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24 October 2008

Madam Chair,
Honorable Members of the Committee,
Dear Delegates,

I have a great pleasure to present to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for its consideration the combined 5th to 7th periodic reports of Mongolia on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to which Mongolia adhered in 1981.

Regarding the preparation of the report, a Working Group was established to develop the report at an ordinance of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor. It was composed of representatives from relevant governmental institutions and agencies. The report reviewed and summarized all the measures taken since the launch of the 3rd and 4th periodic reports, and evaluated specific aspects of the women's rights from a gender perspective.

In 2002, a special training on reporting on implementation of international conventions regarding women's rights was organized to raise awareness and improve knowledge of the staff of governmental and non-governmental organizations, professors of universities and institutes, particularly of government officers about monitoring, evaluation and reporting on implementation of the conventions. The invitation and participation of officers from Asia Pacific International Women's Rights Watch in that workshop was important in the sense to streamline Mongolia's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women the international efforts to ensure human rights, particularly women's rights.

Much attention was paid to the report promotion and public discussion. Several discussions were held with participation of representatives from public organizations and civil society. After incorporating the participants' comments and suggestions, the report was presented to a cabinet session of the Government, and afterwards it was submitted to the CEDAW Committee.

As of 2007, the population of Mongolia reached 2,635,200 and women constitute 51.2 percent of the total population. As a country that endorsed all the articles of the convention and acceded to the convention, Mongolia ensures that all its legislations respect human rights and prohibit discriminations based on age, sex, race, nationality, language, culture and religion.

Within the framework of legal reform, legal acts regulating basic social relations were adopted under the previous reporting periods. Now, attention is paid essentially to the development and adoption of laws which regulate specific social relations, particularly, the laws related to the human rights and freedoms. For example, in 2005, the Law against Domestic Violence was enacted and began to be enforced. Also, the Criminal Code, the Labor Law and the Law on the National Human Rights Commission can be mentioned here. Works are being continued also to review and improve some of the laws and legislation. A Gender Equality Bill is being newly drafted. The Family Law is being revised to reflect the changes and trends occurring in the family relations in Mongolia.

Mongolia adopted its country-specific Millennium Development Goals, developed national MDG progress reports and has been conducting relevant surveys and researches. This year, initiated by the President of Mongolia, the Comprehensive National Development Strategy of Mongolia was adopted by the Parliament and started to be implemented. Issues of gender equality were specifically incorporated in this strategy and the importance of creating trends in addressing all issues from a perspective of gender equality was highlighted.

Since the presentation of its 3rd and 4th periodic reports, Mongolia has been enhancing its policies and programs aimed at ensuring population's development and protection of human rights. In this framework, the Parliament of Mongolia adopted the State Policy on Population Development, the Policy on Family Development. The Government developed, approved and has been implementing the national programmes such as the National Program on Gender Equality, the National Program to Combat Domestic Violence, the National Program on Promotion of Adolescent and Youth Development and the National Program on Reproductive Health.

Positive changes happened in the socio-economic situation of Mongolia contribute naturally to resolving challenges among the population, improving living standards, increasing the household incomes and supporting families. As a result of interventions and measures undertaken since the previous reporting periods, significant progresses and successes were achieved. However, we still have certain issues and concerns that need to be addressed. Here, I would like to briefly mention about them.

During the transition period, women's participation in economic, social and political life has been improved. The increase in proportion of women candidates at all elections resulted in relatively high representation of women at local governments such as the governments of aimag, capital city, soum or district. As well, 60 to 80 percent of the public administrative employees, teachers and medical doctors are women.

However, the proportion of women has not increased to a desirable point at the high-rank decision-making and management levels, in certain aspects it even decreased compared to the previous regime. To address the occurred decrease in Mongolian women's participation in the high-ranking political governance, the National Program on Gender Equality set a goal to raise the percentage of women among high ranking officials in the public service, decision-makers and political administrators to 15%-30% by 2004. This goal was re-affirmed by the National MDG of Mongolia. It is important that the political parties incorporated in their Charters a quota of 20%-30% for women in their internal organizational structures.

The Parliamentary Election Law of Mongolia indicated that 30 percent of the candidates shall be women at all elections. However, this provision was removed in 2007 by the Parliament. Thus, it is required to carry out activities aimed at influencing legislators and decision-makers for these issues in cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

Due to the limited percentage of women candidates in elections, the number of elected women does not grow. Only three women were elected as members of parliament at the election held in 2008. There are two women Ministers working as Cabinet Members of the Government. Therefore, it is necessary to take some particular measures to cooperate with political parties in appointing women for other high-level positions in the future.

The occurrence of domestic violence does not diminish. Women and children are becoming victims of human trafficking. In 2007, 10 cases of human trafficking were registered and 17 persons were involved in there. During the first 4 months of 2008, 7 cases involved by 17 persons were recorded and investigated. This reveals that the number of human trafficking cases is increasing.

Increasing number of children and women are becoming victims of various crimes. For example, in recent years incidents such as the riot which broke out on 1 July 2008 and the bankruptcy of Savings and Credit Cooperatives have affected negatively the interests of children and women.

