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Bhutan



Country Information

Region: South Asia

Population: Approximately 800,000

Capital: Thimphu

GDP (US\$): \$2.512 billion

Geography: Mountainous to lower-lying foothills to plains with semi-tropical forest, savannah grassland and bamboo jungles.

General climate: Alpine to temperate to subtropical with a monsoon season from June till September.

INFORM Risk Rating: 2.9

Risk Summary

- Bhutan is exposed to a variety of hazards, including floods, landslides, earthquakes, glacial lake outbursts (GLOF) and droughts.

- Floods and landslides are most commonly caused by heavy seasonal monsoon rains and glacial melt.
- Over 70% of settlements, most infrastructure and fertile agricultural land are situated along the main drainage basins, putting them at high risk of flooding.
- Recent cyclones have brought unprecedented rain and flooding, damaging transport infrastructure.
- Due to its proximity to the seismically active Himalayan belt, Bhutan is also at a high risk of earthquakes.
- The 2009 earthquake caused loss and damages of over \$52 million and needs over \$45 million. Approximately 4,000 households were affected and over 7,000 people did not have access to adequate shelter.
- Climate change and subsequent rising temperatures are causing the formation of supraglacial lakes, increasing the risk of GLOF, which threaten the lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and properties of the people of Bhutan.

Disaster Management System

National Level

- **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**

The NDMA is the highest decision-making body on disaster management. It is led by the Prime Minister and is responsible for approving national disaster management funds; directing agencies to mainstream DRR into their development plans, policies, programs and projects; and ensuring the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Task Force. The NDMA also directs any agency on disaster management; establishes/commissions research, develops and provides training in the field of disaster management, directs the Department of Disaster Management, Dzongkhag Disaster Management Committees and other agencies, if necessary.

- **Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF)**

The IMTF is comprised of technical experts from relevant agencies and is responsible for the review of hazard zonation and vulnerability maps; structural and non-structural measures; risk reduction activities; national standards; guidelines and operating procedures. It also provides technical assistance for the National Disaster Management and Contingency Plan, and advises on the setup of critical disaster management facilities.

- **Department of Disaster Management (DDM)**

The DDM acts as the Secretariat and executive arm of the NDMA. It is responsible for laying down strategies, policies for disaster management; ensuring that agencies mainstream DRR; preparing the National Plan in coordination with relevant agencies; formulating national guidelines, standards and procedures for disaster management; developing and implementing public education, awareness and capacity-building programs; developing standard training modules and curricula on disaster management, developing and maintaining the Disaster Management Information System; and ensuring the implementation of the Disaster Management and Contingency plan.

The DDM is also responsible for facilitating the constitution and functioning of Disaster Management Committees, the formulation of hazard zonation and vulnerability maps; the set up and functioning of Critical Disaster Management Facilities; the establishment/commissioning of research, development and training in disaster management; collaboration with other countries, organizations, NGOs, private sector; and coordination of international disaster response, relief and recovery assistance.

Sub-National Level

- **Dzhongkhag Disaster Management Committee (DDMC)**

DDMCs are responsible for coordinating and managing all disaster management operations in the Dzhongkhag under the direction and supervision of the NDMA.

- **Agencies and Private Sector**

Every agency, including the private sector, notified by the NDMA, is mandated to institute a disaster management unit. The notified agency is then responsible for implementing disaster management and contingency plans; hazard zonation and vulnerability maps; ensuring the establishment and functioning of critical disaster management facilities; and providing assistance to DDMCs when required.

Helpful Links and Sources

Bhutan Country Profile:

<https://data.worldbank.org/country/bhutan>

Bhutan Hazard Profile:

<https://www.gfdr.org/bhutan>

Bhutan Disaster Risk Management Status Review:

http://www.ddm.gov.bt/download/Bhutan_DRM_Status_Review.pdf

Department of Disaster Management:

<http://www.ddm.gov.bt/>

National Portal of Bhutan:

<http://www.bhutan.gov.bt/>

Thimphu Dzongkhag Disaster Management & Contingency Plan 2017:

http://www.ddm.gov.bt/Contingency_Plans/Draft%20Thimphu%20DM%20and%20Contingency%20Plan.pdf