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**Human Rights Council**

**Fifty-eighth session**

24 February–4 April 2025

Agenda item 6

**Universal periodic review**

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review[[1]](#footnote-2)\*

Bhutan

Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its forty-seventh session from 4 to 15 November 2024. The review of Bhutan was held at the 6th meeting, on 6 November 2024. The delegation of Bhutan was headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, D.N. Dhungyel. At its 16th meeting, held on 13 November 2024, the Working Group adopted the report on Bhutan.

2. On 10 January 2024, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Bhutan: Costa Rica, Malaysia and the United States of America.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Bhutan:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a);[[2]](#footnote-3)

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b);[[3]](#footnote-4)

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c).[[4]](#footnote-5)

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Costa Rica, members of the core group of sponsors of the resolutions on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (Costa Rica, Maldives and Slovenia), Germany, Liechtenstein, Panama, Portugal, on behalf of the Group of Friends on national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States was transmitted to Bhutan through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. Bhutan reported that it had successfully implemented 157 supported recommendations from the previous cycle. Bhutan continued prioritizing human rights, guided by its development philosophy of gross national happiness, which promoted sustainable development while safeguarding security, culture and the environment.

6. Bhutan stated that under the leadership of King Jigme, it had navigated the pandemic with minimal loss of life and achieved nationwide vaccination. Despite the economic fallout from the pandemic, Bhutan had graduated from least developed country status in December 2023.

7. Bhutan acknowledged the country’s economic and climate vulnerabilities. It highlighted the thirteenth five-year plan (2024–2029) as a strategy for addressing those challenges, with a view to becoming a high-income gross national happiness economy by 2034.

8. Bhutan highlighted the successful completion of the fourth parliamentary elections; turnout had been higher among women than men. It emphasized the State’s ongoing commitment to anti-corruption efforts, as reflected in its rank of 26th out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index.

9. Bhutan reported that homosexuality had been decriminalized in 2021 through an amendment to the Penal Code. Laws related to child protection had been strengthened by increasing penalties for child rape and aligning definitions with international standards. The Civil Liability Act had been adopted in 2023 to hold public institutions and individuals accountable with regard to personal injury damages.

10. Bhutan reiterated the State’s commitment to protecting the environment and maintaining carbon neutrality. It had adopted the Biological Corridor Nine Act in 2023 to increase the coverage of protected areas to 52 per cent of the country’s area. Bhutan highlighted its leadership in launching a coalition of carbon-negative and carbon-neutral countries at the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November 2024.

11. Bhutan reported that it had undertaken judicial reforms aimed at improving access to justice for groups in vulnerable situations, and had equipped new court buildings with wheelchair ramps and accessible restrooms. Additional legal aid centres would be established in the southern and eastern regions by 2025. Alternative dispute resolution and court-annexed mediation were being used to resolve disputes more efficiently. Diversion programmes had been established for children in conflict with the law, focused on rehabilitation and reintegration.

12. Bhutan reported that a royal decree aimed at transforming the education system had been issued, and that the State had a target of achieving 100 per cent enrolment in early childhood education by 2029. Significant efforts had been made to improve educational access for children with disabilities.

13. Bhutan highlighted the State’s commitment to health, which was reflected in, among other things, the eradication of neonatal tetanus, leprosy and iodine deficiency. It had also made progress in eliminating malaria and eradicating endemic rubella in 2023. Bhutan had received achievement awards at the seventy-seventh session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for South-East Asia.

14. Bhutan noted that the PEMA secretariat had been established in 2022, under the leadership of the Queen, as the nodal agency for mental well-being. With the transfer of protection services to the PEMA secretariat, the National Commission for Women and Children now fully managed policy formulation, regulatory functions, reporting and monitoring related to the rights of women and children.

15. Bhutan stated that it had adopted the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, in 2019, in order to promote inclusion, and had incorporated a related policy action plan into the thirteenth five-year plan. It had also adopted, in 2023, a senior citizen policy to complement those initiatives.

16. Bhutan highlighted that, owing to sustained efforts, its human development index value had improved from 0.581 in 2010 to 0.681 in 2022, placing it in the medium human development classification. Multidimensional poverty had decreased from 12.7 per cent in 2012 to 2.1 per cent in 2022.

17. Bhutan emphasized that, despite socioeconomic progress, it faced challenges in achieving high-quality, inclusive health and education and effective social protection for vulnerable groups. Issues such as youth unemployment and increasing emigration had persisted. Thus, the thirteenth five-year plan prioritized economic transformation to address those needs.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

18. During the interactive dialogue, 72 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

19. Japan welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It commended Bhutan for measures aimed at reducing poverty and income inequality and raising the standard of living.

20. Jordan welcomed the steps taken to implement the recommendations arising from the third-cycle review related to civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

21. Kuwait commended Bhutan for the progress made in institutional and legislative reforms and in the areas of raising the standard of living, poverty eradication and protection of the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities.

22. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic commended Bhutan for the significant progress made in social and economic development, poverty reduction and advancement of the rights of women and children. It also welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

23. Lesotho recognized the steps taken to ensure climate preparedness and disaster reduction, in particular through the recently adopted National Disaster Management and Contingency Plan (2023–2028). It commended Bhutan for improving access to quality education.

24. Luxembourg commended Bhutan for its efforts to improve the realization of human rights.

25. Malaysia commended Bhutan for reducing multidimensional poverty. It welcomed the ratification of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the State’s continuing commitment to the ratification of other human rights instruments.

26. Maldives commended Bhutan for efforts to enhance the regulatory framework in the areas of good governance and anti-corruption efforts. It expressed appreciation for the country’s commitment to environmental protection and climate-resilient development.

27. Mauritius commended Bhutan for its economic development, its graduation from least developed country status to middle-income country status and its efforts to provide universal, free basic healthcare and to combat domestic violence.

28. Mexico welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the decriminalization of consensual same-sex relationships.

29. Mongolia noted the strides made in promoting gross national happiness, which prioritized the holistic development of the people of Bhutan. It encouraged Bhutan to further promote sustainable economic and social development to enable people to enjoy all human rights.

30. Montenegro asked Bhutan to elaborate on its plans towards the ratification of core human rights instruments. It welcomed efforts to protect child rights and concrete steps taken to protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons.

31. Nepal welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It also commended Bhutan for its policy on climate change, its carbon-market rules and its low-emission development strategy.

32. The Kingdom of the Netherlands commended Bhutan for decriminalizing same-sex relations. It however expressed concern about continued constraints on civil society organizations and religious groups and about the decline in press freedom.

