



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 May 2010

Original: English

Substantive session of 2010

New York, 28 June-23 July 2010

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*

High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Letter dated 25 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of Mongolia on gender equality and women's empowerment, for the annual ministerial review to be held during the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2010 of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Enkhtsetseg **Ochir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2010/100.

Annex to the letter dated 25 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

Voluntary national presentation of Mongolia: gender equality and women's empowerment in Mongolia

The present document sets out the voluntary national presentation of Mongolia on progress made with regard to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Mongolia. The document was prepared by the Government of Mongolia on the basis of open consultations with non-governmental organizations and development partners, including United Nations agencies, and focuses on the following three areas: women's employment, maternal health and women's political participation.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Summary	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Implementation of gender equality and women's rights.	5
2.1. Enabling policy framework for gender equality and women's rights	5
2.2. Implementation of women's economic rights: employment	6
2.2.1. Actions taken	6
2.2.2. Achievements	7
2.2.3. Challenges	7
2.2.4. Lessons learned	8
2.3. Implementation of women's political rights: participation of women at decision-making levels	9
2.3.1. Actions taken	9
2.3.2. Achievements	10
2.3.3. Challenges	10
2.3.4. Lessons learned	10
2.4. Implementation of women's right to health: reproductive health of women and girls ...	11
2.4.1. Actions taken	11
2.4.2. Achievements	12
2.4.3. Challenges	12
2.4.4. Lessons learned	13
3. Conclusion	13

Summary

The present report provides brief information on Mongolia's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the overarching framework of promoting democracy and ensuring human rights for all, and outlines achievements, challenges and lessons learned, focusing particularly on the development of an enabling legal framework, women's employment, participation of women at decision-making levels, and maternal and reproductive health. Mongolia is pleased to report that it is likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals targets on ensuring gender equality in wage employment and reducing maternal mortality by 2015. However, more efforts are needed to maintain these achievements while continuously working to eliminate disparities based on geographic and socio-economic differences. Progress in the field of promoting women's participation at decision-making levels has been slow despite the fact that the level of education of Mongolian women is very high compared to men's. However, the Government is committed to continuing and stepping up its efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by strengthening the national mechanism for ensuring gender equality, enacting a separate law on gender equality in line with the Millennium Development Goals-based comprehensive national development strategy, reflecting women's political representation in electoral law reform, and strengthening cooperation and consultation with civil society and development partners whose support has played a crucial role over the past two decades of deep societal transformation. Furthermore, Mongolia will continue striving to share its achievements with other members of the international community, while learning from them about how to overcome the obstacles and problems.

1. Introduction

1. Mongolia, landlocked between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, is one of the least densely populated countries, with a total territory of 1.5 million km² and a total population of 2.7 million. Since 1990, the country has experienced profound societal changes due to the simultaneous transition from a socialist State with a centrally planned economy to a democratic republic based on a market economy. After a deep economic recession and a sharp decline in the standard of living in the 1990s, Mongolia's economy stabilized and grew rapidly in 2004-2008, with the gross domestic product per capita reaching \$1,649 in 2008. The private sector has grown to play a dominant role in the national economy, currently accounting for almost 70 per cent of the gross domestic product. Significant progress has been made towards institutionalizing democratic norms under the 1992 Democratic Constitution, with the Government formed through regular and relatively free and fair elections; developing civil society, a pluralist media and party system; and progressively integrating human rights principles into national legislation through ongoing legal reforms.

2. However, due to a number of complex factors, including Mongolia's landlocked position and geographic isolation, harsh continental climate with severe winters, combination of traditional pastoral nomadism and rapid urbanization due to heavy urban-bound migration from rural areas (an estimated 60 per cent of the population resides in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar), weak infrastructure outside of the major urban centres, and the need for substantial strengthening of democratic governance, Mongolia continues to face onerous challenges to achieve its development goals, including the empowerment of women and gender equality. Poverty persists (35.2 per cent in 2008) and is much higher in rural areas (46.6 per cent, in contrast to 26.9 per cent in urban areas), indicating a growing development gap between urban and rural areas and a dire need to address the needs of the rural population (37.4 per cent of the total population), the majority of which are nomadic herders.

3. Challenges notwithstanding, Mongolia is irreversibly committed to the path of democratic development based on the universal principles of human rights and freedoms. As an integral part of this framework, Mongolia is fully committed to the progressive realization of its international and national commitments to ensure gender equality and women's human rights in cooperation with the international community, national civil society and other stakeholders.

