

Mongolia Commences the Fourth Largest Underground Mine in the World



The primary extraction of the underground mine, which uses block-caving mining technology to extract ore at a depth of 1.3 kilometers underground, has been officially commenced.



When this underground mine, located in Khanbogd soum, Umnugobi, is fully operational, Mongolia will have the fourth largest high-technology underground mine and become one of the biggest players in the international cop-

per market.

On March 13, Prime Minister of Mongolia, Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene, joined Rio Tinto Chief Executive Jakob Stausholm 1.3 kilometers underground to celebrate the commencement of underground production from the

Oyu Tolgoi copper mine in the Gobi Desert.

Prime Minister of Mongolia Oyun-Erdene said, "I am proud to celebrate this major milestone with our partner Rio Tinto as we look towards Mongolia becoming one of the world's key copper

producers. The start of the underground production at Oyu Tolgoi demonstrates our ability to work together with investors in a sustainable manner and become a trusted partner. The next phase of the partnership will enable the continued successful delivery

of Mongolia's 'New Recovery Policy' and Vision 2050 economic diversification strategy. Mongolia stands ready to work actively and mutually beneficially with global investors and partners."

Rio Tinto Chief Executive Jakob Stausholm said, "We would like to thank the Government of Mongolia for their commitment as our partner in achieving this remarkable milestone. We are starting underground production 1.3 kilometres beneath the remote Gobi Desert from an ore body that will be critical for global copper production and Mongolia's ongoing economic development. The copper produced in this truly world class, high technology mine will help deliver the electrification needed for a net zero future and grow Rio Tinto's copper business."

Oyu Tolgoi is expected to produce some 500,000 tons/year of copper on average from 2028 to 2036 from the open pit and underground, enough to produce around 6 million electric vehicles annually, and an average of around 290,000 t over the reserve life of around 30 years.

In addition, the partnership between Rio Tinto and Mongolia, the Oyu Tolgoi open pit and concentrator have been successfully operating for over a decade. Over 80 per cent of Oyu Tolgoi's total value lies deep underground and the depth of the deepest shaft is 1385 meters. The total workforce of Oyu Tolgoi is currently around 20 thousand people, of which 97 percent are Mongolian. Oyu Tolgoi works with more than 500 national suppliers and has spent around USD 15 billion in Mongolia since 2010, including USD 4 billion of taxes, fees and other payments to the state budget, according to the mining company.

State Great Khural Opens its Spring Session



The State Great Khural of Mongolia (Parliament) opened its regular spring session of 2023 on March 15.

In his opening speech,

Speaker of State Great Khural G. Zandanshatar stressed that the spring session will focus on legal reform against corruption, the detrimental phenomenon

that hampers development of the country and wellbeing of people and undermines the rule of law and governance. He mentioned that package of laws to combat corruption will be discussed during the spring session, including Law on Civil Servants' Ethics and Discipline, Law on the Legal Status of Whistleblowers, Law on the Regulation of Public and Private Interests and Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Public Service, the National Program for Combating Corruption. The Speaker noted that the recommendations of the Deliberative Council, which were based on the results of the "Deliberate and Resolve" National Deliberative Polling will be realized.

During its spring session, the parliament plans to discuss ten packages of laws in three directions in the sphere of legal reform.

Speaker G. Zandanshatar also emphasized the economic recovery of Mongolia, saying "Even though we are facing numerous challenges and difficulties, our future looks bright. Mongolian economy has begun to recover, overcoming tough challenges caused by the pandemic and geopolitical tensions in the last three years. For instance, the country saw economic growth of 4.8 per cent in 2022, significantly higher than expected and according to the preliminary results of January, it reached to 10.6 per cent. Due to the mining export revival, the trade balance has been in surplus of USD1 billion as of the first two months. As a result of these, current account balance is in surplus of USD50 million, while it was in deficit of over USD400 million in January, 2022."

Present at the opening session were the President of Mongolia U. Khurelsukh, Prime Minister

L. Oyun-Erdene, members of the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General and other relevant officials, as well as heads of foreign diplomatic services and international organizations.

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Website: montsame.mn/en
Twitter: @montsame_en

Bloomberg commodity price 2023/03/17		
GOLD	USD/t oz.	1.918.70
COPPER	USD/lb.	385.65
SILVER	USD/t oz.	21.82
BRENT CRUDE	USD/bbl.	74.19
WHEAT	USD/bu	698.50

ANTI - CORRUPTION OPERATION

The Working Group Has Begun the Whistle-Blowing Campaign

INTRODUCTION: Members of the working group that coordinates with citizens to undertake the whistle-blowing campaign

A working group has been formed to collaborate with citizens on the whistle-blowing campaign to begin the anti-corruption programme, five "Sh" which is named after the Mongolian initials of the planned campaigns, initiated by the government.

A press conference to introduce the members of the working group was held on March 9 in the Government Palace.

B. Solongoo, the Deputy Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs will lead the working group on the whistle-blowing campaign. She said, "Let me introduce the working group to you. The working group is made up of the following members:

•J. Erhembataar, Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Communications

•M. Gankhuleg, Deputy Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry

•B. Baasandorj, Vice Chief Cabinet Secretary and Head of Government Control Implementation Department

•Ch. Bolortuya, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Mongolia

•T. Ganzul, Head of Media and Public Relations Department

•G. Azjargal, Deputy General Director of the Independent Authority Against Corruption

•S. Khuderchuluun, Deputy General Director of the General Intelligence Agency

•B. Uyanga, Head of the Department of Geological Policy of the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry

•T. Sukhbold, Head of the Criminal Police Service of the National Police Agency

•N. Manduul, Executive Director of Development Bank

•B. Dulguun, Executive Director of the New Revival Policy and Accelerator Center State Budgetary Enterprise

The secretary of the working group will be L. Nyamgerel, head of the administrative office of the Crime Prevention Coordinating Council.

The purpose of the working group is to make the anti-corruption activities more effective, to eliminate the primary and middle-level bureaucracy in the public sector, and to draw conclusions on the functions of activities that foster the emergence of corruption by burdening citizens and the private sector."

Also, she emphasized "Many statistics regarding inequality in our country are available to us. For example, as of March 2022, there are 3.5 million savings accounts in the local banks of the country, and 97 percent of them have a balance of up to MNT 20 million. However, these savings accounts, which account for 97 percent of all accounts, stand for 25 percent of total savings in terms of MNT value. In other words, 75 percent of the country's entire savings are concentrated in 3 percent of all savings accounts, demonstrating the level of economic opportunity and inequality".

"The income declaration of officials will be examined using information

technology as part of the "dismissal" campaign, which attempts to dismiss political and public sector employees who have consumption that exceeds their income but cannot substantiate it."

G. Azjargal, Deputy General Director of the Independent Authority Against Corruption and member of the working group on the whistle-blowing campaign, provided information.

He responded to the journalist's question as follows: "The officials have already submitted their declaration of property and income before as of February 15. The IAAC receives declarations of property and income from around 47 thousand officials. Just a small portion of them are examined annually. The declarations of property and income of about 500 officials are examined on a scheduled and unplanned basis. As part of the "dismissal" campaign, the income declaration of officials will be examined using information technology.