33. The Niger commended Bhutan for its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

34. Oman commended Bhutan for its efforts to promote and protect children’s rights, especially through the national action plan for child welfare and protection.

35. Pakistan noted the various institutional and legislative reforms undertaken by Bhutan, and efforts in the areas of education, health, poverty eradication, women’s empowerment, social protection and climate change.

36. Panama made recommendations.

37. Paraguay welcomed the progress made in protecting the rights of women, children and adolescents, and the fight against trafficking in persons. It expressed concern that a number of children had encountered various obstacles that prevented access to Bhutanese nationality, which generated many cases of statelessness.

38. The Philippines commended Bhutan for ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. It also positively noted various measures taken that were aimed at expanding access to education for all children, especially those with disabilities and those in rural areas.

39. Portugal commended Bhutan for the decriminalization of consensual same-sex relations between adults and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

40. The Republic of Korea expressed appreciation for the progress made in improving access to high-quality drinking water and amending laws on trafficking in persons. It commended Bhutan for adopting a national strategy for mental health and for its efforts in implementing the strategy.

41. The Russian Federation expressed appreciation for improvements made in criminal law; anti-corruption measures; the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; initiatives against poverty; and the country’s promotion of sustainable development, healthcare and access to education.

42. Senegal welcomed the measures taken to strengthen the rule of law and improve the human rights situation, including the adoption of a new normative and institutional framework.

43. Singapore welcomed the steps taken to expand and upgrade the country’s healthcare infrastructure, and the development of a national mental health strategy. It also welcomed the establishment of the high-level National Drug Task Force, chaired by the Prime Minister.

44. Bhutan stated that education was a fundamental right, and that annual budget allocations to education totalled over 6 per cent of gross domestic product, which reflected the State’s strong commitment to that sector. It noted the construction of 567 schools, over 70 per cent of which were in rural areas, the provision of learning materials free of charge, and the establishment of 63 central schools, and 119 additional schools, with boarding facilities.

45. Bhutan highlighted its efforts to improve access to high-quality and inclusive early childhood care and development services. Vocational education had been expanded through skills development programmes. The delegation highlighted the national technical and vocational education and training gender strategy aimed at boosting the enrolment of women and girls, and the introduction of basic technical and vocational education and training programmes in seven schools.

46. Bhutan stated that access to tertiary education, through two universities and 11 colleges, had improved. Functional literacy and life skills classes were offered through 321 non-formal education centres and 29 community learning centres. A flexible policy allowed individuals to resume their education. Bhutan had enhanced education quality by revising the curriculum, focusing on digital skills, making coding mandatory for students from kindergarten to grade 12 and organizing national science, technology, engineering and mathematics competitions and camps exclusively for girls to promote interest in those areas.

47. Bhutan also stated that fundamental rights, climate education (from grade 4), and sexual education (from kindergarten to grade 12) were part of the curriculum. Traditional tertiary courses had been replaced with work-based programmes aligned with industry demands. In addition, teacher development had been a key focus, requiring 80 hours of professional development annually.

48. Bhutan recognized that education included the fostering of overall well-being, and thus had appointed 1,200 teachers for mental health support, banned corporal punishment and formulated child online protection guidelines to prevent cyberbullying.

49. Bhutan highlighted that in 2024, net primary enrolment had reached 94.3 per cent and dropout rates had decreased significantly. Female students represented over 51 per cent of the total student population, with the gender parity index rising to 1.02. The number of early childhood care and development centres had grown to 609, with enrolment reaching 38 per cent of eligible children. There were currently 48 inclusive schools; over 1,200 students with special needs were enrolled. Enrolment in technical and vocational education and training had increased from 1,800 students to over 3,300 students.

50. Regarding the status of the National Commission for Women and Children, Bhutan reiterated that it was an independent body responsible for policy, regulation, monitoring and reporting on issues related to women and children. If the current institutional arrangement hindered the ability of the Commission to fulfil its mandate, the Government might take action necessary to protect the functions of the Commission.

51. Bhutan highlighted its efforts to prevent gender-based violence, including the development of a related standard operating procedure in 2020, the training of over 200 case managers and 150 protection officers, and the creation of a referral pathway. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, case managers had provided online assistance for 507 survivors. In 2024, 32 police officers had received training on gender-based violence and guidelines for emergency response.

52. Bhutan had introduced a standard operating procedure for child-protection case management in 2021, had trained more than 250 case managers and had revised the standard operating procedure for those working with children in conflict with the law, which it had shared with over 700 stakeholders. Community service centres had been established in 10 districts, with plans to expand, and over 11,000 individuals had been trained in the area of child protection. The Royal Bhutan Police had set up 18 Women and Child Protection Units, and had handled 1,698 domestic violence cases and over 400 sexual exploitation cases between 2019 and 2024.

53. Bhutan stated that the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan 2007 prohibited child labour, and when cases arose, children were assessed and supported by relevant officers, and were provided with schooling or technical and vocational education and training opportunities. Family assessments and livelihood programmes for parents supported reintegration.

54. Bhutan highlighted the State’s commitment to building institutional capacity for child safety. It had introduced safeguarding frameworks, had trained over 300 justice officials and had implementing an anti-bullying standard operating procedure in schools. More than 200 police officers had been trained in child-friendly procedures, with ongoing training on providing support in cases of gender-based violence and on child justice.

55. Bhutan stated that the Marriage Act of Bhutan 1980 (as amended in 2009) stipulated that the best interests of children were to be prioritized in custody cases. The National Commission for Women and Children had conducted over 30 expert assessments to ensure that those interests were upheld. The minimum age of marriage was set at 18, and the Penal Code defined sexual relations with minors as rape and subject to strict penalties.

56. Bhutan highlighted recent judicial reforms that had been focused on improving the quality of judgments, access to justice and rights awareness. Specialized benches had been introduced to improve case processing, ensure consistent judgments and prevent issues such as forum shopping and case fragmentation. In 2023, specialized courts in Thimphu had handled around 25 per cent of national cases. In 2021, the judiciary had introduced an e‑litigation system to improve access to justice, especially for remote communities. The courts facilitated virtual hearings and efforts were under way to enhance systems in collaboration with the Government.

57. Bhutan indicated that the Legal Aid Centre provided pro bono legal assistance; over 50 per cent of beneficiaries were women. Awareness efforts had been focused on expanding outreach and improving lawyer representation for children in conflict with the law and persons with disabilities. The Family and Child Bench used a gender- and child-sensitive approach to protecting rights and privacy. It had heard over 3,500 cases, including those involving family issues, gender-based violence and children in conflict with the law.

