivation is one of the top most priority to engage the seasonal foreign workers. We remain hopeful that this would also assist us in increasing paddy cultivation across the major rice producing districts and scale up country's rice self sufficiency ratio.</p> <p>Additionally, the Ministry in collaboration with relevant sectors is also working on instituting a national crop and livestock insurance scheme to encourage farmers to enhance their agricultural works with this risk transfer mechanism in place. Paddy is prioritized as one of the crops to be covered by the scheme solely to increase paddy cultivation and rice production in the country. This initiative if comes through would also help in increased rice production in the country leading to improved rice self-sufficiency.</p> <p>With regard to the policy guidance and direction for improving rice self-sufficiency, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bhutan 2023 adequately captures the following strategic policy interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rehabilitate and revitalize all potential fallow land and put it to productive use through appropriate support packages.</li> <li>● Bring feasible agriculture land under farm mechanization to address labour shortage, reduce</li> </ul>
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		<p>the cost of production and encourage farming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect prime chhuzhing (irrigated land for rice cultivation) for maintaining required rice self-sufficiency and preservation of farm-scape with appropriate incentives.</li> <li>• Enhance self-sufficiency of essential agriculture and livestock commodities, including rice for food security, resilience and sustainability.</li> </ul> <p>The aforementioned policy statements largely cover the policy interventions to be undertaken in order to improve rice self-sufficiency. Therefore, the Ministry feels that there is no requirement of separate rice policy as it is largely governed under the mentioned national policy which was approved by the cabinet very recently. The Ministry is optimistic that an effective implementation of above policy interventions would resolve the concerns raised by the house.</p>
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B. Land use and exchange

<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Identified agency</b>	<b>Response</b>
4. Flexible use of wetland: Allowing the conversion of wetland to other land categories will certainly		Conversion of chuzhing to kamzhing and khimsa are very pertinent issues. Therefore, to address these issues, a High-Level Steering Committee was recently established as per the Royal Command. This Committee comprises of

<p>have far reaching consequences on the food security particularly the rice production. Therefore, flexible use of fallow wetland, which has no scope for paddy cultivation due to various reasons such as drying up of irrigation water source, steep slope, located far away from settlements, etc. must be considered to grow other crops. This will not only help put the fallow land into productive use but also enhance diversification of crop production.</p>	<p>NLCS</p>	<p>members from MoAL, MoIT, MoICE, NLCS and DoCDD. Thus far, the Committee had three sittings and the work towards finding a solution are on-going.</p>
<p>5. Eligibility criteria for land exchange: Lands are also abandoned or left fallow because they fall in steep gradient. If it is a wetland, it is practically not possible to cultivate paddy. More than 31% of the total agricultural land is 18 situated on slopes as steep as 50%.<sup>27</sup> According to the land exchange rules and regulations, the private registered land is eligible for exchange only if: a) affected by natural calamities; b) fall within the critical watershed area and</p>		<p>With regard to the recommendation to include 'private registered land located on a steep gradient' in the Rules, we are currently reviewing the Land Exchange Rules and the relevant provision shall be incorporated in the revised Rules.</p>

<p>wetland; and c) scattered and located within state forests.<sup>28</sup> In view of this, it is recommended to include 'private registered land located on a steep gradient' in the eligibility criteria for land exchange.</p>		
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C. Program and Subsidy