Any investigational procedures should be transparent or made public. The citizen who made a complaint must be disclosed that "After examining the information you provided, it was identified as a crime, thus a criminal case was opened and the responsible person was charged."

There is no legal framework for the IAAC to decide how to spend funds confiscated from criminal activity. A draft law on the disposal of seized and frozen assets is now in the works.

Assets and cash confiscated by the IAAC compensate the victims for damages resulting from corruption. Who is the hapless victim? In certain situations, state-owned companies and government are the victims. We do not have the authority to decide how the fund is utilized.

The IAAC seized the following funds:

- MNT 3.4 billion in 2017
- MNT 11.9 billion in 2018
- About MNT 7 billion in 2019
- MNT 35.6 billion in 2020
- MNT 96.2 billion in 2021
- MNT 2.2 trillion in 2022

G. Azjargal: It is forbidden to solve cases involving politically influential persons using simplified procedures

G. Azjargal, Deputy General Director of the IAAC, answered the journalist's questions concerning the IAAC's proposal for the draft law on the legal status of whistleblowers.

He said, "The draft law on the legal status of whistleblowers has been presented to the ministry, and many issues have been indicated. It is only prohibited to use simplified procedures to resolve cases involving politically influential persons.

In other words, the Criminal Law and the Law on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing both clearly specify who is a politically influential person.

Many wonders if their petitions, complaints, or information should be submitted anonymously or publicly. In 2022, the IAAC received 2,196 complaints, which is a large number."

Foreign Minister Holds Official Talks with Her Turkish Counterpart



During her Official Visit to Turkey between March 13-14, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Battsetseg held official talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. On March 14, the ministers held a press conference to present the outcomes of their talks.

During the press conference, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Battsetseg said "It is my pleasure to visit your beautiful country at your, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, invitation. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your warm welcome and hospitality.

First of all, I would like to offer my deepest condolence again over the tragic loss and injuries caused by the devastating earthquake in the southeastern provinces of the Republic of Turkey and reaffirm that we, Mongolians, stand in full solidarity with the people of Turkey. I believe that the Republic of Turkey will be able to overcome the losses and damages within a short time. The official talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu were fruitful, and many important issues of bilateral regional and international relations were discussed in detail. Mongolia attaches utmost significance to its relations with the Republic of Turkey and strives to develop bilateral relations in all spheres. In particular, we agreed to advance the relations between our two countries from the current comprehensive partnership to the 'strategic partnership' and continue the mutual high-level visits

in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries."

On the sideline of the talks, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Ms. Battsetseg, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on "Cooperating in Diplomatic Ceremony" which will make a particular contribution to strengthening the cooperation between the ministries.

In addition, in order to increase the trade turnover between the two countries and facilitate the export of animal products, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Mongolia to the Republic of Turkey Mr. Munkhbayer signed the following official documents with Secretary of Halal Accreditation Agency of Turkey Mr. Mustafa Suleiman, Director of National Metrology Institute, affiliated to Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey Mr. Mustafa Cetintaş, and President of Turkish Standards Institution Mr. Mahmut Sami Şahin, respectively. These are:

•Memorandum of Understanding between the Mongolian Agency for Standardization and Metrology and the Halal Accreditation Agency of Turkey on Halal Quality Infrastructure;

•Memorandum of Understanding between the Mongolian Agency for Standardization and Metrology and the National Metrology Institute, affiliated to the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey;

•Action Plan to Organize Training on Standardization, Evaluation, and Metrology from 2022 through 2026 of the Mongolian Agency for Standardization and Metrology and the Turkish Standards Institution.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Meets Her Uzbek Counterpart

Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Battsetseg paid an Official Visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan at the invitation of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Mr. Baxtiyor Saidov between March 8-9.

On March 8, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Battsetseg held official talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Mr. Baxtiyor Saidov.

In a warm and friendly atmosphere, the two ministries concluded the present stage of the relations and cooperation between the two countries and exchanged views on advancing the two countries' cooperation in trade, economy, transportation, logistics, agriculture, culture, tourism, and education and joint commitments in the international and regional arena.

Noting the stable relations between the two countries for the last 30 years, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Ms. Battsetseg expressed her intention to develop relations with Uzbekistan with economic content and intensify the cooperation as landlocked and developing countries. Within the framework of the economic diversification policy of Mon-



golia, the sides agreed to cooperate in exchanging goods between the two countries, establishing greenhouse farms in Mongolia and intensifying the cooperation in the veterinary and quarantine sector. Moreover, the sides highlighted the need to effectively implement the mutual visa exemption agreement which was signed in June 2022.

Also, within the framework of the goal of activating Mongolia's foreign policy towards Central Asia, the ministries discussed in detail specific conditions for establishing a diplomatic mission in the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tashkent this year and opening an embassy.

Women, Peace and Security: Ministerial-Level Open Debate Held

Ministerial-level open debate on women, peace and security (WPS) titled "Women and Peace and Security: Towards the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000)" was held on March 7 at the initiative of the Republic of Mozambique, the president of the Security Council in March.

Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov participated in the open debate, held in anticipation of the International Women's Day. In his address, he reaffirmed Mongolia's effort to ensure the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which is the great impetus to move forward the women,

peace, and security (WPS) program.

Moreover, Mr. Enkhbold highlighted the plan to routinely organize the "Women Peace and Security" conference, which was once held in Mongolia in June 2022, every five years and make it a platform for female peacekeepers to discuss their challenges and exchange experiences.

The open debate was attended by Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Bineta Diop, Chairperson of the African Union Commission on WPS, Nobel Peace Laureate Ms. Leymah R. Gbowee and representatives of over 90 member countries.

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WEATHER

Sunrise: 07:02 Sunset: 18:59

- Ulaanbaatar and Central Aimags: Night temps between -16 C and -7 C. Day time temps between -6 C and +8 C
- Eastern Aimags: Night temps between -13 C and -5 C. Day time temps between +3 C and +11 C
- Western Aimags: Night temps between -15 C and -4 C. Day time temps between -7 C and +10 C
- Gobi Aimags: Night temps between -11 C and -2 C. Day time temps between +5 C and +12 C



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE ULAANBAATAR

17 March 2023

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and on my own behalf, I would like to extend the heartfelt appreciation of the Turkish Nation to:

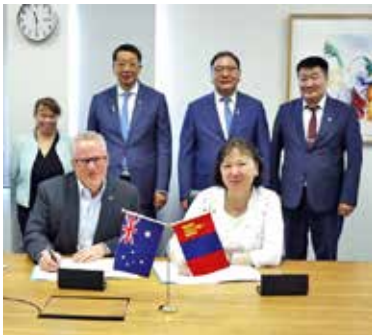
- H.E. Mr. U. Khurelsukh, President of Mongolia,
- H.E. Mr. G. Zandanshatar, Speaker of the State Great Khural of Mongolia,
- H.E. Mr. L. Oyun-Erdene, Prime Minister of Mongolia,
- Distinguished Members of the State Great Khural of Mongolia,
- H. E. Mr. S. Amarsaikhan, Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia,
- H.E. Ms. B. Battsetseg, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia,
- H. E. Mr. B. Bat-Erdene, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia,
- Distinguished Cabinet Members,
- National Emergency Agency of Mongolia,
- Ulanbaatar Municipality and Citizens Representatives Khural,
- Local governments,
- Turkish citizens in Mongolia,
- “One Team”,
- Turkish Alumni in Mongolia,
- Business people, companies,
- NGOs,
- Schools, dear principals, teachers and students,
- Beloved Mongolian friends, brothers and sisters and
- The Corps Diplomatic and Expatriate Community in Mongolia,

who shared our grief by sending condolence messages, letters, flowers and making donations, for their precious support and solidarity over the heavy loss of life and material damage caused by the devastating earthquakes that hit Southern Türkiye on 6 February 2023 and afterwards.

