

SAVING LIVES CHANGING LIVES

# **Disaster Risk Reduction in Bhutan**

Greater resilience to natural disasters and climate crisis

## Hazard and capacity overview

Bhutan is prone to natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, glacial lake outburst floods, landslides and forest fires. Making substantial progress in disaster risk reduction, the Royal Government of Bhutan has through its 2013 Disaster Management Act established the National Disaster Management Authority and Disaster Management Committees in all 20 districts. These districts also have a Disaster Management Contingency Plan (DMCP) in place. With the country facing increased risks of multiple natural hazards, capacity strengthening, upgraded data systems and increased awareness are a priority for the government. A disaster impacting Bhutan today, as the country faces the socio-economic pressure of COVID-19 and other global crises, would have devastating impacts on the country and its people.

#### **Focus and partners**

The WFP Bhutan Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) identifies enhancing resilience to natural disasters and climate change as a key focus area. WFP is the UN lead on disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the country and supports coordination between development partners through regular sector meetings and knowledge sharing platforms. To develop stronger national resilience to disasters and the climate crisis, WFP supports the Royal Government of Bhutan's (RGoB) DRR initiatives in the five areas of governance and coordination, data preparedness, logistics, emergency telecommunications, and food security.

#### **Governance and coordination**

To enhance governance and coordination in DRR, WFP and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), in consultation with relevant government stakeholders, are completing the Roadmap for Disaster Risk

### **Data preparedness**

To strengthen DRR data preparedness, WFP is supporting the RGoB in the 72-hour rapid assessment approach and building a digital vulnerability database. This assistance will help estimate the likely impact of a disaster and enable a response within 72 hours.

The 72-hour approach provides critical information based on a pre-disaster vulnerability database, which includes information on demographics, poverty, food insecurity, access to roads, health stations and schools, combined with data from tactual disaster events, such as the 2009 earthquake in Bhutan. This offers a basis to make operational decisions even in extremely complex situations with information being refined through continuous updates.

WFP, in partnership with DDM, is currently upgrading the 72-hour approach using WFP's platform for real-

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