58. Bhutan highlighted that the judiciary’s strategic plan for 2022–2032 had been aligned with international standards. Key reforms included judicial performance reviews, training on judgment drafting and a grievance cell, which had addressed over 124 complaints since 2022. Guidelines and standard operating procedures had ensured accountability, with ongoing capacity-building programmes provided for judges and members of law enforcement.

59. Bhutan stated that a review, in 2018, of the laws of Bhutan had resulted in key amendments being made to the Penal Code and other legislation in order to better protect the enjoyment of human rights, particularly among children and members of vulnerable groups. Changes included a broadening of the definition of trafficking, the enhancement of protections for children against molestation, the reinforcement of penalties for statutory rape and provisions to ensure the sensitive treatment of consensual acts between older adolescents; the changes helped align the country’s laws with international standards.

60. Bhutan highlighted that under the Child Care and Protection Act and the Penal Code there were legal measures providing for the prosecution of physical abuse and enshrining the protection of child rights, including protection against corporal punishment.

61. Bhutan stated that under section 22 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, police could facilitate mutual settlements in compoundable offences only with the informed consent of the victim, and must, in such processes, ensure the safety and well-being of the victim and consider factors such as recidivism and abuse severity in order to protect the victim.

62. Bhutan noted that section 146 of the Penal Code allowed for medical termination of pregnancies in specific cases, such as where the mother’s life was at risk or in cases of incest or rape. The Ministry of Health provided guidelines for post-abortion care and family planning.

63. Slovenia commended Bhutan for its commitment to environment protection and gender-responsive development. It also highlighted the key role of women in the management of natural resources.

64. Bangladesh welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It commended Bhutan for the significant progress made in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, health, the environment and climate change.

65. Sri Lanka commended Bhutan for its graduation from the least developed country category. It highlighted the progress Bhutan had made in achieving its development goals, despite the negative social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the global food, energy, finance and climate crises.

66. Suriname acknowledged the progress made with respect to the graduation of Bhutan from the least developed country category. It commended Bhutan for placing people at the centre of development and for promoting the rights and welfare of every citizen.

67. Canada welcomed the steps taken to decriminalize same-sex relations, improve health outcomes, expand education access and establish a comprehensive social protection system through the thirteenth five-year plan.

68. Thailand congratulated Bhutan for its graduation from the least developed country category and its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

69. Timor-Leste welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the achievement of gender parity in education. It welcomed the graduation by Bhutan from the least developed country category, and the thirteenth five-year plan, which was focused on economic development and improving the standard of living.

70. Togo noted the initiative to create an “open prison” system, which allowed prisoners who had served 75 per cent of their sentences and who had demonstrated good behaviour to be transferred to a less restrictive prison.

71. Ukraine commended Bhutan for ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, decriminalizing same-sex relations, protecting children and women, supporting inclusive education and prioritizing health and education funding.

72. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It encouraged Bhutan to prioritize social protection for groups in vulnerable situations.

73. The United Republic of Tanzania acknowledged the measures taken to eradicate poverty and improve the standard of living. It also commended Bhutan for improving access to high-quality drinking water.

74. The United States appreciated the State’s commitment to human rights. It, however, expressed concerns about restrictions on civil society and freedom of association, and about reports of discrimination against members of religious and ethnic minorities.

75. Vanuatu congratulated Bhutan for its human rights achievements and proactive approach to climate change, in particular the adoption of a carbon-neutral, and climate- and disaster-resilient, approach to development. It also welcomed the Biological Corridor Nine Act and the National Adaptation Plan.

76. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomed the promulgation and amendment of various legal norms, and the implementation of several national plans, including the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality.

77. Viet Nam welcomed the thirteenth five-year plan. It also welcomed initiatives aimed at enhancing social protection and prioritizing mental health, which reflected the State’s commitment to a holistic approach, which was anchored in the concept of gross national happiness.

78. Algeria welcomed the ratification of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

79. Armenia appreciated the State’s reform agenda to enhance accountability and good governance, align with international human rights standards, strengthen anti-corruption measures, prioritize environmental protection and launch the National Prevention and Response Strategy to address trafficking in persons.

80. Australia welcomed the State’s successful conduct of the 2024 national elections, its ongoing efforts to promote and protect human rights and the progress made in development, marked by its graduation from least developed country status in 2023.

81. Azerbaijan commended Bhutan for the progress achieved in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including through the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities and the establishment of new inclusive schools across the country.

82. Spain congratulated Bhutan for its decriminalization of consensual same-sex sexual relations, its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its efforts on climate change.

83. The Plurinational State of Bolivia welcomed the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the review emanating from the previous cycle, such as the harmonization of the regulatory framework with international human rights instruments and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

84. Botswana welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and encouraged Bhutan to ensure sufficient resources for its implementation across all sectors to address discrimination against persons with disabilities.

85. Brazil commended Bhutan for decriminalizing same-sex relations and defining trafficking in persons in line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

86. Brunei Darussalam congratulated Bhutan on its graduation from the least developed country category. It commended Bhutan for its success in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the pandemic.

87. Burkina Faso congratulated Bhutan for its adoption of the thirteenth five-year plan, aimed at improving per capita gross domestic product by 2034 and the incomes of the poorest 40 per cent of the population by 2030.

88. Bhutan highlighted its efforts to improve the living conditions of its people by addressing poverty, inequality and the needs of members of vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Through the implementation of the thirteenth five-year plan, Bhutan aimed to quadruple the income of the bottom 40 per cent of the population by 2029 and to offer affordable housing, social protection, school boarding facilities and enhanced school feeding programmes.

89. Bhutan had adopted the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities to empower individuals with disabilities, prioritizing inclusivity in health, education and social protection in the thirteenth five-year plan. Bhutan had introduced a national programme for the care of older persons in 2020, providing priority access to healthcare and public services for senior citizens. Bhutan had also adopted a national policy for senior citizens, focused on family support, safety and economic security.

90. Bhutan highlighted its commitment, as guaranteed in the Constitution, to ensuring free healthcare for all citizens. Healthcare infrastructure had been expanded; 97 per cent of the population were within two hours of a healthcare facility. Essential medicines and functional equipment had been made freely available.

91. Bhutan had achieved many Sustainable Development Goal targets in the area of maternal and child health. The maternal mortality ratio was 53.2 per 100,000 live births, the stillbirth rate was 1.3 per 1,000 births, the neonatal mortality rate was 6.9 per 1,000 live births and the infant mortality rate was 15.2 per 1,000 live births. The under-5 mortality rate was 19.5 per 1,000 live births, outperforming the global target of at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

92. Bhutan highlighted that over 90 per cent of the target population had been screened for human papillomavirus, widespread vaccination had been achieved and treatment for pre‑cancerous lesions had been provided.