The Turkish Nation will never forget what you have done for Türkiye during these difficult times. I believe, your support will help alleviate the heavy consequences of this colossal disaster and overcome it in a short period.

Zafer Ates
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Republic of Türkiye to Mongolia

Students of MUST to Benefit from Dual Degree Program in UC




During the official visit on March 6-10, Minister of Education and Science Mr. Enkh-Amgalan met with President of the University of Canberra (UC) Paddy Nixon and exchanged views on intensifying the cooperation between the universities.

On the sideline of the meeting, the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST) signed the “Memorandum of Cooperation” with the University of Canberra. According to this MoC, the universities are able to exchange teachers and students and offer dual degree programs for their students.

Moreover, Minister of Education and Science Mr. Enkh-Amgalan visited the Faculty of Science and Technology of UC and discussed potential projects and programs that can be jointly implemented.

CABINET SESSION



At its session on March 15, the Cabinet made the following decisions:

Five “W” Operations to Combat Corruption to be Intensified

The Government of Mongolia has declared 2023 as the “Year to Combat Corruption” and started the five “W” operations to combat corruption. According to Mr. Nyambaatar, the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs and the Chair of the Working Group of the “Wasp” Operation, within the framework of the “Wasp” operation, overseas fugitives will be brought back to the jury according to the international agreements and Mongolian laws, ensuring the streamlined process of investigation.

Within the scope of the “Whistleblowing” Operation, a bill on protecting whistleblowers who are reporting corruption and misconduct for public interests will be discussed at the spring session of the State Great Khural and required measures to reduce bureaucracy in public services and protect legitimate interests of individuals and private sectors will be taken. In pursuant to the No. 20 Ordinance of the Prime Minister, a working group, led by Deputy Minister of Justice and Home Affairs Solongoo, for the “Whistleblowing” operation was formed. The members of the working group work at the Government’s “11-11” center every Friday and meet with citizens. Minister of Mongolia and Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Cabinet Mr. Amarbayasgalan was mandated to organize the “Wiping-out” and “Wealth” operations and Minister of Digital Development and Communications Mr. Uchral was tasked to be responsible for the “Wide-open” operation.

Moreover, the Prime Minister mandated the working groups in charge of five “W” operations to intensify their activities and present the results at the Cabinet meeting every month.

Certificate of Honor of the Government will be awarded to the team members who participated in humanitarian relief and search and rescue operations in Turkey

The Cabinet decided to award the “Search and Rescue team”, led by Deputy Chief of the National Emergency Management Agency, Brigadier-General Mr. Uuganbayar, and the “Medical team” of the Ministry of Defense, led by Colonel Mr. Sukh-Ochir with the Certificate of Honor of the Government, recognizing their demonstration of skill, bravery, resilience, compassion, and humanity of Mongolians and honorably fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

During the extraordinary session of the Government dated February 7, it was decided to send humanitarian aid to the people of the Republic of Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic, who were affected by the deadly earthquake. On February 8 or 68 hours after the earthquake, the Mongolian search and rescue team of 41 members, including 24 rescuers from the NEMA and 11 officers from Mongolian armed forces, and some media representatives, landed in Hatay province, Turkey, and started participating in the rescue operations.

In ten days, the rescue team rescued eight people from under the rubble of the building and took them to the health care facility, and the bodies of 19 people were handed over to the relevant authorities. With the help of their two search dogs, named Balu and Marta, they also found 45 bodies of people who lost their lives in the earthquake. The medical group, based on the local hospital, provided medical care to 649 people.

In addition, five tons of meat, one ton of candles, 1000 blankets, and 20 Mongol Gers were sent to Turkey. The Gers were built and handed over to the Turkish side with other humanitarian aid.

State Great Khural Chairman Receives Ambassador Kim Jong-gu

Chairman of the State Great Khural Mr. Zandanshatar received the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Mongolia Kim Jong-gu on March 9, 2023.

At the outset of the meeting, while congratulating the Ambassador on his appointment, the State Great Khural Chairman requested the Ambassador to pay attention to and support the further development of the Strategic Partnership relations between the two countries with economic content. Moreover, Mr. Zandanshatar underscored that the cooperation between supreme legislative bodies of the two countries had been playing a significant role in strengthening the legal environment for cooperation and consolidating the Parliamentary Democracy.

For his side, highlighting the fact that Mongolia, which has extensive historical and cultural ties, and shares common values of respect for democracy and human rights, is an important partner country in the Northeast Asian region for South Korea, Ambassador Kim Jong-gu pledged to work for translating the remarks of the State Great Khural Chairman into a reality.

Over the course of the meeting, Chairman of the State Great Khural Mr. Zandanshatar gave information on organizing the “Sustainable Development of Altai Region” international conference in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on June 13-14 in cooperation with Ban Ki-moon Foundation for a Better Future, Ewha Womans University of South Korea and Stanford University.

Also, Mr. Zandanshatar expressed his confidence that the Ambassador would pay special attention to cooperation with the Republic of Korea in establishing an Inter-Parliamentary Union of countries that speak Ural-Altaic languages.

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For his side, highlighting the fact that Mongolia, which has extensive historical and cultural ties, and shares common values

L. Lkhagvasuren: Domestic Companies Need to Carry Out Mining Transportation

On March 9, the Governor of the Bank of Mongolia Mr. Lkhagvasuren presented on the current economic situation to the journalists.

-What measures are taken to reduce and cover the current account deficit by the Bank of Mongolia?

-Last year, the current account and payment deficit reached about USD 720 million. According to the projection, it was supposed to be USD 1.8 billion but decreased to USD 700 million at the end of the year.

This deficit reduction was mainly driven by coal export. As of the end of 2022, a total of 31 million tons of coal were exported and it resulted in a decrease in the payment deficit, especially in the current account deficit. Another way to reduce the current account deficit is improving the service sector, in particular transportation services. With the stagnation in the mining sector, the transportation sector tends to become stagnant as well. In this sense, even though the



Mongolian economy increased by 4.8 percent, the mining and transportation sector showed a decline.

