

Putting people first

Key lesson of two-day training for top leaders



ICTing Bhutan: Govt. talks to media about the project

involved in creating ICT enabled society to help them

Chiphen Rigpel 28 August, 2010 - That e-governance is first about people and then processes and technology was one of the understandings top leaders came to after attending a two-day "training" on how ICT can make Bhutan a knowledge-based society.

"A knowledge society is about ideas and innovation; about bringing humans to the centre," information and communications secretary, Dasho Kinley Dorji said in a presentation of Chiphen Rigpel, the project that aims to transform Bhutan.

Deciding that they would meet every six or 12 months to take stock of developments, leaders agreed that they needed to have the understanding to be directly make decisions on ICT projects and programmes.

They said that imagination is the role of the leaders and MoIC, through ICT officials, could coordinate to bring everyone on the same platform. The leaders, which included all ministers including the prime minister, the head of the legislature and the army chief and the chief justice, agreed that ICT literacy is about the potential, scope and risks of ICT innovations. A website on Chiphen Rigpel, which is yet to be launched, would also be a forum for discussions, the ministers agreed.

"It was a worthwhile experience, both in terms of knowledge and skills that we have gained, and in terms of us being able to interact together," the prime minister Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y Thinley said at the end of the training.

The project, said Lyonchhoen, is aimed at creating an ICT-enabled knowledge society, fulfilling the vision of the country – a green and sustainable economy.

"This very important program is essentially the training of leaders to be able to lead our Bhutanese society in this transformation from this conventional, traditional development society into an IT enabled knowledge society," the prime minister said.

Meanwhile, secretaries, who also attended a similar training by consultants from the national institute of information technology (NIIT), recommended to promote virtual conferencing and that geographic information system (GIS) be used for administration.

Taking stock of ICT situation in each ministry, forming forums such a lawyers' forum by the office of the attorney general, police creating a crime database to be shared with checkposts, and archiving materials and maintaining a data base for each sector, were other recommendations made by the secretaries.

"The government will look at a central procurement system and standardisation of vendors, avoiding monopolies, and decentralising services, like the issue of ID cards to the gewog level," the secretaries agreed.

The secretaries decided that MoIC would step up its role in standardisation, selection of both hardware and software, all projects in each ministry should be consolidated, all initiatives must be made visible and that every organisation must build an information system.

Facilitator from NIIT, Rajendra Pawar, said that the goal of Chiphen Rigpel is capacity building, an essential pre-requisite to building a knowledge based society. "It was very clear during the program that every member of the leadership is committed to the cause of using ICT for development," he said. "Seeing them engage so actively during the 11 hours of the first day was most satisfying to me."

By Sonam Pelden