93. Bhutan stated that the adolescent fertility rate had decreased from 28.4 births per 1,000 girls in 2012 to 18.6 births per 1,000 girls in 2023. Unmet contraceptive needs among adolescents had also fallen, from 18.4 per cent in 2010 to 13.7 per cent in 2023, with adolescent-friendly health services currently accessible nationwide.

94. Bhutan also stated that it had been implementing preventative programmes, including awareness campaigns about, testing for and counselling on HIV/AIDS. The national strategic plan on HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted illnesses had been launched to improve healthcare access for groups in vulnerable situations.

95. Bhutan reiterated that it had established the PEMA secretariat in 2022, and had launched helplines and adolescent screening programmes and had introduced treatment for substance-use disorders, serving nearly 3,000 individuals. Additionally, Bhutan was building a national drug treatment and rehabilitation centre, including a unit for women.

96. Bhutan stated that the amended Citizenship Act promoted inclusion, allowing citizenship by birth, registration or naturalization. The procedure for transmitting nationality was the same, regardless of the parent’s gender. Since the adoption of the Constitution in 2008, over 22,000 individuals had been granted citizenship – 12,000 in the previous five years alone. Non-citizens residing in Bhutan were granted equal access to public services, including free education and healthcare, and were fully protected under the law. The Integrated Citizen Services system had been introduced to simplify birth registration; the aim was to achieve a birth-registration completeness rate of 95 per cent by 2026.

97. Bhutan emphasized its commitment to expanding the role of civil society organizations; 53 such organizations were currently registered. It had been developing guidelines, including endowment fund, social enterprise and fundraising guidelines, to strengthen collaboration with civil society organizations and ensure their financial sustainability. The proposal by civil society organizations to permit them to mobilize the required endowment fund over a period of time had been accepted. No distinctions were made between civil society organizations with regard to registration under the Civil Society Organizations Act, and the State was in the process of further simplifying the registration process.

98. Bhutan reaffirmed that freedom of thought, conscience and religion was guaranteed under the Constitution. Citizens could freely choose and practice their faith, and attempts to compel religious conversion were prohibited. Religious groups could practice without registering with the Commission for Religious Organizations.

99. Bhutan stated that the study of international human rights treaties for potential ratification was ongoing. It remained open to exploring options for establishing a national human rights institution. Work on capacity-building, the establishment of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up and the development of a tracking database for universal periodic review recommendations and observations of international human rights bodies had continued, although progress had been delayed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

100. Bhutan also stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the mapping of supported universal periodic review recommendations to relevant agencies through a consultative process. The recommendations were then integrated into the agencies’ annual work plans and budgets, which were reviewed mid-year and annually, and at the end of specific periods established for progress reports.

101. Bhutan expressed its commitment to hosting visits by special procedure mandate holders when possible. However, owing to capacity and resource constraints, the extension of invitations to mandate holders would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

102. Bhutan reiterated that the Constitution guaranteed freedom of the press and freedom of expression, highlighting the fundamental role of those freedoms in good governance and expressing the State’s commitment to supporting media outlets in addressing issues related to sustainability, capacity-building and access to information. Bhutan had diverse media outlets, including seven newspapers, one television station, multiple radio stations and five over-the-top television platforms, supported by government press sessions and briefings, and an executive order requiring agencies to enhance media access.

103. Cambodia commended Bhutan for the significant progress made in human rights, social and economic development, legal reforms and governance, and its ongoing commitment to women’s empowerment and gender equality.

104. Switzerland praised Bhutan for the progress made, in particular the holding of its fourth parliamentary elections.

105. Chile congratulated Bhutan for decriminalizing same-sex relations between adults, and encouraged Bhutan to continue its efforts to guarantee the rights of all people.

106. China noted proactive measures taken to combat epidemics effectively, increase investment in education, health, employment and social security, combat corruption and trafficking in persons, protect women’s rights actively and continually improve the population’s standard of living.

107. Colombia made recommendations.

108. Costa Rica highlighted the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

109. Côte d’Ivoire welcomed the progress made in primary healthcare, noting in particular the coverage rate of over 91 per cent and that essential medicines were free and available in all health establishments.

110. Cuba welcomed the State’s efforts to advance the promotion and protection of human rights. It also highlighted the efforts aimed at the protection and well-being of children.

111. Djibouti commended Bhutan for the progress made in promoting and protecting human rights, in particular the strengthening of its normative and institutional framework to bring national legislation more into line with international standards and principles.

112. The Dominican Republic congratulated Bhutan for its accession to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. It also welcomed the first national disaster management and contingency plan.

113. Egypt welcomed the thirteenth five-year plan, which was based on the objectives of economic development, social development, security and governance. It expressed appreciation for the efforts made in improving the quality of education and health services and in empowering youth.

114. Estonia expressed appreciation for the efforts to legalize same-sex relations and enhancing access to health services in remote areas through new technology and digital services. It however expressed concern about restrictions on freedom of expression and the misuse of defamation laws.

115. France congratulated Bhutan for measures taken to promote the rights of women and of persons with disabilities.

116. The Gambia welcomed the Marriage Bill of Bhutan (2024) and the launch of the three‑year project aimed at promoting positive parenting and ending violence against children.

117. Georgia welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

118. Germany commended Bhutan for decriminalizing consensual same-sex conduct. However, it expressed concern about the limited protection of prisoners, and encouraged Bhutan to ensure better conditions for minority-led civil society organizations.

119. Iceland made recommendations.

120. India welcomed the efforts made by Bhutan to further socioeconomic development, especially in the areas of education, health, gender equality, poverty reduction and combating corruption. It noted the country’s graduation from the least developed country category and its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

121. Indonesia commended Bhutan for its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It encouraged Bhutan to build on the document laying out the strategy for collaboration between the parliament and civil society organizations and to further improve its healthcare system.

122. Iraq welcomed the holding of general elections and the launch of the thirteenth five‑year plan, which was aimed at establishing a just and sustainable society and reducing poverty and unemployment.

123. Ireland welcomed the decriminalization of same-sex relations. It however expressed concern about the high rates of violence against women and girls. It encouraged Bhutan to make further progress in the treatment of minority communities.

124. Italy welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It noted the improvements made in the conditions of women, in particular with regard to their growing involvement in public administration.

