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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE FORMATION OF  
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP, 2024**

**Title and Adoption**

1. There shall be Parliamentary Friendship Groups, hereinafter called the Parliamentary Friendship Group, formed in the National Assembly of Bhutan to interact with Parliamentary Friendship Groups in designated foreign countries.
2. This Standard Operating Procedure for the Formation of Parliamentary Friendship Groups and Its Terms of Reference comes into effect from **29 May 2024** upon adoption by the Speaker of the National Assembly.

**Formation of Group**

3. Upon receipt of expression of interest to form the Parliamentary Friendship Groups, the Speaker shall refer the proposal received to the House Committee of the National Assembly, who shall study the proposal in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MoFAET).
4. The House Committee of the National Assembly shall submit its report to the Speaker along with recommendations and list of nominees for the Parliamentary Friendship Group.
5. The Speaker, based on the recommendations of the House Committee of the National Assembly, shall convey the acceptance letter to the MoFAET for onward submission to the Parliament of the partnering country.
6. Once accepted by the Parliament of the partnering country, the Speaker of the National Assembly shall issue an order constituting the Parliamentary Friendship Group.

**Composition of Membership**

7. A Parliamentary Friendship Group shall consist of five to seven Members of the National Assembly who have special aptitude for and interest in the affairs of the country with which the Parliamentary Friendship Group is constituted to interact with.
8. A Member shall be nominated in one Parliamentary Friendship Group only.



Speaker  
National Assembly of Bhutan  
Thimphu



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9. The Members of Parliament holding ministerial or equivalent positions shall not be nominated to a Parliamentary Friendship Group.

## **Office Bearers and Secretariat**

10. There shall be a Chairperson and a Dy. Chairperson of the Friendship Group elected from amongst the Members of the Group.
11. The Secretary General of the National Assembly shall appoint relevant parliamentary staff to function as Member Secretary to the Parliamentary Friendship Group.

## **Aims and Objective**

12. The aims and objectives of establishing parliamentary friendship groups shall be:
- a. To maintain political, economic, social and cultural contacts between the parliaments of two countries.
  - b. To foster cooperation and understanding between the Parliament of Bhutan and friendly countries' parliamentary institutions, as well as international assemblies and organisations, through conduct of activities like seminars, visits, exchange programs, cultural exchanges, and other suitable initiatives.
  - c. To assist in having exchanges of information and experiences on issues related to parliamentary activities;
  - d. To promote cooperation between the delegations of the two countries while participating in the deliberations of international organisations and also in carrying out consultations on issues of mutual interest, as and when such opportunity arises; and
  - e. To study and evolve an insight into the best parliamentary practices that are worth emulating.

## **Meetings**

13. The meetings of the Parliamentary Friendship Groups shall be held with the Foreign Parliamentary Delegations of respective countries' parliamentary friendship groups visiting Bhutan. The records of discussion of the meetings shall be maintained by the Member Secretary of the Group.
14. The Parliamentary Friendship Group may initiate an exchange program including a visit to interact with the parliamentary friendship group in a designated foreign







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country. However, the exchange program shall be pursued only upon the approval of the Speaker.

**Tenure and Dissolution**

15. The tenure of the Parliamentary Friendship Groups shall be from the date of office order issued by the Speaker of the National Assembly.
16. The composition of the Parliamentary Friendship Group may change after every one year upon the recommendations of the House Committee.
17. The Parliamentary Friendship Groups shall stand dissolved upon the dissolution of the National Assembly of Bhutan.

**Amendment of the SOP**

18. Any variation or amendment to this SOP shall be made by the Speaker as and when required.

**Note:** The list of Parliamentary Friendship Groups for the Fourth Parliament are:

1. Thailand - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group;
2. Bangladesh - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group;
3. India - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group;
4. Mongolia - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group;
5. Nepal - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group;
6. Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD); and
7. Australia - Bhutan Parliamentary Friendship Group.

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Speaker  
National Assembly of Bhutan  
Thimphu