Literacy rate and education level of the population of Mongolia is relatively high. However, in recent years, school drop-out rate rises due to poverty, particularly in rural areas. The tendency is sustained in greater number of women obtaining the higher education. One of the major indicators that reveal gender inequality in education is the gender balance of staff working at schools. Women dominate among teaching personnel, but men dominate at the management level.

Therefore, it was very important that external and non-staff gender watch units were established in compliance with the order by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia. These units have duties to conduct surveys and research on gender balance in education sector of Mongolia and provide policy advice to the educational policy-makers and implementing agencies.

Gender issues in health policy are mainly raised through women's role in reproduction.

The National MDG of Mongolia aimed at reducing infant mortality rate from 63.4 in 1990 to 22.0 in 2015 and mortality rate of children under the age 5 from 87.5 in 1990 to 29.2 in 2015. For now, Mongolia has already achieved these goals. Also, Mongolia aims to reduce maternal mortality from 200 to 50 between the years of 1990 and 2015. This year the maternal mortality was at 89.6 and the goal is considered as achievable by 2015. However, mostly rural women and women with low income tend to die due to birth and pregnancy complications. Therefore, Mongolia takes measures to provide all pregnant women with early antenatal care and to deliver maternity rest home services to the pregnant women in rural areas.

Since 1990s, when Mongolia began its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, unemployment and poverty have newly emerged in the country. Mostly, women are

severely affected by these new phenomena. Unemployment rate of women has always been high and wage disparities are emerging due to the sectors and positions that women are serving.

As a consequence of unemployment and poverty, a substantial number of women are working in the informal sector or doing unpaid domestic work. Attention should be paid to that their coverage by social insurance is relatively low.

Many measures have been taken aimed at reducing poverty and increasing household income of the population. In this framework, the Government of Mongolia makes substantial efforts in selecting and implementing the most optimal approaches that ensure equal distribution of wealth and benefits of natural resources to every citizen and household.

But, a recent significant rise of gasoline and fuel prices resulted in higher inflation and increase in prices of foods, goods and products. This trend severely hurts citizens with middle and low incomes. The Government has been taking appropriate measures to slow down and stabilize the price hikes. However, it might become a reason for fuelling poverty. Thus, the Government is organizing works to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for poverty reduction.

A half of the population of Mongolia lives in rural areas. However, in rural areas, the power supply, infrastructure and telecommunications are unevenly developed, access to information technology is limited and quality of and access to the health, education, culture and common services are insufficient.

Such a condition contributes to an extreme disparity in urban and rural development that causes inequality between the citizens in urban and rural areas. Although the women's participation in nomadic animal husbandry is increasing in rural areas, new technologies are rarely introduced to the field in order to ease women's workloads and to improve their working conditions. However, certain progresses were made in providing the rural households with power generators, telecommunication services and other mobile services.

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the CEDAW adopted upon consideration of the 3rd and 4th periodic reports of Mongolia on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, we would like to note that Mongolia had the following achievements and successes:

- The Law against Domestic Violence was adopted and began to be enforced. Development of a Draft Law on Gender Equality was started with support of the Asian Development Bank.
- Although the number of women parliamentarians was decreased, the percentage of women at some high-ranking positions has been increased. For instance, women's involvement has grown in the Supreme Court, the General Committee of Election and National Human Rights Commission. Women occupy an appropriate part of management staff at political and public administration levels.
- Extensive works were done to improve information and research activities and to ensure gender mainstreaming in national policies, programs and activities by making them gender sensitive.
- ~~Activities and initiatives made by non-governmental organizations are needed to be~~
highlighted here.

- They fill the gap of services that the public services failed to reach and share of the burdens and workloads of the State. The development of the NGOs reached its new stage and this is the result of their own active initiatives and efforts. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor concluded cooperation agreements and cooperates with national NGOs.
- Mongolia effectively cooperates with UN Specialized Agencies, development banks, financial institutions and international NGOs. Under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, a particular emphasis is laid on ensuring gender equality and protecting the human rights.
- Proper steps were made to establish a national system that deals with gender issues. A National Committee for Gender Equality was set up with the Prime Minister as the chairman. The established working group of the National Committee creates necessary and effective working conditions for improving the coordination of sectors in gender issues and providing concerned organizations with professional guidance.

Moreover, there are number of concerns that should be addressed to ensure a more effective implementation of the Convention. They are as follows:

- It is necessary to raise public awareness on this Convention, analyze and address issues from the Convention aspects and encourage the practical use of it.
- It is also necessary to intensify capacity building and regularly organize trainings and promotional activities aimed at shaping attitudes to address any issue from the human rights perspective. In this vein, many activities should be organized such as development of various promotional materials and training of teachers and trainers.
- It is important to establish a system that ensures the integration of the Convention with planning, policy and programs of all sectors, implementation and reporting of the Convention and regularize these activities.
- It is needed to establish a database system to monitor implementation of the Convention and create a system for external auditing.
- The NGO participation should be increased in the implementation of the Convention and establishment of cooperation contracts and agreements should be expanded.
- Measures should be taken to strengthen capacity of government officials to implement the Convention and create an appropriate system.

Madam Chair,
Honorable Members of the Committee,

We are confident that you will consider carefully our national reports, address the issues from multiple angles and provide us with valuable comments and recommendations that will be useful for our further works. Mongolia will make efforts and take the necessary steps to successfully implement the Convention respecting the interests of our citizens.

Thank you for your attention.