125. Bhutan highlighted its Gelephu Mindfulness City project, through which it aimed to establish the world’s first mindfulness city as an economic hub in the rapidly growing region. Guided by the King’s vision of the project, Bhutan sought to enable Bhutanese youth to look forward to a future in Bhutan with confidence while aligning its efforts with the principles of gross national happiness and promoting sustainable businesses inspired by Bhutanese values and Buddhist heritage. Ultimately, Bhutan aimed to create a flourishing economy and a more equitable distribution of wealth for the benefit of the entire country.

126. Bhutan reiterated that its Constitution prohibited discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion, politics and other status, ensuring equality for all. At the same time, it expressed concern about misleading narratives of discrimination, particularly those aimed at a particular group, being spread by external groups. It highlighted that there was fair representation: three of the nine ministers in the Cabinet were from southern Bhutan.

127. Bhutan stated that allegations regarding the denial of fair trials were unfounded. All persons who were accused of a crime were subjected to the due process of law and sentenced accordingly, on the basis of the gravity of their offence. The Government had provided access to, and facilitated independent monitoring of, prisons. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had made three visits to Bhutan; the most recent visit had been undertaken in 2019. Bhutan had received a series of visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

128. Bhutan concluded by expressing appreciation for the constructive dialogue and recommendations. It affirmed its strong commitment to addressing the issues raised, and stated that it viewed the universal periodic review process as essential for reflecting on progress and reinforcing its human rights commitments. All feedback had been noted and would be carefully studied as Bhutan continued to prioritize human rights within its development framework, guided by the concept of gross national happiness and welcoming ongoing international support.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

129. **The following recommendations will be examined by Bhutan, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the fifty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council:**

129.1 **Consider ratifying international instruments for the protection of human rights to which it is not yet party (Plurinational State of Bolivia);**

129.2 **Continue its efforts towards the ratification of other human rights treaties (Thailand);**

129.3 **Ratify international human rights instruments that Bhutan has not yet ratified (Ukraine);**

129.4 **Accede to the main international human rights instruments (Iraq);**

129.5 **Further strengthen the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights by considering the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and by becoming a party to other relevant international human rights instruments (Burkina Faso);**

129.6 **Ratify the main international human rights treaties, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Luxembourg);**

129.7 **Ratify core international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Germany);**

129.8 **Ratify the remaining core international human rights treaties, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Estonia);**

129.9 **Ratify all fundamental human rights instruments to which the State is not yet a party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Italy);**

129.10 **Ratify human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Brazil);**

129.11 **Consider the possibility of ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Niger);**

129.12 **Consider becoming a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Nepal);**

129.13 **Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and harmonize the national legal framework with other fundamental human rights treaties (Spain);**

129.14 **Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Botswana);**

129.15 **Ratify the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland);**

129.16 **Consider ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Chile);**

129.17 **Accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Colombia);**

129.18 **Sign and ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and undertake reviews of prison conditions (Australia);**

129.19 **Move forward towards the ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Chile);**

129.20 **Ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Botswana) (Switzerland); Accede to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Indonesia); Become a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

129.21 **Become a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (United States of America);**

129.22 **Consider ratifying both the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as previously recommended (Armenia);**

129.23 **Consider the possibility of ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Niger); Consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Côte d’Ivoire);**

129.24 **Ratify the core human rights treaties to which it is not yet a party, as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Paraguay);**

129.25 **Consider extending an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Chile);**

129.26 **Extend a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate holders (Montenegro) (Ukraine); Extend an open and standing invitation for special procedure mandate holders to visit the country (Paraguay);**

129.27 **Redouble efforts to fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Colombia);**

129.28 **Undertake further steps to enhance human rights protection in line with its international obligations (Algeria);**

129.29 **Continue efforts to build a legal framework for the protection of human rights, by ratifying the main international conventions, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (France);**

129.30 **Consider the creation of an independent national human rights institution in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) (Chile); Consider establishing an independent national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principle (Nepal);**

129.31 **Redouble efforts to create a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Côte d’Ivoire);**

129.32 **Establish an independent national human rights institution (Gambia);**

129.33 **Establish an independent national human rights institution in full compliance with the Paris Principles (Armenia); Establish an independent national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles (Australia);**

129.34 **Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Timor-Leste);**

129.35 **Establish an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal);**

129.36 **Establish a permanent national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up of recommendations on human rights, considering the possibility of receiving cooperation for this purpose (Paraguay);**

129.37 **Ensure, at the legislative level and within the framework of law enforcement practices, the protection of the rights of socially vulnerable groups, in particular women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, as well as ethnic minorities (Russian Federation);**

129.38 **Strengthen its regulations to prohibit all forms of discrimination (Plurinational State of Bolivia);**

129.39 **Adopt measures to eradicate torture and ill-treatment, in particular by explicitly criminalizing it and ensuring that it is investigated and punished appropriately (Paraguay);**

129.40 **Allow independent observers, including diplomats and representatives of international organizations, to visit prisons (United States of America);**

129.41 **Enhance its anti-corruption efforts and programmes to build on existing momentum and address emerging challenges (Malaysia);**

129.42 **Continue strengthening good governance and the fight against corruption to combat poverty (Senegal);**

129.43 **Support the emergence and work of civil society organizations by easing legal restrictions on their creation and their contributions to the full realization of all human rights for all people in Bhutan (Luxembourg);**

129.44 **Increase the compliance of places of detention with international standards (Luxembourg);**

129.45 **Ensure full protection of the human rights of prisoners, by allowing independent monitoring of prison conditions and reviewing the National Security Act to ensure its compliance with international standards of human rights protection (Germany);**

129.46 **Continue expanding access to justice and legal aid, particularly for marginalized groups, to ensure that all citizens can effectively claim their rights (Armenia);**

129.47 **Continue efforts to promote access to justice (Pakistan);**

129.48 **Guarantee legal representation for all criminally prosecuted persons, during all phases of the trial, as one of the minimum individual guarantees of the human right of access to justice (Costa Rica);**

129.49 **Review all criminal convictions resulting in lengthy prison sentences to ensure that fair trial rights and related guarantees are met (Canada);**

129.50 **Review long-term prison sentences to ensure compliance with the right to a fair trial, adequate legal representation and protection from torture or other inhuman treatment (Spain);**

129.51 **Take concrete measures to enhance press freedom by amending the National Security Act to protect legitimate journalistic activities and reforming Bhutan Information Communication and Media Authority regulations to ensure independence to guarantee journalists’ access to State-held information, and to diminish content restrictions on journalists (Kingdom of the Netherlands);**

129.52 **Implement legislative measures that guarantee the protection of the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of the press and access to public information (Spain);**

129.53 **Promote the right to freedom of expression for the members of the press and media, including by ending the imprisonment of journalists for activities linked to the exercise of this right and decriminalizing defamation (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