2. Implementation of gender equality and women's rights

2.1. Enabling policy framework for gender equality and women's rights

4. Mongolia fully supports international human rights standards and is a signatory to all major international instruments pertaining to women's rights and gender equality, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and

Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on equal remuneration and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, among others. In line with the international standards, the Constitution of Mongolia and major laws in principle prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and uphold gender equality.

5. In 2005, in adopting the Millennium Development Goals, the Parliament set concrete gender-related targets in employment, education, political participation and health. The Millennium Development Goals-based comprehensive national development strategy adopted in 2008, reaffirms these commitments and includes additional strategic objectives to adopt a separate law on gender equality, integrate gender equality content at all levels of education and ensure women's equal rights to property.

6. Following the fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, the Government adopted the National Programme on the Advancement of Women Until the Year 2000, based on broad consultations with women's non-governmental organizations as part of its efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. The Programme was revised in 2002 as the National Programme for Ensuring Gender Equality, which indicates specific actions to combat violence against women, support rural women's development, promote women's political participation and economic empowerment, ensure equal access to technology and establish a national machinery for the promotion of women's rights. Within this framework, the Government facilitated nationwide dissemination of information on gender equality and women's participation, established the National Committee on Gender Equality, with focal points in all ministries and in all 21 *aimags* (provinces), and provided training on gender equality to public servants and other stakeholders.

7. The adoption of the Non-Governmental Organizations Law in 1997 facilitated the development of civil society, wherein women's non-governmental organizations have come to play a leading role. Legal reform has consistently supported the expansion of Government-non-governmental organizations policy dialogue, and efforts are ongoing to further institutionalize cooperation between the Government and non-governmental organizations, particularly in the areas of improving the reproductive health of women and girls and of combating gender-based violence and trafficking in women and girls. Furthermore, the Gender Equality Law has been drafted through broad consultation with civil society and in cooperation with development partners. When adopted, the law will provide women with stronger legal protection against gender-based discrimination and will promote gender-mainstreaming and women's participation at all levels of public service and elected office.

2.2. Implementation of women's economic rights: employment

2.2.1. Actions taken

8. Mongolia supports the ILO decent work agenda and seeks to implement a balanced and integrated programmatic approach to achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, providing men and women with equal opportunities to obtain work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Within this framework, the Government has sought to establish and maintain adequate standards and rights at work, promote employment creation and enterprise development, ensure social protection and foster social dialogue.

Mongolia continues to systematically improve the legal framework for ensuring the labour rights of all, in line with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and ILO Conventions No. 29 and No. 105 on forced labour; Conventions No. 100 and No. 111 on equality of opportunity and treatment; Conventions No. 89 and No. 98 on the right to organize; and Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 on child labour, which Mongolia has acceded to. As expressed in the National Programme for Ensuring Gender Equality, the Government recognizes the importance of enhancing women's employment and ensuring their equal rights in employment, of promoting women's social, economic and political empowerment, of fostering human development and of reducing poverty.

9. With a view to creating more jobs, the Government is taking systematic measures aimed at promoting economic growth, developing medium and small enterprises and at employment facilitation. The economic growth support and poverty reduction strategy was developed and implemented with support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In 2001, the Law on Employment Facilitation was adopted, and the Government has provided funding support for the nationwide provision of services, such as career counselling, job matching, professional training and retraining courses, business training, microcredit to citizens who wish to create new businesses individually or in cooperatives, and business incubator services, and for involvement of people without jobs and incomes in public works. In 2007, the Law on Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises was adopted, providing for the establishment of the Small and Medium Enterprise Support Fund, which issues loans for small businesses at discounted interest rates and supports business efforts to improve management and employee skills.

2.2.2. *Achievements*

10. Overall, the employment rate has increased by 4.2 per cent since 2002-2003, although the overall labour force participation rate has declined owing to the high percentage of working-age people in the population structure, indicating the insufficient capacity of the labour market and economic growth to absorb the labour force. Women, who constitute 51.3 per cent of the total population, play a central role in the Mongolian economy, accounting for 51 per cent of the total workforce. In 2007, the female employment rate was 61.2 per cent and the female labour force participation rate was 63.2 per cent higher than the world average (52.5 per cent), though somewhat lower than the regional average (67.4 per cent). The proportion of women engaged in non-agricultural paid jobs has remained stable, at just over 53 per cent during 2004-2008, signifying attainment of the Millennium Development Goals target and reflecting the rather high level of educational attainment of Mongolian women (over 65 per cent of college and university graduates are women). Women have relatively higher rates of enrolment in employment facilitation services, such as professional training courses and job matching.

