

**Fourteenth Round Table Meeting between Royal Government of Bhutan
and
Development Partners
Thimphu, 12-14 March 2019
Statement of the Delegation of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation**

Excellencies, Dashos, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

1. Switzerland and Helvetas in particular, have a long history in Bhutan. Our partnership for the development of the country is already almost 45 years old. Throughout the years, Helvetas has accompanied Bhutan in its progress towards the MDGs – and now the SDGs, particularly in the sectors of education, infrastructure, rural economic development, and more recently, vocational skills training, decentralisation and local governance and support to civil society.
2. With the graduation as a middle-income country by 2023 in target, Bhutan has compiled an ambitious 12th FYP. The Bhutan's pace of development, out of poverty, has been rapid and still is. Bhutan is a small country that moves fast. The country manages to keep this unique blend of tradition and pioneering spirit. Culture and century-old traditions are preserved and revived all over the country, as well as forward looking and innovative stands are made: Bhutan is probably the only country to be carbon negative and therefore certainly well equipped to face future global challenges.
3. Bhutan is changing fast, as is the entire world. Global warming, migration, urbanisation, pollution, new geopolitics, technology and big data, etc. are only a few of the global trends that affect and will affect all of us ever more. How is Bhutan getting ready with it? What are the typical challenges that the Bhutanese society will have to face. What will this mean to the poor and vulnerable people – be they rural or urban? Is the country really preparing the ground for a sustainable, harmonious and people centred sustainable development in social, environmental and economic terms? Helvetas will remain a partner besides Bhutan to contribute to those reflections and to the achievements of the last mile plan.
4. The 12th FYP envisions a just, harmonious and sustainable society through enhanced decentralisation. With its commitment to actively support decentralisation and local governance, foster Civil Society Organisations and support the youth in taking up new professional and life challenges, Helvetas is confident that its added value as a foreign technical assistance provider will contribute to the realisation of the government's vision.
5. I am pleased to reaffirm HELVETAS commitment to remain engaged in Bhutan until at least 2022. Keeping in mind the above-mentioned challenges in the country and the priorities in the 12th plan, our focus in the next five years will be on skills training and

entrepreneurship, local governance and decentralization, as well as strengthening the emerging civil society. This shall contribute to the National Key Result Areas 7, 11, 13.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation thanks the Royal Government of Bhutan for the excellent preparation and arrangements for this Round Table Meeting. We would like to take this opportunity to wish the people of Bhutan the very best for the future.

Thank you and Tashi Delek

Thimphu, March 14th, 2019