129.54 **Foster a safe and enabling environment for civil society organizations to organize freely and to work on any issue they choose (Canada);**

129.55 **Eliminate restrictive financial requirements for civil society organizations to legally operate and allow them to organize freely (United States of America);**

129.56 **Create a safe and enabling environment for civil society, including by lifting onerous restrictions to the registration and activities of civil society organizations under the amended Civil Society Organizations Act, and ensure that adequate support and funding opportunities are made available to civil society (Ireland);**

129.57 **Facilitate the registration of civil society organizations (Colombia);**

129.58 **Continue promoting the rights and welfare of every citizen in the context of digital transformation (Cambodia);**

129.59 **Continue taking targeted steps to improve national legislation in terms of upholding human rights and freedoms (Russian Federation);**

129.60 **Grant amnesty to all individuals detained for peacefully expressing political views or participating in political activities and allow for monitoring of prison conditions (Portugal);**

129.61 **Review the registration system for religious organizations to ensure that registration is not a prerequisite for exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief (Kingdom of the Netherlands);**

129.62 **Enhance freedom of religion by ensuring that all religious groups can freely practice their faith without discrimination and allowing the construction of places of worship for these groups in line with their beliefs (Gambia);**

129.63 **Facilitate civil society organizations to register by lowering the minimum amount of funds they must have at their disposal (France);**

129.64 **Consider amending its data protection legislation with a view to strengthening the protection of children’s right to privacy (Republic of Korea);**

129.65 **Continue strengthening the digital inclusion of children in need, including children in rural areas and children with disabilities, promoting equal and affordable access to online services and the Internet, and ensuring that laws and policies relating to access to information and the digital environment protect children from harmful content and online risks and respect their privacy (Togo);**

129.66 **Promote the equal sharing of parental responsibilities, in particular by guaranteeing paid maternity and paternity leave for parents working in the private sector and increasing the duration of paid paternity leave in all sectors, introducing flexible working arrangements for both parents and providing incentives for fathers to play an active role in raising children (Togo);**

129.67 **Take steps to strengthen measures to ensure the early identification and referral of victims of trafficking to appropriate services (Sri Lanka);**

129.68 **Continue efforts to combat human trafficking and provide the necessary training for law enforcement authorities in this regard (Egypt);**

129.69 **Continue strengthening policies to guarantee the right to work, especially for young people and vulnerable populations (Plurinational State of Bolivia);**

129.70 **Sustain the efforts developed under the system of responsibility in employment to guarantee young people different job opportunities and offers (Cuba);**

129.71 **Continue strengthening its social policies with the aim of improving the quality of life of its people (Kuwait);**

129.72 **Continue promoting economic and social development to eradicate poverty and improve the standard of living, particularly in rural areas (Malaysia);**

129.73 **Continue promoting economic and social development with the aim of eradicating poverty and improving the standard of living of the population, particularly in rural areas (Djibouti);**

129.74 **Continue national efforts to combat poverty and provide social protection (Egypt);**

129.75 **Implement key objectives of economic development and social protection as envisaged in its five-year plan (India);**

129.76 **Continue efforts to improve the living conditions of people living in rural and remote areas (Lesotho);**

129.77 **Intensify its efforts towards improving living conditions, particularly in rural and remote areas, as well as among vulnerable populations (Mongolia);**

129.78 **Continue strengthening national initiatives aimed at promoting the standard of living and advancing women empowerment in the country (Pakistan);**

129.79 **Extend the national strategy and action plan in the field of nutrition aimed at combating malnutrition, with a focus on socially vulnerable groups (Russian Federation);**

129.80 **Take further measures to fully implement the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2025 to address undernutrition among vulnerable populations (Bangladesh);**

129.81 **Intensify its efforts to ensure access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (Bangladesh);**

129.82 **Strengthen measures to ensure that all children have access to quality health services by increasing the pool of health professionals and expanding health services in remote areas (Maldives);**

129.83 **Strengthen and expand the health infrastructure to meet the needs of society (Oman);**

129.84 **Continue its efforts to ensure access to quality healthcare services, including mental health services, for all (Singapore);**

129.85 **Continue its efforts in the implementation of its health programmes (Mauritius);**

129.86 **Continue efforts to further increase its vaccination coverage and guarantee universal primary healthcare to its citizens (Sri Lanka);**

129.87 **Further strengthen its practice of universal free basic healthcare (Brunei Darussalam);**

129.88 **Provide accessible sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls, including in remote areas (Estonia);**

129.89 **Continue efforts to enhance childcare services and programmes in rural areas and work to reduce social and health gaps in those areas (Iraq);**

129.90 **Continue promoting the initiatives planned as part of the national mental health strategy (Cuba);**

129.91 **Continue the work on developing the national mental health strategy that began in 2023 (Oman);**

129.92 **Continue efforts to finalize the national mental health strategy (Brunei Darussalam);**

129.93 **Continue its holistic efforts in dealing with the drug problem, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation and aftercare, as well as preventive education on the harm of drugs (Singapore);**

129.94 **Ensure access to free family planning and contraceptive services for women, girls and vulnerable groups (Chile);**

129.95 **Decriminalize abortion, expand the range of family planning and reproductive health services and increase access to them for vulnerable populations (Luxembourg);**

129.96 **Decriminalize abortion under all circumstances (Iceland);**

129.97 **Expand women’s and girls’ access to comprehensive family planning services and sexual and reproductive health and rights services, including contraceptives, pregnancy testing and legal and psychosocial support services (Mexico);**

129.98 **Further strengthen its efforts to provide quality and inclusive education (Japan);**

129.99 **Further enhance national policies and measures to improve quality and inclusive education in the country (Lao People’s Democratic Republic);**

129.100 **Continue making efforts to improve the quality of and access to education for all children, especially children from rural communities (Mauritius);**

129.101 **Redouble efforts to strengthen measures to ensure that all children, particularly those in rural areas, have access to inclusive primary education (Indonesia);**

129.102 **Continue improving access to early childhood education, especially in rural areas (Kuwait);**

129.103 **Continue efforts to increase access to education for children in remote, rural and widely dispersed villages (Nepal);**

129.104 **Continue its efforts in enhancing educational services, particularly for remote and rural areas, by strengthening the infrastructure of extended classroom facilities and promoting access to digital learning resources (Viet Nam);**

129.105 **Take further measures to ensure access to inclusive and quality education, especially for children living in poverty and children in rural areas (Thailand);**

129.106 **Take legislative measures to make primary education compulsory for all children and implement social protection programmes to support children in disadvantaged situations to access education (Portugal);**