2.2.3. *Challenges*

11. However, Mongolia faces substantial challenges in ensuring a sufficient provision of decent jobs for all and ensuring gender equality in employment. While the employment rate figures are improving relatively, there is little qualitative change, with most jobs still being informal, and the percentage of people,

predominantly women and girls, engaged in non-wage employment in household businesses remaining relatively high. The rate of female labour force participation is about 9.0 points lower than that for men. Women lag behind men in terms of economic activity levels due to a higher burden of unpaid care work, such as childcare and care for the elderly or sick members of the family in the context of insufficient provision of social services and the low level of men's participation in care work, and the earlier (by about five years) retirement of women. Gender wage gaps have become a concern, with average salaries for women in non-agricultural sectors being lower than men's by about 15 per cent. The salary gap mainly stems from sectoral gender segregation: women are concentrated in low-pay and low-productivity sectors, such as education, health, hotels and restaurants, wholesale and retail trade and repairs, whereas men are largely concentrated in such highly productive industries as mining, construction and transport. Women have also been consistently underrepresented at senior levels in all sectors, although they form a majority at mid- and lower-management levels, indicating that women's high education attainment does not automatically lead to comparable income levels.

12. In addition, the deepening development gap between urban and rural areas and the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to harsh weather conditions and natural disasters has put the rural population, especially women, at a major disadvantage. Working conditions of herders do not meet the basic criteria for work safety and hygiene, while return on their labour is low owing to poor access to markets and the informal nature of the sector. Rural women work the longest hours (11.1 hours a day) but earn the least, in contrast to urban men who work the shortest hours (7.7 hours a day) but earn the most. This is despite the fact that herder women play an important role in the primary production (collection, primary processing and sale) of cashmere, which is a major source of Mongolia's foreign currency, following copper and gold. Herders receive less than 20 per cent of the end-product price and women herders receive even less. Rural poverty and the high risks and low incomes associated with nomadic husbandry have driven thousands of men as well as women and children to engage in informal artisanal mining, which provides for seasonal income, but at a very high cost in terms of mental and physical health, and exacerbates people's vulnerabilities to alcohol abuse, violence and environmental pollution.

2.2.4. Lessons learned

13. Equal opportunities to engage in fruitful and productive employment with fair remuneration are crucial for women in terms of their ability to enjoy their economic rights and their social, political and economic empowerment. The lesson Mongolia has learned is that major economic and social changes, such as privatization, structural change and pension reform, can have deep destabilizing effects on women's employment; therefore, State policies must necessarily be based on gender-sensitive impact analyses and seek to effectively respond to gender-specific needs and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the Government realizes the urgent need to better integrate social and environmental policies with economic development policies, taking into account such specific factors as the small population, vast territory and significant gap between urban and rural areas, and to strengthen efforts to promote rural employment and development and direct donor assistance to this area. Another lesson learned is that ensuring every person's right to decent, productive and fruitful employment with fair wages on the basis of equality between

men and women requires concerted action, a cross-sectoral regulatory approach and strong partnerships between the Government, civil society, the private sector and the international community, especially ILO.

2.3. Implementation of women's political rights: participation of women at decision-making levels

2.3.1. Actions taken

14. Promoting women's participation at decision-making levels is one of the most challenging areas for Mongolia, informed by a complex set of structural, institutional, political and sociocultural factors. The Constitution explicitly states that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex, among other categories, and that men and women shall enjoy equal rights in political, economic, social and cultural fields and in family relations, and guarantees the rights of citizens to elect and to be elected to State bodies. These same principles are reflected in the laws on State Great Khural (National Parliament) and citizens' representatives' khurals (local legislatures), the Law on Civil Service and other laws and regulations, providing for the formal equality of men and women in exercising their right to participation at decision-making levels. Thus, eligible voters of 25 years of age, regardless of gender, have the right to be elected to the State Great Khural either through nomination by parties or coalitions or independently upon collection of no less than 801 voter signatures in support of the candidates. Furthermore, citizens are free to establish a political party, join a party, leave a party, and participate in political activities in accordance with the law, party charter and the election platform of the respective party. Women have actively used this political space to work through political parties and/or non-governmental organizations to exercise their political rights, obtain party nomination or promote nomination of female candidates for national and local elections and appointment of women to high-level government posts. Women's non-governmental organizations affiliated with political parties are particularly active in this respect and have contributed significantly to raising public awareness of the importance of women's political participation and representation.