<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Identified agency</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>6. Program support: To mitigate HWC and enhance self-sufficiency of cereals and essential vegetables, it is paramount to augment various program support in the form of upscaling electric fencing technologies; supplying of fertilizers and pesticides; access to improved farm machineries/gender friendly machineries, technologies and integrated cold storage facilities; renovating existing irrigation channels and constructing new ones with smart technologies;</p>	<p>MoAL</p>	<p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in the 13th Plan has prioritized the following interventions to mitigate HWC and enhance self-sufficiency of cereals and essential vegetables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Ministry is working in close collaboration with the relevant agencies and the Ministry of Finance to establish a national crop and livestock insurance scheme wherein the HWC is one of the perils covered under scheme.</li> <li>2. The Ministry also has prioritized BTN 5.1 billion to construct chain-link fencing in the 13th plan and in the first fiscal year of the plan, we will be constructing chainlink in 80 locations across 20 districts.</li> <li>3. The Ministry in the 13th Plan targets to achieve 30 perce rice self-sufficiency and 62 percent of essential vegetable self-sufficiency by 2029. In order to achieve that we have charted out the plan to implement the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of 26 irrigation schemes in five years</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<p>and developing lands to address numerous challenges being faced by the farmers.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provision of inputs and subsidy support which include pesticides, fertilizers, farm machineries and technical support services.</li> <li>● Promotion of innovative technologies and climate smart farming with sustainable land development, poly houses, smart irrigation system like drip and sprinkler.</li> <li>● Construction of agrifood economic hubs in Sarpang and Paro is also one of the major 13th plan activities of the Ministry.</li> <li>● The Ministry is also working with a proposal to facilitate the distribution of farm machineries (power tillers, mini tillers and others) to enhance agricultural productivity and enhance production.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Crop and livestock insurance scheme: There is a high risk associated in farming due to HWC and natural calamities. Though the previous Government reinstated the Endowment Fund for Crop and Livestock Conservation in 2019 to compensate crop and livestock damages by wild animals it could not be materialized due to inadequate financial resources, COVID-19 pandemic and sustainability issue. As HWC has significant bearing on the livelihood of farmers, the section 119 of Forest and Nature Conservation Act of</p>		<p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL) erstwhile the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) has initiated the introduction of National Crop and Livestock compensation scheme since 2016. The proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Finance in 2017 but the Ministry of Finance has not approved the proposal in view of the limited resources. Similarly, the Ministry also submitted the proposal on crop and livestock insurance in 2021 to the cabinet after which it was reverted to the Ministry of Finance for review. The proposal was also not recommended by the Ministry of Finance considering financial implication to the government and due to lack of clarity in administration of the scheme which appeared to be complicated.</p> <p>However, realizing the importance of providing the safety net for farmers to encourage enhanced agriculture and livestock farming in the country, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is reinstated to introduce the national crop and livestock insurance scheme. The past proposal could not be approved by the Ministry of Finance in view of huge cost implication to the government and unclear administrative mechanism as the proposals were spread across all the crop and livestock commodities. The past proposals also did not contain clarity on direct cost</p>

<p>Bhutan 2023 mandates the Government to institutionalize appropriate compensation measures to address crop and livestock by wildlife. Therefore, it is appropriate to initiate Insurance Scheme for the livestock depredation and crop damage by wild animals for the priority crops and categorized livestock farming identified by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.</p>	<p>implication to the government on insurance premium subsidy. The proposal submitted in 2021 proposed for higher premium rates for both crop and livestock.</p> <p>On the contrary, the current proposal of the Ministry is clear, focused and with lower premium rates. The current proposal focuses on seven selected commodities which include paddy, maize, potato, orange, cattle, poultry and piggery. The proposal also contains concrete cost implication to the government if the scheme is introduced providing clarity for decision making purpose. The proposed premium rates for crop and livestock insurance are 5.8 percent and 15 percent (Year 1) and 10 percent (Year 2 and beyond) respectively which are lower than 8 percent for crop and 15 percent for livestock in the past proposals.</p> <p>The Ministry in the past worked on the establishment of an endowment fund to pay compensation to the farmers during crop and livestock losses and the proposal was submitted to the cabinet in 2017. The Cabinet approved the establishment of the Endowment Fund on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017 in its 129<sup>th</sup> session of the Lhengye Zhungtshog. However, it could not be rolled out because of some unforeseen challenges.</p> <p>The Ministry prioritizes establishment of insurance scheme than the trust fund because of the following reasons:</p> <p><b>Risk Transfer and Management:</b> Insurance transfers the risk from farmers to insurers, providing a financially-backed safety net, unlike a trust fund, which relies on the availability and adequacy of the fund, which can be depleted by large-scale disasters, limiting its ability to fully compensate farmers.</p> <p><b>2. Financial Stability:</b> Insurance premiums create a consistent flow of funds to cover losses, and insurers spread the risk across a large pool of policyholders, whereas a trust fund may face funding shortages, especially after consecutive or widespread losses, leading to potential delays or reductions in compensation.</p> <p><b>3. Predictability and Planning:</b> Insurance offers predictable</p>
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	<p>insurance premium of the farmers insuring their crops and livestock.</p> <p>The Ministry also sought the technical expert guidance from the Ministry of Finance and incorporated their recommendations wherever relevant. The Technical Working Group also discussed for two times to discuss on the modality of the insurance and accordingly revised the proposal.</p> <p>The Ministry has worked on different percentage of premium share and its cost implication to the government on an annual basis. The best and suitable percentage of premium will be adopted taking into consideration the affordability of farmers and the government to pay the premium rates. The premium percentage share ranges from 20 to 80 percent for all the selected crop and livestock commodities.</p> <p>The Ministry have sent an official letter to the Ministry of Finance requesting their expert support in deriving an appropriate subsidy share of the government for payment of insurance premium and also to provide their financial expertise in deriving the premium rates.</p> <p>Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is hopeful that we can be able to institute the national crop and livestock insurance scheme in the country to protect our farmers from crop and livestock losses posed by natural calamities, climate change impacts and wildlife depredation. The subsidy share of the government to pay the premium rate will be determined as per the financial expertise and guidance of the Ministry of Finance.</p>
<p>8. Subsidy support: Farming across the country is not only drudgery but it is further rendered difficult by a significant shortage</p>	<p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock would like to acknowledge that the sector is facing the challenge of farm labor shortage and we also understand that farm machinery would truly help in increasing the agricultural</p>