129.107 **Adopt legislative measures to ensure, as a matter of priority, that primary education is compulsory and applicable in public and private educational institutions, as well as in monastic schools and nunneries (Panama);**

129.108 **Ensure that all Bhutanese children have equal access to education regardless of religion or belief (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

129.109 **Continue taking effective measures to promote equal and equitable access to quality education to all children and youth, including by increasing the number of accessible educational facilities for children and youth with disabilities (Republic of Korea);**

129.110 **Strengthen inclusive education policies at all educational levels to improve access to quality education for students with disabilities, including through adaptation to ensure accessible infrastructure (Mexico);**

129.111 **Strengthen the promotion of inclusive, quality education by increasing school attendance, especially for girls (Senegal);**

129.112 **Strengthen efforts to provide technical and vocational education in schools and further increase female enrolment for such programmes (Sri Lanka);**

129.113 **Continue implementing reforms for improved access to quality education (India);**

129.114 **Continue investing in quality education through effective teacher training and recruitment and by harnessing information and communications technology (Philippines);**

129.115 **Take measures to address the gaps that still remain in technical and vocational training (United Republic of Tanzania);**

129.116 **Ensure effective implementation of its national climate change policy and other relevant programmes to address environmental protection issues and climate change (Mongolia);**

129.117 **Strengthen adaptive capacity and the integration of climate measures into national development strategies and planning (Vanuatu);**

129.118 **Strengthen measures to ensure the sustainable use of water resources and increase the resilience of infrastructure for water, sanitation and health with a view to reducing the risk of climate change-related hazards (Timor-Leste);**

129.119 **Continue remaining carbon neutral through its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement (Sri Lanka);**

129.120 **Incorporate at the constitutional level the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (Costa Rica);**

129.121 **Remove financial barriers to improve the capacity of civil society organizations to contribute to Bhutan’s social, environmental and development objectives by encouraging greater empowerment of local organizations (Switzerland);**

129.122 **Continue efforts to promote sustainable development and reduce the development gap between urban and rural areas (Lao People’s Democratic Republic);**

129.123 **Continue vigorously developing the economy to achieve sustainable development and constantly improve people’s standard of living (China);**

129.124 **Expand its National Disaster Management and Contingency Plan, paying particular attention to the needs of women, children and persons with disabilities during disaster events (Viet Nam);**

129.125 **Continue seeking support of the international community to ensure sustainable and irreversible graduation from the least developed country category (Brunei Darussalam);**

129.126 **Continue strengthening international cooperation and actively respond to climate change and natural disasters (China);**

129.127 **Continue the implementation of plans and public policies to guarantee gender equality (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

129.128 **Intensify efforts to adopt the national policy for gender equality (Iraq);**

129.129 **Continue strengthening measures towards advancing gender equality and equity and increasing women’s representation in political and public life (Mongolia);**

129.130 **Promote greater gender equality and participation of women in public life, including in decision-making and political processes, as well as increase women’s representation in civil service (Thailand);**

129.131 **Strengthen measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against ethnic minority women (Lesotho);**

129.132 **Step up efforts to increase the proportion of women in political posts and in civil service, especially in senior positions (Republic of Korea);**

129.133 **Continue increasing women’s participation in political and economic fields (Oman);**

129.134 **Implement legislative and public policy measures to promote equal inclusion of women in positions of popular representation and leadership, such as parity rules at the electoral level (Costa Rica);**

129.135 **Implement targeted initiatives to increase women’s representation in political affairs, particularly in the National Assembly and local governance (Indonesia);**

129.136 **Implement mechanisms and policies to make justice more accessible to women, especially in the case of police complaints (Dominican Republic);**

129.137 **Develop policies to combat discrimination in the workplace and ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls (Switzerland);**

129.138 **Pursue and strengthen the legal framework and policies to further increase women’s participation in political and public life (Djibouti);**

129.139 **Continue efforts aimed at reducing the structural barriers faced by women that prevent their full participation in political and public life (Chile);**

129.140 **Continue efforts towards women’s empowerment and increasing their participation in politics and leadership (Azerbaijan);**

129.141 **Continue developing initiatives to promote and protect the rights of women and children (Cuba);**

129.142 **Continue efforts to promote the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities and combat all forms of discrimination against them (Egypt);**

129.143 **Continue efforts as regards strengthening the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children (Algeria);**

129.144 **Develop further initiatives to empower women in political and civic life, thereby advancing gender equality in leadership roles at all levels (Viet Nam);**

129.145 **Improve resources for programmes supporting women’s participation in governance and increase protections for children against exploitation and violence (Ukraine);**

129.146 **Increase awareness campaigns aimed at informing Bhutanese women of their rights and ways to claim them, with a particular focus on rural and remote areas (Jordan);**

129.147 **Adopt cross-cutting measures to mainstream gender budgeting across all government ministries, including the Ministry of Finance and the Royal Civil Service Commission (Panama);**

129.148 **Support women’s empowerment and gender inclusivity by increasing women’s representation at all levels of public office (Canada);**

129.149 **Bolster efforts to advance women’s political participation in the electoral process (Lesotho);**

129.150 **Accelerate the implementation of the national plan of action for gender equality and advocate for the rights of women and children (Japan);**

129.151 **Step up efforts to promote gender parity by fostering an enabling environment for greater participation of women in the political and economic spheres, including through human rights education and training (Philippines);**

129.152 **Increase the representation of women in politics and the workforce and strengthen legal frameworks to ensure stronger protection against gender-based violence (Timor-Leste);**

129.153 **Improve women’s access to financial credit (Luxembourg);**

129.154 **Continue making efforts to combat unemployment and the gender gap in the labour force, and address the gender gap in political representation (India);**

129.155 **Continue efforts to combat violence against women and ensure effective protection for victims of gender-based violence (Maldives);**

129.156 **Align the classification of marital rape in the Penal Code with the classification of rape outside marriage and allocate sufficient resources to ensure the comprehensive protection of victims of gender-based violence (Iceland);**

129.157 **Continue its efforts to address violence against women more effectively and strengthen multisectoral coordination to provide comprehensive support to survivors of gender-based violence (Burkina Faso);**

129.158 **Strengthen the implementation of relevant laws against gender-based violence, including domestic violence, ensuring access to justice and support to survivors, among other measures (Philippines);**

129.159 **Address gender-based violence by enforcing protective measures, improving support services for survivors, and ensuring accountability for perpetrators (Gambia);**

129.160 **Continue adopting measures to combat gender-based violence, provide services to all survivors of violence and ensure the provision of survivor-centred training and skills development (Estonia);**