15. However, the legal reform to expedite political equality of men and women has not been a linear process. In 2005, following its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, Mongolia adopted the target of Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals, to achieve a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in the National Parliament by 2015. The same year, owing to the well-coordinated lobbying of a multiparty women's non-governmental organizations forum, the quota was introduced in the election law on the State Great Khural, and main political parties introduced women's quotas in their by-laws. However, in 2007 the Parliament suddenly moved to revoke the quota and the motion was carried through with substantial support from both major parties. In 2008, the President issued a veto on this decision but the Parliament was able to override the veto. However, the Parliament reaffirmed its commitment to achieving a minimum of 30 per cent women's representation in the National Parliament when adopting the national development strategy in early 2008. The Gender Equality Law, which is now in the pipeline, is expected to support the process of women's political empowerment, and discussions on the need to ensure women's representation are part of the ongoing efforts to reform the electoral system.

2.3.2. *Achievements*

16. The number of women running for office has consistently grown at both local and national levels, signifying growing interest in political office and increasing self-confidence among women. Despite this positive trend, women's representation in the unicameral National Parliament has declined in the past decade, from a low of 12 per cent in 2000 to an even lower 3.9 per cent in 2008, going back to the 1992 level. However, significant progress has been made at local levels, with women currently accounting for 30.2 per cent of members and 16.2 per cent of the chairpersons of local legislatures. After the election of 2008, a National Unity Government was formed, which included one female minister (for social welfare and labour) and four female vice-ministers (for justice; education, culture and science; agriculture; and trade and industry), bringing the percentage of women in the cabinet to 6.6 per cent, the highest level since 1992. Furthermore, women currently account for 26.5 per cent of department and division heads at ministries, 17.3 per cent of local governors and their deputies at all levels and 28.1 per cent of heads of divisions within the offices of local governors. Given that women account for 71.7 per cent of public servants, but only 22.0 per cent of political officers, it is clear that a much more concerted effort is required to achieve greater gender parity at decision-making levels.

2.3.3. *Challenges*

17. The current percentage of women in the Parliament (3.9 per cent, out of 76 members of Parliament) is a major step back, especially when compared to 23-25 per cent before the transition. Key obstacles to promoting women's political representation are lack of political will among high-level politicians and political parties, economic inequality between men and women combined with the expensive nature of majoritarian elections and the large financial donations required by political parties from potential candidates. Furthermore, there is a need for extensive gender-sensitive voter education as well as intensive capacity-building for women candidates and potential candidates on leadership, governance and policy issues.

2.3.4. *Lessons learned*

18. A major lesson learned in Mongolia is that without the introduction of temporary special measures such as women's quotas, gender equality at decision-making levels cannot be achieved by 2015 or even for decades beyond that. Therefore, the ongoing process of reforming the electoral system must include affirmative provisions to support women's nominations, such as quotas for the list of candidates proposed by political parties. It is also imperative that the Government cooperate with civil society to raise public awareness of the crucial importance of gender equality in decision-making, change discriminatory gender stereotypes and enhance women's competitive capacity and skills-building in politics. These efforts shall require effective cooperation as well as significant human, financial and political resources. Sharing best practices and lessons learned from other countries and having the cooperation of the international community are going to be critical in this area if Mongolia is to make material progress to ensure women's and men's de facto equality in politics.

2.4. Implementation of women's right to health: reproductive health of women and girls

2.4.1. Actions taken

19. Reproductive health is an area in which Mongolia has made revolutionary changes, recognizing women's fundamental right to make autonomous choices about their sexual and reproductive lives. During socialism, Mongolia had pursued a strong pronatalist policy and had banned abortion and contraceptives. As part of the democratization process and a clear commitment to upholding human rights and freedoms, Mongolia legalized abortion and contraceptives in 1989. Since then, the Government has worked systematically to introduce family planning services throughout the country to empower women and girls to achieve the highest possible standards of sexual and reproductive health while still maintaining a policy of supporting population growth. Mongolia's efforts in this area have been guided and strengthened by the concept of reproductive health as a human right articulated at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo and by the consistent support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other development partners. In terms of the Millennium Development Goals, Mongolia has included a target to reduce the maternal mortality rate to 50 per 100,000 live births by 2015, achieving a fourfold reduction compared to 1990. The Government has adopted and implemented a national programme on reproductive health and a national strategy to reduce maternal mortality, significantly improving the quality and coverage of antenatal care. To maximize the impact of this work, the Government has also consistently expanded its dialogue and cooperation with civil society, especially women's non-governmental organizations involved in the health sector.