If the production and export of the mining sector improve, the transportation sector will revive. In particular, the current account deficit of the service sector can be reduced if domestic companies and enterprises carry out the

mining transportation. To that extent, it will reduce the payment deficit. Another positive impact could be an increase in foreign exchange reserves which will be resulted in stabilizing the foreign exchange rate.

According to the Ministry of Economy and Development, Mongolia can export 40-45 million tons of coal this year. If coal

is transported by domestic companies from the mine-mouth to the border port at the border price, there is a possibility of making a profit of USD 1.6-2.4 billion, gaining additional income, and maintaining a balance of payments without deficit.

-The exchange rate and inflation rate are still the main concerns of people. What are your expectations in this regard?

-In this regard, the balance of the payment should be improved. Since the international geopolitical tension started in February 2022, we observed its most prominent impact in May. The price index reached a record-high 16.5 percent and the foreign exchange reserves dropped to USD 2.4 billion. Comparing that period with today, the inflation rate is 12.3 percent and the foreign exchange reserves have reached USD 3.4 billion.

These are, indeed, good signs. We are expecting that the inflation rate would be within our targeted level or down to 8 percent. These are the outcomes of the raise in the policy rate of the

Bank of Mongolia. If this positive trend in the economy continues, the foreign exchange reserves will increase and the exchange rate will become more stable. Enterprises and citizens still have expectations that the US dollar will rise against MNT. Therefore, they are still preferring dollar deposits over MNT deposits.

-Can all commercial banks complete their IPOs within this year?

-According to the amended Code on Banks, five systematically important commercial banks are obliged to become public companies and offer their shares to the public. Last year, Golomt Bank and State Bank listed their shares, while Khan Bank received their approval. Now the IPOs of Khas bank and Trade and Development Bank are pending.

The code amendment that is pushing Mongolia's banks to go public requires all systemic banks to list 20% by June 30, 2023. Since there is deadline, we are expecting their IPO's will complete within this year.

Education Loans and Grants Account for 10-15 Percent of Mongolia's Total Debt

Local Education Group High Level Consultation Meeting was held on March 14 in Ulaanbaatar.



At the meeting, the Government's policy and short-term goals on the education and science sector were presented to the attendees and discussions were evolved around the topics such as cooperation opportunities and roles of the stakeholders. The meeting was significant in terms of establishing cooperation and partnership mechanism between the member countries. This mechanism will allow the realization of international projects and programs in line with the policy of education and science. Moreover, by establishing this mechanism, member organizations of the group will be able to hold meetings quarterly to identify the challenges and discuss solutions and possible technical assistance to solve these challenges.

Over 100 representatives from donors, international development organizations, and civil society organizations attended the consultation meeting.

Concerning the expected results from the consultative meeting, Mr. Enkh-Amgalan said,

-“For many years, the governments of Japan and Germany, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank have been providing discounted loans for our education sector, and the amounts of projects, implemented in the education and vocational training sector have reached USD 760 million and USD 300 million, respectively. In total, we have

received financing of over USD 1 billion. As a result, now education loans and grants are accounting for 10-15 percent of our total debt. However, the results and effectiveness of these loans and grants are still in question. The attendees of this consultative meeting are offering their suggestions on ways to improve the effectiveness of loans and grants, such as avoiding the overlap of loans and encouraging result-based financing methods. For instance, many projects are implemented for supporting disabled people, but they often fail to achieve results due to a lack of coordination. We also discussed other issues with donor and financing organizations, including the possibility to reduce the interest rate and prolong the term of loans.

Another main issue was to cooperate with the financing organizations in eliminating the quality gap in educational services in urban and rural areas. To that extent, we have presented our cooperation proposals to the donors and financing organizations. Currently, we are cooperating with Germany on vocational training, with Japan on numerous projects, including school expansion projects, a 1000 Engineers Project, and a Japan-Mongolia Hospital Project, and with KOICA on the school lunch program. There are many more projects are expected to be implemented in the education sector.”

-Will it be possible for our country to get our education loans written off?

-For the past 30 years, Mongolia has received over USD 1 billion as loans and grants in the education sector from donors and financing organizations. Most of them have been paid, and now the remaining amount on such loans is about USD 170 million. During this meeting, we also discussed the possibilities of each scenario in writing off the loans, reducing their interests, or extending their terms.

Moreover, the World Bank has launched an initiative to tackle education financing challenges for developing countries. In this regard, the Government of Germany swapped the debt for education programs in Indonesia.

-Professionals who studied abroad with international loans are criticized for not returning to their home country. What is the position of the Ministry of Education and Culture on this matter?

-Mostly, bachelor's degree students are criticized for such reasons. So, we have started to establish an agreement with the

students to bind parties to perform their obligations. Moreover, our universities are offering a 2+2 program for their students, allowing them to complete their last two years in a foreign university.

The 'President's Scholar-2100' scholarship program initiated by President of Mongolia Ukhnaaгийн Khurelsukh has been successfully implemented since 2021,

awarding the best students from each of the 330 soums and capital city's 171 khoros to study at the world's best universities. There are other types of scholarships and loans for bachelor's degree students. Yet, we need to expand the scope of scholarships and loans to include master's and doctor's degree students.

CONSULTING SERVICE RECRUITMENT NOTICE

Date: **March 16, 2023**

Tender Name: **Conducting Feasibility study (FS) and full detailed engineering design of Gashuunsukhait-Gants Mod port cross-border railway**

Tender number: **TTZ/202302079**

• As Tavantolgoi Railway LLC is going to contract a consulting service for “Conducting Feasibility study (FS) and full detailed engineering design of Gashuunsukhait-Gants Mod port cross-border railway”, interested entity is invited to send us the Request for Proposal (RFP).

• This consulting service includes:

Conducting Feasibility study (FS) and full detailed engineering design of Gashuunsukhait-Gants Mod port cross-border railway

• The international or domestic entity shall submit the following information to prove the ability to perform the consulting service.

• Formal letter for participating in the consulting service recruitment.

• Company profile introduction and copy of entity certificate

• Copy of state registration certificate.

• Copy of special licenses for conducting feasibility study, detailed engineering design, and cost estimate. (Foreign entities shall submit a copy of a document equivalent to a special license)

• Financial statements of the last 3 years in a list.

• List of information about similar work the entity have done in the past. (*Experience in developing railway project FS, detailed engineering design, and cost estimate will be considered as an advantage.*)

• List of information about the working personnels, (*Information about the main personnels required to prepare the FS, detailed engineering design and cost estimate of the railway project.*)

• Statement of the tax authority. (*In the case of a foreign enterprise, the statement of the tax authority of the country of establishment.*)

• Documents in foreign languages must be translated by a certified translation agency.

• Interested entity that meets the above requirements can get additional information between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m on March 20, 2023 and shall submit the RFP below address tender.gov.mn by 11:00 a.m on March 24, 2023.

Ulaanbaatar city, Sukhbaatar district, 1st district, 13th district /14320/, 62 Sun road, Union Building block B, 11th floor.

