



RAA asked to frame accountability procedures for performance audits

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The Royal Audit Authority (RAA) must come up with clear procedures to fix accountability on lapses pertaining to the performance audit report by September this year, the joint sitting of the parliament resolved yesterday.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) proposed the recommendation in the backdrop of many RAA's recommendations not being implemented by concerned agencies. The PAC observed that unlike in the case of financial audit, there were no procedures for fixing accountability on findings of a performance audit.

The RAA had conducted a performance audit for the period covering September 25, 2015 to March 31, 2018 on the "preparedness for implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" with objectives to ascertain adaptation of 2030 Agenda by the government into its national context.

The RAA had issued five recommendations and asked the GNHC to submit its management action plan (MAP) and action taken report (ATR) in January 2019. However, the GNHC failed to provide MAP and ATR within the deadline for review of its implementation status and the progress of implementation as of April 30 this year.

"The committee is deeply concerned of such non-compliance to RAA's report by GNHC," PAC chairman Phuntsho Rapten said.

The joint sitting also endorsed the PAC's recommendation to constitute a SDG committee of parliament to oversee progress and challenges in the implementation of SDGs.

The committee will comprise members from both houses of parliament, which the PAC stated has an important oversight function.

The committee's recommendation was not specific if the proposed SDG committee would be instituted in each House. Members however, said that the proposed committee should be a joint committee, which will report its findings on the implementation status of SDGs to a joint sitting.

Panbang MP Dorji Wangdi said it would be better to have a joint committee in terms of coordination and convenience in review of SDG implementation status.

The PAC reported that since Bhutan became a member of the UN, it has not only ratified many conventions but also became an early mover of SDGs in 2015 after satisfactorily achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

“Now that the country’s five-year Plan cycles have been aligned with the development goals, the 12th Plan adopted 17 SDGs after carefully mapping them to National Key Result Areas (NKRAs).”

The PAC stated that GNHC as a central planning and coordinating body for the overall development plan is responsible for leading and coordinating SDGs activities in the country.

The joint sitting also endorsed PAC’s recommendation for a dedicated unit or division within the GNHC secretariat along with competent personnel to ensure timely and effective coordination of SDG implementation. A separate dashboard to monitor implementation of SDG activities in equally important, PAC added.

Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering, who is also the Chairman of the GNHC, said that a separate unit for SDGs was unnecessary.

MB Subba