<p>of labour and limited access to machinery types suitable for different crops and women farmers. For instance, between 2017 and 2023, the average area under farm mechanization was 8,211.6 acres per year - power tiller being the most common machinery used by the farmers. The government subsidy support ranged from 56% for power tiller to 68% for tractor 34 HP and 73% for paddy transplanter. However, with the withdrawal of government subsidy, a farmer now has to pay additional Nu. 1,255 to hire one power tiller per day. In view of the increasing labour shortage, it is crucial to reconsider the subsidy support for hiring of farm machinery, which will not only contribute to agricultural production and productivity but also ease huge financial and physical burden on the farmers.</p> <p>Likewise, it is also vital to provide cost sharing packages for prioritized crops/commodities (rice, maize, potato,</p>		<p>productivity with low farm labor.</p> <p>Realizing the importance of resolving this emerging issue, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is working on the proposal to import seasonal foreign labors in close collaboration with the MoICE and MoHA. We feel that the seasonal import of foreign labor in the prioritized districts would help us in replacing lost farm labors and continue our efforts for enhanced agricultural production and productivity.</p> <p>Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is also working on a proposal to facilitate the procurement and distribution of power tillers, mini tillers and other farm machineries by the farmers to help in increased farm mechanization. Farm mechanization would not only save the labor cost but also enhance productivity contributing to increased farmers income. The Ministry remains hopeful that those proposals will be able to implement sooner than later.</p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock currently follows the Guidelines for Cost Sharing Mechanism 2021 for different public support services and facilities provided. The CSM Guidelines 2021 mentions segregation of the share of cost at</p>
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<p>vegetables, fruits and nuts, etc.) and livestock activities (dairy, poultry, piggery, etc.) across the value chain ranging from production to processing and marketing to incentivize farmers to enhance productivity, improve livelihoods and contribute to overall national food security.</p>		<p>different percentages amongst subsistence farming, semi-commercial farming and commercial farming. The percentage share of the cost for different facilities and support were also differentiated by the nature of farming mentioned above.</p> <p>The CSM Guidelines 2021 has prioritized the following agriculture and livestock commodities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rice</li> <li>2. Maize</li> <li>3. Vegetables</li> <li>4. Potato</li> <li>5. Fruits and nuts</li> <li>6. Citrus</li> <li>7. Organic crops and organic fertilizers</li> <li>8. Post harvest and marketing</li> <li>9. Floriculture</li> <li>10. Agriculture nursery</li> <li>11. Meat (Chicken, Pork, Chevon, Fresh Fish-both cold and warm water)</li> <li>12. Dairy</li> <li>13. Egg</li> <li>14. Highland livestock development support (Yak, Sheep, Equine, Mastif)</li> <li>15. Animal Nutrition Services Support</li> <li>16. Animal Health services support</li> </ol> <p>Nevertheless, considering changing needs and development, the Ministry is currently working to review and revise the CSM Guidelines 2021.</p>
<p>9. Access to credit: During the 109th National Day, 2016 in Trongsa, His Majesty the King commanded to change the overall credit share to the agriculture sector. On the contrary, as evident from the chart 3, the overall share of credit</p>		<p>As evident from the table, the following views are offered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Between 2018 to 2019, there has been a steady growth on loans meant for the agriculture sector.</li> <li>2. Between 2020 to 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted and the loan growth has declined.</li> <li>3. In 2022, with the non-performing loan ballooning beyond control, the Bhutan Development Bank Limited (BDBL) and National CSI Bank Limited (NCSIBL) were put under credit moratorium. This barred access to finance from BDBL and NCSIBL which catered to</li> </ol>