Phone number: 976-77777727-507 (Procurement division), 976-77777727-506 (Head of External Relations division-Foreign Languages)

Elaine Conkievich: UNDP to Support Mongolia on Gender Equality, Digital Transformation and Development Financing

■ *MONTSAME Mongolian National News Agency interviewed Ms. Elaine Conkievich who was appointed as a Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia on November 9, 2019.*

-Good morning! Thank you for your interview with the Mongol Messenger today. Before we start, could you please introduce yourself and your background to our readers?

-Thank you. It is my pleasure. My name is Elaine Conkievich and I have been working as UNDP Resident Representative in Mongolia for over three years. Before that, I used to work as the UN Women representative in Central Asia, based in Kazakhstan for the last five years. Overall, I have been working for nearly 30 years in international development in the fields of governance, human rights, rule of law, gender mainstreaming, democratic institution building, conflict resolution, and preventive diplomacy working in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, and now Mongolia.

-Can you please tell us about how UNDP works in Mongolia and the organization's history in Mongolia a little bit?

-Gladly. UNDP has been working in Mongolia for over five decades. Formally, our agreement with the Government of Mongolia was signed in 1976, but our work in the country started even before that.

Today, we are very proud to have become a trusted and long-term partner of the Government and people of Mongolia. UNDP has provided vital development support to Mongolia, including the transition to democracy and the market economy in the 1990s. Since then, we have continued to work with Mongolia on governance, climate change, natural resource management, and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We have helped establish critical nationwide institutions in Mongolia, including the National Emergency Management Agency, the National Human Rights Commission, and the Independent Authority Against Corruption as well as the major private sector entities, including Gobi Cashmere and Xac Bank.

We have also provided support for major legislative reforms in Mongolia. For example, the Law on administrative and territorial units and their government, the LATUG Law, and the Law on Genetic Resources were also adopted with UNDP support and the ongoing civil service reform.

UNDP's work in Mongolia is guided by our Country Programme Document, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and Mongolia's national sustainable and long-term development priorities, namely the Vision 2050, and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Mongolia.

-What is the Country Programme Document? Could you please tell us more about it, such as how it is developed and who contributes to it?

-The Country Programme Document is a modality under which UNDP works. It is developed and

adopted every five years through a consultative process with the Government of Mongolia, civil society organizations, and other partners, including development partners, international financial institutions, and bilateral institutions. It guides UNDP's activities in a country and is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to the changing development needs and priorities of the country. We are starting the implementation of the new Country Programme Document for 2023-2027 this year, which was signed off last September at the UNDP Executive Board following endorsement by the Government of Mongolia.

-Thank you. So, what are some of the key results and achievements of UNDP from your previous Country programme document in 2017-2022?

-UNDP's previous Country Programme Document for Mongolia focused on two key areas, including inclusive and sustainable development and strengthened voice, participation, and accountable governance.

One of our major achievements is the development of the Integrated National Financing Framework and Strategy and tools with support from the UN Joint SDG Fund, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, in partnership with sister UN agencies. It has been endorsed by the National Committee on Sustainable Development and implementation will begin with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy and Development.

In connection with this, we have been and continue to work on the institutionalization of results-based budgeting, with a special focus on the employment sector, supported by the European Union helping line ministries to link their long-term development plans and budgeting with the outputs for those plans as a way to accelerate progress for the sustainable development goals. On climate change and biodiversity fronts, we have supported the resiliency of local communities and aimags through multiple interventions such as conducting the first feasibility assessments for climate risk and vulnerability, protection and conservation of Mongolia's biodiversity and ecosystem by supporting the implementation of the Natural Resource Use Fee law, and sustainable livelihoods of local communities thanks to funding from the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environmental Facility.

For governance, our support focused on building competencies and capacities of the local citizen's representative khural in the aimags across Mongolia, with the support of Switzerland, emphasizing the decentralization and Mongolia's civil service with the support of Canada, especially in human resources, to ensure recruitment and retention follow



the merit-based principle and to increase the number of senior female civil servants which increased from 8.6 percent to 21 percent by last year.

We have also focused our support on key cross-cutting areas, including gender equality and digitalization. Our main priority for gender equality has been and continues to be supporting women in public decision-making with the support of KOICA.

Innovation and digitalization have been another focus, with UNDP Mongolia's Accelerator Lab finding new solutions to complex development problems, such as digital literacy for vulnerable groups and waste management systems. During Covid-19, we also helped to digitize social workers and improve their capacity easing the provision of effective social services with the support of the Government of Japan.

-What are the main priorities of UNDP in the next five years and what are your expected results?

-In the next five years, UNDP will be supporting the Government of Mongolia in three main priority areas: first, diversified, inclusive, and green economy, second, risk-informed climate adaptation and sustainable management of natural ecosystems, and third, women's empowerment, inclusive and accountable governance, and progress towards achievement of the SDGs.

As you know, the Sustainable Development Goals are through 2030, and this year we are right midway now between 2015 and 2030. So, it's very important for us that our support in the next five years will help the Government of Mongolia to accelerate its progress towards SDGs.

As we look to take on complex development challenges leveraging innovation and new solutions, we are changing our approach where we have separate projects that are independently working to developing what we call a portfolio approach, which is bringing together synergies across different aspects of the work that we're doing and leveraging them in an integrated fashion to bring more complex results and thus accelerating

results for Mongolia.

-In connection with your next five years' priority, will UNDP's work support the Billion Tree nationwide campaign initiated by the President of Mongolia?

-Absolutely. We already began supporting by developing a feasibility study for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism with regard to the Billion Tree Initiative in 2021. And beyond that, our programmes that we are implementing in the area of climate change, biodiversity, natural resource management, also the financing for sustainable development are geared towards supporting combating desertification, supporting reforestation, and overall efforts of the Government of Mongolia to fulfill its commitment made at the previous COP in regard to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 22.7 percent.

-What do you see as the main challenges that Mongolia is facing, and how will UNDP support us in addressing them?

-Mongolia faces many development challenges, including economic diversification and job creation, as the economy remains heavily dependent on extractive industries. Attention to infrastructure development and transitioning urban centers to sustainable cities including focusing on a just energy transition, to support its growing economy through inclusive development that is benefiting both women and men, would be important. Additionally, poverty reduction is a significant concern, as a large portion of the population lives in rural areas with limited economic opportunities and the poverty rate has been hovering around 27-28 percent for several years. Environmental degradation and climate change impacts including increased natural disasters and foreign debt burden are also pressing issues as well as corruption, which hinders economic growth and erodes public trust. Furthermore, increasing inequalities and the importance of achieving gender equality, especially at the decision-making level, is a major challenge that Mongolia needs to address given over 50 percent of the population are women.

