

Dear Participants in the Launch of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network,

It had been our wish that Bhutan be present at the launch of the new multidimensional poverty network. However on May 31st, Bhutan held the second election in its history and the results of the primaries are just now being finalized. As an interim government has been in place for the election period, this has made our travel to Oxford impossible at this time. Bhutan hopes to be actively involved in this new network as it moves forward.

The Royal Government of Bhutan has taken the view that poverty is multidimensional. A multidimensional outlook is fully consistent with the basic development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and the need to view development more holistically and beyond just income measures. Similarly, a multidimensional approach to poverty and its equivalent measure, the Bhutan Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), captures more than just income poverty at the household level.

The Bhutan MPI was constructed using the Alkire Foster measure using 13 indicators with varying weights. Efforts to further refine the model and attune it to Bhutan's GNH index (that also uses the AF method) are underway as relevant data become available. Nevertheless, the basic intent is to explore the value added that such a measure could bring, in addition to supplementing the income poverty measures that are already in use so that the reduction of material poverty coheres with the environmental, social, and spiritual dimensions of life.

Bhutan looks forward to its participation in the new Multidimensional Poverty Network, to learn from the experiences of others and of share its national experiences. Our use of the MPI will deepen over time and we look forward to the support of the network in this. We anticipate the network promoting better measurement, facilitating further training and exploring how better measures could contribute to the MDGs post 2015.

I wish you well in your deliberations in this august event.

Karma Wangdi (ཀར་མ་དབང་འདུལ་)

The Centre for Bhutan Studies

www.bhutanstudies.org.bt

www.grossnationalhappiness.com