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BHUTAN ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Road to Dubai: The Bhutan Story at COP28

27 – 28 October, Thimphu Deluxe

Bhutan stands at a critical crossroads in its development journey, while also poised to reap the economic rewards of past investments. However, this progress is under imminent threat from climate change, necessitating rapid adaptation and mitigation efforts to avert its worst consequences. Globally, the urgency of our situation is amplified by the rapidly shrinking window to prevent exceeding the Paris Agreement's temperature limits of 2°C or the more stringent 1.5°C target. This looming crisis underscores the "ambition gap" – the chasm between our climate pledges and the decisive actions required to meet these commitments. Yet, within Bhutan, there exists another, equally concerning gap: the "implementation gap." This gap is the divide between the promises made and the tangible steps taken on the ground. Although it garners less attention, its significance cannot be overstated, for failing to realize our commitments not only jeopardizes our collective ambition but also exacerbates the climate crisis.

Amidst this backdrop, the world's largest climate convention, the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), is slated to convene in Dubai, UAE, from November 30 to December 12. In alignment with these global concerns and ambitions, the Bhutan Ecological Society (BES) announces its annual symposium: "Road to Dubai: The Bhutan Story at COP28." The symposium will be centered around three critical focus areas for climate action in Bhutan to drive a sense of urgency, action, the mobilization of finances and partnerships. However, the Symposium will also explore what solutions and thought leadership Bhutan can bring to the climate crisis.

Understanding the scale of climate risks and vulnerabilities in Bhutan: Delving into the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by Bhutan in the wake of climate change.

Driving prosperity and resilience: Exploring avenues to sustainably harness economic growth while preserving our natural heritage, improving resilience of our communities and systems, and gaining insights into the financial investments required for Bhutan to effectively implement its national climate policies.

Preserving carbon-neutral landscapes: Focusing on safeguarding Bhutan's cherished carbon-neutral landscapes that make us a global exemplar in climate action. How can landscapes be reimagined as functional i.e., that works for its inhabitants, both human and non-human?

As an exciting addition, the symposium will feature the Bhutan Lectures for Innovation, Science, and Society (BLISS), concentrating on the untapped potential of carbon markets within Bhutan.



Day I (27th Oct)	
09 00 - 09 30 h	
Plenary: Road to Dubai Venue: Gyelsa 2	Description: Bhutan has been involved in the UN climate negotiations since it signed the United Nations Convention Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and ratified it in 1995. Bhutan's ability to comprehensively align its national policies to achieve global goals, especially for climate action is important because such actions have earned it political capital and credibility. However, there are also several challenges that Bhutan must contend with: How can Bhutan increase its resilience and diversify its economy, support job creation and livelihoods without compromising its environmental track record? How can Bhutan transform into a creative viable market-based sustainable economy and continue to remain carbon-neutral? With graduation from its Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2023 as well as the completion of the 13th Five Year Plan and the upcoming COP28 present an important moment for Bhutan to harness
Speakers: Dasho Paljor J Dorji Namgay Choden	
0930- 11 00 h	
Plenary Panel: From the Cryosphere to the Biosphere: Climate Risks and Vulnerability in Bhutan Venue: Gyelsa 2	Description: This session brings attention to the urgent climate vulnerability risks of the Bhutanese Himalayas and the cryosphere, with its downstream impact on livelihoods and biodiversity and explore its interconnectedness. Leading experts will delve into Bhutan's unique vulnerability to climate change, exploring the intricate interplay between the rapidly melting Himalayan glaciers and the fragile ecosystems. Discover the implications for local communities, biodiversity, and global climate, and gain insights into innovative adaptation strategies and the importance of international collaboration. Be part of the solution and learn how Bhutan's challenges resonate with the broader climate crisis.
Speakers Sonam Lhamo, NCHM Tenzin Khorlo, Department of Water Dr. Karma Tenzin, KGUMBS Sonam Peldon, DGPC Moderator: Pema Tshoki	
11 30 - 13 00 h	2000 – 2100 h (Virtual Session)
Economic Opportunities in the Energy Transition Venue: Gyelsa 2	Climate Justice
Description: This session will focus on the potential for economic growth and opportunities as Bhutan, and the world, shifts to cleaner energy sources. It offers opportunities in innovation, job creation, and investment, including renewable energy, clean technologies, and energy efficiency. The discussion will include roles of governments, businesses, and individuals in driving the energy transition and capitalizing on its economic benefits. Additionally, it will examine how policy, incentives, and international cooperation can expedite the shift to cleaner energy.	Description: Bhutan, as a LDC and carbon negative country contributes the least to climate change, yet is fated to be the most vulnerable and least equipped to mitigate and adapt to the worst impacts of climate change. What does Climate Justice mean for Bhutan and how can we demand a more equitable system in international climate decisionmaking regimes?
Speakers Lam Dorji, BCCI Dawa Chhoedron, DoE, MoENR Zerrie Choden, DHI Dechen Wangmo, DGPC	Speakers Dr. Lindsay Skog Passang, Chhukha District Court
14 00 - 15 30 h	