UNDP will continue to support the Government of Mongolia in key development areas, including digitalization and innovation through our Accelerator Lab to address the complex development challenges that Mongolia is facing. Furthermore, we will continue to support the improvement of public financial management through results-based budgeting with a particular focus on the labor and employment sectors so that more women, youth, and people with disabilities can find and be engaged in long-term formal employment. We hope to continue our work to strengthen the civil service, including by increasing the number of senior female civil servants. In addition, advocating for and supporting women's participation in public decision-making is key to engaging women in the development and implementation of policies and legislation. We will continue to work with the private sector by supporting businesses to have good human rights practices.

Also, importantly, UNDP will continue to support climate change adaptation and resilience building of herder communities, protection of ecosystems, and the beautiful natural resources of Mongolia. And underpinning all of this is our continued support of sustainable financing to increase the amount of financial resources from the public and private sectors for effective use towards Mongolia's development.

-What are the areas that Mongolians should take more advantage of to accelerate its development and achieve SDGs by 2030?

-In addition to increasing women's role and participation across different sectors at all decision-making levels, leveraging innovation and digitalization, and mobilizing more financing for sustainable development, one of the key areas that Mongolia should focus on, and advance is the energy transition. This is an area where Mongolia has large untapped potential for renewable energy, that is solar and wind which would not only be beneficial to the environment but important for the people of Mongolia by improving their health and economic situation through the development of this sector. So, very much the way of the future is not only for the provision of energy, but an energy transition is just, which means that it benefits the women and men of Mongolia, leaving no one behind through economic diversification, new jobs, and new skills as well as improving the environment, contributing to better health outcomes.

Focusing on the human angle of the energy transition is quite important. In this regard, we are currently working on developing a flagship report, a National Human Development Report, exactly on the importance and significance of Just Energy Transition for Mongolia as we see, looking into the future, that this is a key to unlocking a more prosperous and sustainable future for the people of Mongolia.

-Thank you.

The "Improve – Act! En-Gendering Rural Economic Development in Mongolia" Project Results Presented

The European Union (EU) funded Improve – Act! En-gendering rural economic development in Mongolia (IMPACT) project organized its final event on March 7 2023 in Ulaanbaatar to present the results of 3 years of implementation. This project has supported the strengthening of rural women's group's role in agricultural productive systems and towards their local and national representatives in Khentii and Arkhangai aimags.

At the closing ceremony, H. E. Ms. Axelle Nicaise, Ambassador/ Head of Delegation of the European Union to Mongolia, H. E. Mr. Sebastien Surun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Mongolia, N. Byambadorj, responsible for production in Animal Husbandry and Policy Implementation and Coordination department of MoFALI, O. Buyanaa, representative of National Committee on Gender Equality, G. Kherlenchuluun, Head of Khentii aimag Citizen Assembly and B. Battsetseg, representative of Arkhangai aimag Citizen Assembly, representatives of herder and vegetable growers cooperatives, of women groups and women's CSO-s participated (more than 80 participants).



Empowerment related activities under each of the components of the project were presented:

- Empowering women policy dialogue and advocacy towards gender equality and impact (Ts. Ariunaa, Project Manager for MONES-Funds for Women Mongolian NGO)

- Empowering women's role in the organic vegetables value chain, achievements and impacts (Teresa Games, Technical Assistant for GERES-French NGO)

- Empowering women's role in the sustainable cashmere value chain (Ts. Munguntsetseg, Project Manager for AVSF-french NGO)

It was the occasion to highlight some of the achievements of this innovative and ambitious project:

- o Women's groups of Khentii and Arkhangai were empowered in their role in income-generating activities, rural cooperatives, and household financial management. It was included within the statutes of project supported cooperatives that both members of the household, men, and women, could have one vote each: now all women have an equal share of social part and have a say in all decisions!

- High potential organic vegetable and sustainable cashmere value chains were supported for

the economic empowerment of 62 women's groups & CSO-s. As a result, 122 herders' families could join the sustainable cashmere initiatives, thus improving their revenues between 10 and 18% while adopting best practices to protect their pasturelands.

- Women's groups are empowered in their dialogue capacities with Local Authorities for mutual support and conducive local policies. There was an increase of 83% of women participating in the women's network of Khan Khentii Women's Union.

- 80 local-level decision makers and 17 national-level decision makers were involved in project activities. An evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in the Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry Sector was carried out in the 6 target soums of Khentii and Arkhangai aimags. The results were presented to the National Committee on Gender Equality, MoFALI and authorities of target aimags. Recommendations formulated by MONES shall inspire more gender-inclusive policies in the future.

The representatives who participated in the closing event, panelists, and the implementers of the project expressed the following views:

H. E. Ms. Axelle Nicaise, Ambassador/Head of Delegation of the European Union to Mongolia: "It is my great pleasure to be here, on behalf of the European Union, to welcome you to the closing event of the "IMPACT" project. Mongolia is an important partner of the European Union. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1989, we have supported the country's transition to democracy and a market economy. Over the recent years, the portfolio of EU-funded projects in Mongolia has increased significantly both in scope and sectors.

This project had objectives to pursue an integrated development approach focusing on envisioning women and men working together towards economic development and putting in practice gender equality with the ultimate goal to contribute to closing the gender gap and reaching inclusively and equally the next level of economic development. I would like to congratulate the project team and all partners for their achievement with this project and I would like to highlight its importance for an enhanced CSOs' Contribution to Governance and Inclusive Development Processes in Mongolia. The IMPACT project was able to demonstrate that gender

mainstreaming in rural economic development, specifically in agriculture sector, can be beneficial for all stakeholders, women and men, and can leverage positive changes. I am hopeful that the beneficiaries of IMPACT project



Mrs. Axelle Nicaise, H.E. EUD Mongolia

will maintain the achievements of the project and be leaders in their respective sectors in advocating the implementation approach of the IMPACT project."

Senior Specialist, Inter-sectorial policy coordination and implementation of laws and legislations, Secretariat of National Committee on Gender Equality O. Buynaa:

"I would like to express my gratitude for the fact that the project funded by the European Union contribute significantly to the implementation of the policies pursued by the Mongolian government in the agricultural sector. Also, the evaluation of the Gender Policy for the Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry conducted by the Mongolian Women's Fund brought out important information and facts that should be considered in the implementation of the next phase, 2022-2025."

H. E. Mr. Sebastien Surun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Mongolia: "What I retain from listening to the beneficiaries and panelists are three points. First, the impacts of this project are assessed on a collective scale and have an impact on civil society organizations, the aimags, and the entire country. Then, the environmental and sustainability input can only go hand in hand with an increase and diversification of rural household incomes, which is essential for improving living conditions. Finally, the production of vegetables has a direct impact on the



M. Surun, French ambassador intervention during panel discussions

quality of life by contributing to improve the nutrition of family members."

Two panel discussions were organized about i) strengthening rural women groups in agricultural value chain & ii) strengthening rural women groups towards local authorities. The representatives of herder's and vegetable growers' women groups, CSO-s and Local authorities participated.

D. Oyunjargal, the representative of the cooperative "Uguuj bayan Binderya" from Binder, Khentii aimag pointed out that "the sustainable value chain has allowed us to sell our cashmere in the textile market in France, at 18% higher price."