portfolio to the agriculture sector has been declining continuously over the years. For instance, it decreased from 6% in the FY 2017/18 to 4.6% in 2019/20 and plummeted to 2.3% in the YF 2022/23. Moreover, the interest rates charged on agricultural loan by different financial institutions is high ranging from 8.32% - 10.85% (BoBL) to 10% (Druk PNB Bank Ltd.), 11% (RICBL), 8% (BNB) and 10.25% - 10.5% (BDBL). Recognizing the pivotal role of capital in catalyzing the growth, there is an urgent need to review the overall credit flows to the agriculture sector and the interest rates to improve enabling conditions for growth in the agriculture sector.

farmers.

4. There is a charge-off Nu. 538.22 million as of September 2024, which does not form a part of the loan outstanding.

Year	Total Loan (million Nu)	NPL Amount (million Nu)	NPL ratio	Growth
2017	5,690.27	1,172.41	20.6%	
2018	5,860.38	1,080.11	18.4%	3.0%
2019	6,274.68	1,252.10	20.0%	7.1%
2020	6,553.70	1,661.48	25.4%	4.4%
2021	6,603.08	1,252.00	19.0%	0.8%
2022*	5,057.88	367.04	7.3%	-23.4%
2023	5,045.99	372.80	7.4%	-0.2%
Sep-24	5,017.50	453.57	9.0%	-0.6%

\*Charged-off amount: 538.22 million

Compared to other sectors, exposure of agriculture loans

	<p>(value) to overall loans stands at 2.2% as of September 2024. Agriculture loan is considered a small ticket loan vis-à-vis other sector. In terms of volume (number of borrowers) of agriculture, the exposure stands at 49.82% as of September 2024.</p> <p>Interest rate is determined by cost of funds, tenor risk, credit risk, and operational costs, and business strategy. Out of these five factors, two factors (credit risk and operational costs) raise the interest rate on agriculture loans.</p> <p>As part of risk mitigation factor (to reduce the credit risk) which will bring down the interest rate for agriculture loan, Government may explore the possibilities of subsidizing the insurance premium for Agriculture insurance.</p>
<p>10. Agriculture marketing: Even to this day, farmers sell their agricultural products in a rudimentary way in local market, neighboring towns, to village traders or to a middleman. These are largely unorganized and farmers do not receive fair price. Moreover, lack of or inadequate infrastructure like road, storage, market shed/outlet, etc. further constrain rural agricultural development. In view of the above, besides</p>	<p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock as the nodal agency to look after the agricultural marketing, cooperatives, linkages and accessibility has set our priorities in the 13th Five Year Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the major outcomes of the 13th plan of the ministry is double the export value of the agricultural commodities and this is strategized to be achieved through the following activities to improve market stability, access, linkages and facilitation within five years:</li> <li>• Consolidation and upgradation of farmer group and cooperatives to federation – dairy federation, poultry federation, Cardamom federation</li> <li>• Establishing and strengthening farmer groups including youth groups, and cooperatives for supplies to four Gyalsung academies (vegetables, fruits and livestock products), GMC and export markets (asparagus, broccoli, ginger, turmeric,</li> </ul>

<p>improving market infrastructure it is high time to strengthen market linkages between farmers and buyers by establishing or identifying dedicated actors who will facilitate buying of agricultural products from the farmers, guaranteeing fair price and also ensuring convenient and trust worthy commodities to consumers. This will also help contribute to import substitution.</p>		<p>cardamom, chili).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Institutionalization of agrifood supplies to schools, institutions (Monastic and Education) and hospitals (Productive alliances, offtake agreements, essential post-harvest inputs, revision of the concept, identification of schools)</li> <li>● Support agrifood business through provision of value addition equipment, processing facilities, product development, packaging, logistics, and digitalization in strategic locations</li> <li>● Establishment of market infrastructures, main outlet for sale of products from all 20 dzongkhags; formation of aggregators, linking with potential processors, retailers, wholesalers, vendors; capacity building.</li> <li>● Establish Agrifood Economic Hub in Paro for high value export commodities and Establish Agrifood Economic Hub in Sarpang for domestic/ export marketing of bulk commodities</li> </ul>
<p>11. Incentivize youth: In view of the increasing youth unemployment in the country, the Local Government should be tasked and supported by the Central Government to design a well packaged innovative scheme to attract youth back home. For instance, forming a youth group or cooperative to carry out potential economic activities such as contract farming, community contract, eco-tourism, value addition of one gewog product could be explored. Likewise, similar support could be</p>		<p>In order to enhance agricultural production and contribute towards achievement of the sector's 13th plan objectives, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock's major focus will be on large scale commercial farming which would help in increasing the productivity of agricultural enterprises, attract youth's engagement, create employment opportunities and improve nation's food security.</p> <p>The Ministry has charted out the following plans which would attract youths and other unemployed persons into the agricultural sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Through the support of ESP, the government has put in place the collateral free loans for the agricultural investment and ventures at the concessional interest rate of 4 percent.</li> <li>● Promote innovative agriculture farms (150 ac) 2 chirup farm</li> <li>● establish Commercial farms (4 nos)</li> <li>● Promote large-scale commercial farms (Total area: 435 acres) at Yarjugang, Wangduephodrang</li> <li>● Establishment of large-scale Broiler farm in Tsirang,</li> </ul>

