

Preface

Inspired by the participation and response to First Rigter Conference, Norbuling Rigter College organised its Second Rigter Conference on 15 September 2023. The 2023 Rigter Conference was on Culture and Development: *Challenges and Prospects*.

Rigter Conference brings together scholars and academicians from different institutes to contribute and provide fresh discourse on issues that matter to us.

His Excellency Dasho Sonam Kinga (PhD), former Chairperson of the National Council of the Kingdom of Bhutan graced the academic event as the Keynote Speaker.

There were eleven presenters from five institutions including two participants from University College London, United Kingdom.

The one-day conference was divided into four thematic sessions. The sessions were Leveraging culture for development, Culture, development and sustainability, Beyond conventional understanding of development and Culture, Development and Health: The Nexus.

The four papers presented in the session on '*Leveraging culture for development*' discussed opportunities of harnessing culture to advance economic development and boost income. The papers presented cases of *menchu* (*medicinal water*), local healing practices, homestay tourism and spiritual practices to illustrate opportunities of leveraging culture to enhance development.

The session on "*Culture, development and sustainability*" discussed the opportunities of using development to promote culture. The three papers in this session discussed food culture, New Year celebration and a local festival in the context of sustainability of culture.

The third session was on “*Beyond conventional understanding of development*”. The two papers in this session presented the examples of a popular character known as Memey Haley Haley and the influence of Drukpa Kunley on the Bhutanese psyche to highlight a different perspective of development.

The final session on “*Culture, Development and Health: The Nexus*” has two papers. The discussions in this session were the nexus of culture and development and role of culture in development of health systems.

The Chairperson of the College Research Committee who is also the Dean of Academic Affairs presented the concluding remarks. The concluding remarks underscored the importance of research, particularly for academic institutions and the commitment of college to invest to support research.

Besides giving a distinct academic character to Norbuling Rigter College, Rigter Conference aims to advance research culture among staff and students of the College.