Ts. Tserenchimed: "Passive solar greenhouse provides an opportunity to harvest 2-3 times a year, start seeding in early spring, increase the variety of vegetables and double the incomes by selling the seeds. Because it does not use energy, it is important to reduce greenhouse gases."

P. Chadraabal: "With the training of the project we understood that if we value our products, we don't need to increase the number of animals, we have the opportunity to earn better with few animals so as not to degrade the pasture too much."

In the end, Mrs. Agni B., Executive director of MONES, emphasized "I would especially like to congratulate the project team, all the beneficiaries and partners for the achievements of project during the pandemic. The impacts of the project are impressive.

The Mongolian Women's Found was grateful to participate in the Impact project to support women herders and vegetable growers in empowering them and contributing to the understanding of gender equality in rural communities. Even though the project

is over, MONES plans to continue working with the women's networks and groups were established."

Ms. Eliane Jarry, Country Representative of Geres Mongolia, expressed the consortium's "gratitude to the panelists for their valuable contributions and Madam and Mr. Ambassador, the representatives of Aimag and soums, the members of the CSOs and all of our guests today. My deepest gratitude goes to you for taking the time to celebrate our achievements.

Working together for several years in Mongolia on the cashmere and market gardening sectors, AVSF and Geres have joined forces with the expertise of MONES to work in greater depth on the gender theme. The difficulty today is not to have women involved, they have always been involved. Look around you today and in your daily life. The difficulty is rather to have their important role recognized."

Ms. Manon Lelarge, Country Representative of AVSF Mongolia, concluded, highlighting "The project team has worked over the past three years to diversify their opportunities, including access to technical and leadership training, actively engaging them in the sustainable cashmere industry, and energizing women's councils to foster their equal participation in local and community decision-making." Furthermore, on the eve of International Women's Rights Day, she expressed her respect for "many Mongolian women leaders. I want to pay tribute to your ideas, your activism, and your consistency that make our world a better place. Your determination and our solidarity bring a glimmer of hope and are a driving force for change. We at AVSF, Geres, and MONES are proud to work alongside you."



Arkhangai participants to the Closing event of IMPACT project

Government Services to Reach Every Citizen with the Creation of 'Digital Aimags'

Thirteen percent of the populace who have moved to the capital city wish to return to their homeland. Ulaanbaatar city dwellers would also like to live and work in rural areas. The primary drivers behind this are to increase their employment opportunities, raise their salaries, and improve their quality of life. Chief Cabinet Secretary of Government of Mongolia D.Amarbayasgalan spoke about this at the opening of the national conference 'Rural Revitalization Policy'.



Policy' to intensify rural development and to present the government's policies, decisions, support, and other assistance to



citizens," he said.

Minister of Digital Development and Communications N. Uchral launched the "Digital Aimags" campaign in order to provide citizens in rural areas with access to the electronic system. The government and the Ministry of Digital Development and

Communications are evaluating the aimags' needs for digitization. For example, in accordance with state and public information laws, requirements such as meeting the first requirements for information transparency and coordinating with the main state information system for information exchange via the National Data Center are being established.

Furthermore, citizens will have easier access to government services with a 'One-stop Service' for aimags and rural areas. Aimags must make better use of this service. He gave the example of how the Uvs aimag tested a good electronic development solution by launching a mobile application called 'Uvs Digital' that contains all of the information about the aimag.

On the sideline of the

'Rural Revitalization Policy' National Conference, 'Regional Development-Cooperation' and 'Migration and Youth Leadership' discussions were held.

The conference presented the concept of regional development and ideas on how to improve regional development and cooperation. Human rights issues in rural areas were also discussed, as are ensuring the participation of young people in migration in collaboration with the government, citizens, and the private sector.

The conference was jointly organized by the Cabinet Secretariat of Government, IOM Mongolia, Swiss Cooperation in Mongolia, the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, JICA Mongolia and the Mongolian Youth Federation.



Two Mongolian Organizations Receive International Awards in the Field of Technology



The "Women in Tech" Global movement, which aims to increase the participation of girls and women in the field of technology, has awarded the best Asian Initiative Award to Mongolia's NGO E-Gobi and the ICT Group.

This was announced on March 8 at the Shangri-La hotel during the "Women in Tech: Time for Change" conference for women in the technology industry. Winner of the award, E. Erdenesuvd, executive director and teacher of the Umnugobi aimag's E-Gobi technology training and research NGO:

"In collaboration with UNICEF, our organization has implemented a technology training project involving girls who live in school dormitories in

soums. We have robot workshops and clubs, we have switched from home to classroom training, and we have trained 600 children in the last seven years. Children even traveled from Ulaanbaatar to participate in our workshops. Because the cost of the course is high and teaching materials must be purchased separately, only eight to ten children are accepted and taught at one time. During "Invention Time," our students look at the robots in the textbook and not only assemble and program them in the correct sequence, but they also invent new robots themselves. Our children are currently working on the project of creating a helper robot, this project will aid in the development of Mongolian children's imagination and their ability

to see the big picture.

Today, Mongolian children can go anywhere in the world to study. We are trying to make people understand that it is possible to build necessary infrastructure in our country using technological solutions. Women and mothers are excellent educators and mentors. Women's participation in the field of technology is increasing. We will teach young Mongolian citizens of the twenty-first century skills that they can use right away when they enter society and begin working. Technological innovation is helping us in our efforts" she said.

N. Enkhsaikhan, representative of the "Women in Tech" organization in Mongolia and organizer of the "Women in

Tech: Time for Change" conference said: "The participation of Mongolian women in the technology sector is increasing year by year. The number of private-sector start-up companies has been growing, particularly in this sector. In addition, the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications was established.

Ambassadors of five different countries in Mongolia came to participate in our conference. They expressed their views and positions on the need to increase women's participation in Mongolia's information and technology sector, and they praised the fact that this initiative reaches hundreds of women and girls through the "Women in Tech" movement.

Ambassador of Canada H.E. Ms. Catherine E. Ivkoff, Ambassador of the United States H.E. Mr. Richard L. Buangan, Ambassador of India H.E. Mr. MP Singh, Ambassador of Australia H.E. Ms. Katie Smith and Ambassador of the European Union H.E. Ms. Axelle Nicaise were invited to the conference. A discussion was held on the significance of innovation and technological participation in strengthening the position of Mongolian girls and women in society and the economy.

Panelists emphasized that educating and training girls and women in STEAM fields such as science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics will change their lives and benefit the country's future.

The lawyer's advice



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In cooperation with Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Project Mongolia and its "Legal Education" Academy

-What are forms of local self-governance?

-Citizens Representative Meetings of aimags, soums, the capital city and districts implement the functions of the citizens' representative bodies.

-Who participates in the Citizens' Common Meetings of bags and khoroots?

-Citizens' Common Meeting is a citizens' self-governing organization that undertakes its activities based on the principle of direct democracy and implements its lawful powers on the principle of joint governance. The Meeting's main organizational form of its activities is a meeting.