129.161 **Introduce laws to provide effective protection orders against violent partners, and ensure additional resources for victims of gender-based violence (Ireland);**

129.162 **Modify the legal definition of marital rape to consider it a crime that cannot be resolved by agreement between the parties, to ensure that it is treated with the same severity as other forms of rape (Costa Rica);**

129.163 **Amend the classification of marital rape under the Penal Code to align with that of rape outside marriage (Ireland);**

129.164 **Explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings (Montenegro) (Slovenia);**

129.165 **Enact legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings (Estonia);**

129.166 **Take appropriate measures to ensure that the rights of children are respected, including by prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment and improving conditions of access to education (Italy);**

129.167 **Amend the Penal Code to fully ban corporal punishment in all settings and raise public awareness of violence against children (Costa Rica);**

129.168 **Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility in accordance with international standards (Colombia);**

129.169 **Continue implementing child protection measures to eradicate violence and exploitation (Cuba);**

129.170 **Redouble efforts to ensure the rights of children and adolescents (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

129.171 **Improve child protection by bringing the provisions on children’s rights in its national legislation more into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Luxembourg);**

129.172 **Develop more early childhood care and development centres to cater for more children (United Republic of Tanzania);**

129.173 **Continue promoting the digital inclusion of children in disadvantaged situations, including children in rural areas and children with disabilities (Dominican Republic);**

129.174 **Ensure that laws and policies on access to information and digital environment protect children from online risks (Dominican Republic);**

129.175 **Ensure children’s rights to public education and health services, especially for children living in rural areas (Dominican Republic);**

129.176 **Continue efforts aimed at improving children’s access to quality education and healthcare services, including in rural areas (Georgia);**

129.177 **Continue efforts to educate the population, including youth, about the harmful effects of child and forced marriages (Dominican Republic);**

129.178 **Pay greater attention to and increase investment in the rights of young people, older persons and other specific groups (China);**

129.179 **Continue to take a holistic approach to implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while engaging with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (Japan);**

129.180 **Develop a plan to implement the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, along with inclusive and non-discriminatory policies on access to health, education and employment, formulated with and supported by persons with disabilities (Panama);**

129.181 **Take necessary domestic action under the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities to give full force to its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Australia);**

129.182 **Take appropriate measures to implement the recently ratified Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially to avoid all discrimination against vulnerable persons (Italy);**

129.183 **Take measures to ensure the effective implementation of the national disability policy action plan (Djibouti);**

129.184 **Strengthen the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities by improving access to services, education and employment and ensuring inclusive infrastructure across urban and rural areas (Gambia);**

129.185 **Work to guarantee inclusive education for all children with disabilities in public schools (Jordan);**

129.186 **Continue its efforts to provide appropriate medical care for persons with disabilities (Kuwait);**

129.187 **Further uphold and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including by ensuring the effectiveness of related laws and policies (Thailand);**

129.188 **Guarantee to persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, access to rights for their free development and equal opportunities (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

129.189 **Continue measures aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities (Azerbaijan);**

129.190 **Continue implementing further measures for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular by enhancing their access to social protection (Georgia);**

129.191 **Ensure the secret and effective vote of persons with disabilities, with access to adapted forms under the same conditions as the rest of the population, and guarantee the necessary resources for the effective implementation of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (Spain);**

129.192 **Take measures to ensure the elimination of all forms of ethnic discrimination against the Lhotshampas, guaranteeing their rights to nationality, health and education, as well as their cultural rights (Brazil);**

129.193 **Promote measures that benefit ethnic minorities, including the facilitation of birth registration or the repatriation of refugees (Colombia);**

129.194 **Grant equal treatment to non-governmental organizations of minorities and ensure the possibility of registration of such organizations (Germany);**

129.195 **Develop a legal framework to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Spain);**

129.196 **Ensure access to reproductive health and family planning services for all, including persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (Iceland);**

129.197 **Review the Marriage Act of 1980 to ensure that it reflects the rights and needs of all, including persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (Iceland);**

129.198 **Intensify its efforts, in conjunction with Nepal, to find a sustainable solution to the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (France);**

129.199 **Implement measures to prevent statelessness and eliminate discriminatory practices that impede access to Bhutanese nationality, allowing children of Bhutanese mothers married to foreigners to have access to nationality (Mexico);**

129.200 **Amend legislation to guarantee Bhutanese nationality to all children born on its territory, without distinction as to the nationality or marital status of their parents, and grant the possibility to children of Bhutanese born abroad of opting for Bhutanese nationality (Paraguay);**

129.201 **Amend the nationality law of Bhutan to extend birthright citizenship to individuals born in Bhutan who would otherwise be stateless, including members of religious and ethnic minorities (United States of America);**

129.202 **Adapt its legislation to provide for the acquisition of nationality by descent (*jus sanguinis*) for having at least one parent who is a Bhutanese national, regardless of the identification or nationality of the other parent (Costa Rica);**

129.203 **Facilitate Bhutanese nationality for children with only one Bhutanese parent (France).**

130. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Bhutan was headed by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Mr. D.N. DHUNGYEL and composed of the following members:

* H.E Mr. Tenzin Rondel WANGCHUK, Ambassador/Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bhutan, Geneva;
* Mr. Karma GALAY, Director General, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD);
* Mr. Tashi NAMGYAL, Director, Department of Education Programme, MoESD and Member Secretary, National Commission for Women and Children;
* Ms. Pelden WANGMO, Judge, Family and Child Bench, Thimphu, Royal Court of Justice;
* Mr. Laigden DZED, Chief Program Officer, Non-Communicable Diseases Division, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health;
* Mr. Pema LETHO, Chief Civil Registration and Census Officer, Department of Civil Registration and Census, Ministry of Home Affairs;
* Ms. Dechen PELMO, Chief, Social and Development Division (SDD), Department of Multilateral Affairs, MoFAET;
* Mr. Rinchen SAMDRUP, Chief Planning Officer, Strategic Planning Division, Office of the Cabinet Affairs and Strategic Coordination, Cabinet Secretariat;
* Ms. Tshering YANGDON DY, Chief Attorney, Finance and Corporate Division, Office of the Attorney General;
* Ms. Jigme WANGMO, Asst. Desk Officer, SDD, Department of Multilateral Affairs, MoFAET;
* Ms. Rinchen DEMA, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bhutan, Geneva.

1. \* The annex is being circulated without formal editing, in the language of submission only. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/1](http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/1). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/2](http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/2) and [A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/2/Corr.1](http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/2/Corr.1). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/3](http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/47/BTN/3). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)