The National Adaptation Plan Venue: Gyelsa 2	
Description: Learn about Bhutan's NAP which outlines comprehensive strategies to address climate change impacts and enhance resilience. Our experts will share insights on Bhutan's approach to adaptation, its alignment with sustainable development goals, and the Paris Agreement. Discover how this ambitious plan is shaping Bhutan's climate future and contributing to a more sustainable, resilient world.	
Speakers Pem Dorji Tamang, DECC Netra Sharma, UNDP	
BLISS (Bhutan Lectures for Innovation, Science and Society)	Carbon Stewardship: Leveraging Markets for Climate Solutions
Day II (28th Oct)	
10 00 - 11 30 h	
Climate Finance Roundtable: Plenary Venue: Gyelsa 2	Description: This session brings together key players in Bhutan who are mobilizing, channeling and utilizing substantive multilateral climate finance funds into the country. This exciting panel will shed light on the current challenges as well as where we can do better to organize ourselves to meet investment needs. Step into the heart of climate action by understanding how strategic financial decisions are shaping the future of our country and the planet.
Speakers Wangchuk Namgay, RSPN Jigme Tenzin, FAO Bhutan Sonam Dagay, WWF Bhutan Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation	
Moderator: Namgay Choden	
1130 - 1300 h (Parallel Session)	1130 - 1300 h (Parallel Session)
Health and Climate Venue: Gyelsa 1	Guardians of a Carbon Neutral Landscape Venue: Gyelsa 2
Description: This session will focus on the nexus between climate change and health, dissecting Bhutan's unique challenges and the critical role of climate resilience in safeguarding the nation's health systems. Gain insights into strategies for adapting to changing climate patterns, promoting public health, and enhancing the resilience of healthcare infrastructure.	Description: This session will shed light on the astounding Tiger and Snow Leopard surveys that were released recently, peaking to the protection of forests, critical habitats, and landscapes that sequester carbon emissions as well as a story of hope from Bhutan.
Speakers Dr. Karma Tenzin, KGUMBS Netra Sharma, UNDP	Speakers Dr. Tshering Tempa, Bhutan Ecological Society Letro, Department of Forest and Park Services Tashi Dhendup, Tiger Center Moderator: Dr. Norbu Wangdi
1400 - 1500 h (Parallel Session)	1400 - 1500 h (Parallel Session)
Innovation for Climate Solutions	Upscaling Nature Based Tourism Venue: Gyelsa 2



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Venue: Gyelsa 1		
Description: DHI will present different tech stacks that can be leveraged to address climate change. These tech stack and tech systems vary in stages of R&D; from concept notes to piloted implementations. DHI seeks to leverage platforms such as the upcoming COP28 to help realize collaborative goals.	Description: Focusing on Bhutan's unique approach to one of its biggest economic sectors from the lens of sustainability, climate resilience, and livelihoods. This session is also focused on the investment needs and mitigation potential of such an approach.	
Speakers DHI Department of InnoTech: Phuntsho Namgay Pema Wangchug Chirag Sharma	Speaker Damcho Rinzin, Department of Tourism	
1500 - 1600 (Parallel Session)	1500 -1600 (Parallel Session)	2000 - 2100 (Virtual Session)
Presentation: Thimphu as a Sustainable and Resilient City Venue: Gyelsa 1	Security, Sovereignty and Food Venue: Gyelsa 2	New Frontiers in Conservation Finance
Description: What does urban resilience look like for Bhutan, specifically in the context of the Thimphu Structure Plan. What are the investment needs and mitigation potential of green urbanization?	Description: This session brings attention to the status of food security in Bhutan in the context of the urgent climate vulnerability risks to food security and adaptation/resilience strategies, with reference to important policy documents (NAPA, NAP, LEDS, etc).	Description: What are some innovative ways in which Bhutan can mobilize finance for climate change adaptation and mitigation?
TBC	Speaker Sonam Pelgen, PPD, MoAL	Speakers Saurav Malhotra, Balipara Foundation Tshewang Wangchuk, Bhutan Foundation