All eligible citizens residing in the respective bag or khoroo has the right to participate in the Citizens' Common Meeting. A citizen who attends in person in the meeting of the Citizens' Common Meeting becomes its participant. Participants of the meeting have the following rights and duties:

1. Initiate a question for discussion;
2. Participate with the right to suspend the decision-making process;
3. Explain the decision of the meeting;
4. Vote for and be elected to the chairman of the meeting;
5. Maintain the order of the meeting.

What is the process of the Citizens' Common Meeting?

To comply with the principle to ensure the representation of citizens and each unit of the khoroots of the respective territory in the Citizens' Common Meeting, if one eligible citizen from every three eligible households, one eligible citizen from every five households within a unit of more than 400 households presents in the citizens' Common Meeting of the bag and not less one eligible person presents from every 20 households within a unit of khoroots, then the meeting shall be considered valid. The residents of the respective bags and khoroots shall be informed of the date of the meeting not less five work days in prior, and the information must contain details of the location and time of the meeting.

The meeting of the Citizens' Common Meeting of bag and khoroo shall be presided by the chairman elected from respective meeting. The chairman of the Citizens' Common Meeting of bag and khoroo may be chosen again for the consequent period.

-What are forms of local self-governance?

-Citizens Representative Meetings of aimags, soums, the capital city and districts implement the functions of the citizens' representative bodies.

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Mongolia Hosts IIHF Championships for the First Time



The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Asia and Oceania Championship is being held in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar from the 11th of March until the 17th of March. In the opening ceremony of the championship, the Minister of Finance and the President of the Mongolian Hockey Federation B. Javkhlan, the Minister of Environment and Tourism B. Bat-Erdene, and the Vice President of the International Ice Hockey Federation Aivaz Omorkanov participated and made opening remarks.

The Minister of Finance and the President of the Mongolian Hockey Federation B. Javkhlan



During his remarks, President of the Mongolian Hockey Federation B. Javkhlan expressed his profound gratitude to the International Ice Hockey Federation for accepting our candidature to host the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Asia and Oceania Championship and the IIHF World Championship Division IV in Mongolia, noting that Mongolian hockey history started its new chapter with this remarkable moment.

Mongolia has submitted its candidature many times before to host the high-level ice hockey championships. The IIHF requires countries to meet certain conditions for hosting hockey world championships. This time, we have passed these thresholds after constructing Steppe Arena, which meets the standards of not only Asian championships but also the Olympic standards at a 100 percent expense of private sector in Ulaanbaatar.

We are truly pleased to host

these championships in our country. The Mongolian hockey team has already captured first place in high-level hockey championships twice before. The right to organize the world ice hockey championships was granted to Mongolia after successful runs at the international championships. But at that time we had no opportunity to organize it due to the lack of an indoor ice hockey arena.

Today is a significant day that wrapped a new chapter in the history of Mongolian hockey. Mongolian hockey players had been playing and training on outdoor rinks and on frozen rivers in freezing temperatures for many years. This was a challenge that was stopping the advancement of our hockey athletes.

So now, we have the potential to train Mongolian hockey athletes in a world-class ice arena.

The Vice President of IIHF Aivaz Omorkanov



First of all, for IIHF, we are privileged to organize the first ever International Ice Hockey event here in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar. I think this is a very good opportunity for Mongolia to promote ice hockey, develop ice hockey in their country, and have more kids involved in Ice hockey. Especially, when you have a such beautiful venue, which is Steppe Arena, a fantastic platform for ice hockey players to play and train.

For the first time in history, Mongolia is hosting international hockey championships after constructing Steppe Arena that meets world standards. It has become an enormous support for the development of tourism related to winter sports. These hockey tournaments are being held in connection with the "Years to Visit Mongolia" declaration from the Government of Mongolia. The officials have emphasized that the development of sports

tourism in Mongolia is being supported at a state policy level.

The Minister of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia B. Bat-Erdene



The Government of Mongolia has declared 2023-2025 as the "Years to Visit Mongolia." In this regard, we have officially launched the "Welcome to Mongolia" program worldwide. The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Asia and Oceania Championship, which is being held in Ulaanbaatar, is one example of the program. Typically, hosting high-level championships requires ceaseless effort. I wish to extend my profound gratitude to the organizers and hockey players who are participating in this tournament. Moreover, on the behalf of the Government of Mongolia, I also would like to express my sincere appreciation to the IIHF and the Mongolian Hockey Federation.

The Minister of Finance and the President of the Mongolian Hockey Federation B. Javkhlan

In the field of tourism, it is a valuable opportunity for us to stand out as a country with a winter season, rather than focusing only on the nature and culture of our country. In this regard, this tournament is very special in that

it announces to the world that winter tourism, especially tourism related to winter sports, can be developed in Mongolia.

Over 800 tourists from ten countries are visiting Mongolia for enjoying the two high-level ice hockey championships. The International Ice Hockey Federation is fully supporting us. In particular, Aivaz Omorkanov, the Vice President of the IIHF, has greatly supported us to host these tournaments in Mongolia. It is our responsibility to successfully organize the world championships in Mongolia, and it directly affects our country's reputation in the world arena.

Since the International Ice Hockey Federation cannot cover all the expenses, the total cost was equally shared by the host country and the IIHF. We are organizing these tournaments at the expense of and with the help of hockey enthusiasts, fans, the private sector, and citizens.

Therefore, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the citizens, the private sector, and hockey fans for co-organizing the tournament.

On the first day of the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Asia and Oceania Championship, the United Arab Emirates punched Thailand with a score of 5-2 while Uzbekistan conquered Turkmenistan with a score of 5-0. The last match of the first day was between Mongolia and Iran. Consequently, Mongolia solidified its status as a team to watch out for in the region following a 5-0 conquest of Iran. The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Asia and Oceania Championship will be held until the 17th of March. The IIHF World Championship Division IV will be held from the 23rd of March to 26th of March in Steppe Arena, Ulaanbaatar.



One Billion Trees

Action Plan to Plant "One Billion Trees" Approved

The committee was newly established by resolution No.350 of the Government of Mongolia, dated September 9, 2022.

At the meeting the National Climate Committee discussed and approved the strategic and action plans for implementing the "One Billion Trees" national campaign in 2022-2030 and the action plan of the National Committee in 2023.

For the purpose of countering global warming, mitigating climate change, reducing desertification and land degradation, and ensuring ecosystem

stability, President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh issued Decree No. 58 on October 4, 2021, and launched the "One Billion Trees" national campaign.

In the strategic and action plans for implementing the "One Billion Tree" national campaign, 27 actions and 154 measures are planned to be implemented. Through over one billion trees plantation in the country by 2030 it is expected that the area affected by desertification and land degradation to be reduced by 4.0 percent, and carbon dioxide absorption by the tree to

be increased by 11.0 percent, in addition to expansion of forest area.

Furthermore, it is effective in mitigating climate change, accelerating green recovery, increasing the cultivation of herbs, creating jobs, and having a positive impact on the food supply.



The National Climate Committee, led by Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia S. Amar-saikhan convened on March 14.