<p>extended to potential individuals with innovative business ideas and proposals. However, this must be complemented by targeted incentives such as entrepreneurial and skills training, interest or collateral free loan, exchange program, logistic and marketing support.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samdrupjongkhar, Samtse each with 10,000 birds producing 270MT annually</li> <li>• Construction (turnkey) of clean chicken processing plant with allied facilities (Dagana (Lhamoizingkha) &amp; Samtse) and linking value chain actors</li> <li>• Establish large scale fattening farms in 4 Dzongkhags of Dagana, Sarpang, Samtse and Samdrupjongkhar each with capacity of 200 fattener level/farm.</li> <li>• Establish large scale high tech pig breeding farm in Samtse with capacity of 240 sow level</li> <li>• Establish Chirup commercial Carp farms in Samdrupjongkhar and Dagana with the capacity to produce 15 MT each annually</li> </ul> <p>Those farms will be linked with the domestic markets through the technical support of the Ministry. The Ministry has prioritized to link schools, institutions, Gyalsung Academies and aggregators.</p> <p>The Ministry of Finance has also introduced the Price Guarantee Scheme (PGS) to ensure stable market to benefit for producers and consumers.</p>
<p>12. Community vitality program: Communities in some of the gewogs at the borderland also face increasing gungtong and satong. For instance, in 2023, Yalang and Toetsho gewogs in Trashiyangtse recorded 31.2% and 23.8% gungtong respectively. Likewise, Lauri and Serthi gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar witnessed 29.4% and 23.5%</p>	<p>MoHA</p>	<p>Intricately linking with the RGOB;s SDG and PTA projects for the Local Governments, and NC’s recommendation for “community vitality program” towards curbing rural- urban migration, the MoHA (DLGDM) is vigorously promoting “community engagement platform” in the Dzongkhags and Gewogs. Local Communities are sensitized and trained on the concepts of self- help, community help and public help, promoting the principle of subsidiarity, whereby they are sensitized and trained on various community engagement tools and encouraged to scan, identify and define their own local development challenges, opportunities, resources and capacities. They are empowered to plan and prioritize their social, economic and environmental activities through democratic and consensus- based community decision-making.</p>

<p>gungtong respectively. Considering the strategic importance of communities at the borderland, it is crucial to design a Community Vitality Program to provide comprehensive development and services to enhance their livelihoods.</p>		<p>Furthermore, the communities are encouraged to implement such planned and prioritized activities by themselves in the first instance. If they are not in a position to implement an activity for want of technical or financial support from the Local Governments (LGs), they can put up the proposal for necessary assistance from the Gewog or Dzongkhag Administration. This concept and practice empower and encourage communities to work, think and envision, and make their voices heard at the higher levels of the government structure for necessary financial or technical support.</p> <p>In the process, communities become aware of the processes of planning, prioritization, governance, and project management in their own little ways and means. The process also inculcates the value of community vitality, community ownership, social responsibility, and project sustainability. In the long run, the members of such communities are motivated to become local leaders and rise to higher local leadership positions, such as Tshogpas, Mangmis, and Gups. And if they meet the required qualifications, they could rise to ministerial ranks through democratic processes.</p> <p>Therefore, this concept and practice of community engagement platform is being promoted and strengthened in several LGs with the noble objective of strengthening the community vitality and governance system in the long run, encouraging rural people, especially women and youth, to live, survive and thrive in the villages.</p>
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