20. The Government, in cooperation with development partners, has undertaken innovative measures to overcome challenges presented by long distances, weak infrastructure and poor access to health-care services in rural areas. Thus, to address the special needs of women living in remote areas, maternal rest homes have been set up in all *soum* (county) hospitals and *aimag* general hospitals to enable rural women, especially women at high risk in terms of pregnancy and delivery, to access medical assistance in a timely fashion. This experience of Mongolia has been studied by many other countries as an effective model to reduce maternal mortality in the context of sparsely populated large territories with poor infrastructure. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health is implementing, in cooperation with the Government of Luxembourg and UNFPA, a "telemedicine" project for providing emergency professional services to women and children in remote areas through long-distance diagnosis of maternal and infant health problems. General hospitals in eight remote *aimags* have been connected through this project, and diagnosis, medical advice and training workshops have been organized, covering vast areas of land, and have been instrumental in providing timely medical care. Specific measures have been taken to ensure that women with pregnancy and delivery complications and women from vulnerable groups are able to deliver under the supervision of specialized medical doctors and significant gains have been made in reducing the maternal mortality rate. Initiatives to combine the provision of prenatal care with sexually transmitted infections diagnosis, treatment and counselling through one-stop-service centres in several districts of the capital city, and some of the *aimags* are producing positive results. Moreover, hospital-based one-stop-service centres have been set up at three national hospitals to assist victims of

domestic violence and sexual abuse, making it possible to provide women and girls with prompt and effective assistance.

2.4.2. *Achievements*

21. As a result of the above-mentioned interventions, over the past 10 years Mongolia has reduced the maternal mortality rate by 2.3 times and the under-five child mortality rate by 2 times. The maternal mortality rate was very high in 1990, at 200 per 100,000 live births, but has declined to 50 in 2008, thus attaining the level set in the Millennium Development Goals target. However, in 2009, the figure increased once again, reaching 81.4 deaths per 100,000 live births, owing to the outbreak of influenza A (H1N1) and the devastating winter disaster, which has seriously undermined the well-being of the rural population. On a positive note, as a result of extensive public education on sexual and reproductive health, 98-99 per cent of men and women of reproductive age report being aware of family planning, and 53 per cent of women of reproductive age report using at least one of the modern family planning methods. Antenatal care coverage has expanded significantly to reach 98-99 per cent of all pregnant women, and 99 per cent of all births are assisted by medical personnel. Furthermore, Mongolia covers the full cost of health care for mothers and children and also subsidizes a certain portion of the reproductive health medicines and supplies.

22. International partnerships have played a critical role in this area. Thus, UNFPA supported the implementation of a special project to improve access to and quality of reproductive health care in five western *aimags* where maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates remain high. A project on promoting social equality and promoting human security through an integrated treatment and prevention approach is being implemented in three *aimags* (Govi-Altai, Bayankhongor and Umnugovi) with the support of UNDP, WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund and UNFPA through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. The project is based on a gender-sensitive situational analysis and aims to improve the quality of and access to basic health care, water and sanitation, income-generating opportunities and formal education.

2.4.3. *Challenges*

23. Although maternal and child mortality rates are generally on the decline, there are wide discrepancies by rural and urban status, geographic location and social status. Maternal mortality rates remain consistently well above the national average in the westernmost mountainous *aimags* and easternmost *aimags*. The higher incidence of morbidity and mortality in remote areas is linked to poor access to health-care services caused by poor infrastructure development in rural areas, weak communications, the shortage of emergency care vehicles and fuel as well as shortage of qualified medical personnel. Natural disasters such as droughts and *dzuds* (winter crises) strain the capacity of the health-care system to protect maternal and child health, indicating the system's fragility in the face of increased pressure. Constant migration of the rural population from one *soum* to another, across *aimags*, to artisanal mining sites as well as to major cities is another serious challenge for Mongolia. Migration makes planning difficult, leads to the outflow of medical personnel from rural areas and overstretches service capacity in overpopulated *gher* districts (poor peri-urban areas) in the cities.

24. Despite the substantial reduction in maternal mortality, the overall health status of girls and women is increasingly an issue of concern: 46 per cent of women of reproductive age suffer from a chronic disease, 14 per cent have iron deficiency anaemia, 41.4 per cent have vitamin D deficiency and uterine tumours, and sexually transmitted infections are prevalent among women. Multiorgan diseases increase the risk of pregnancy and delivery complications and, in 2008, almost 50 per cent of all women giving birth were recorded to have experienced delivery complications. The low level of public health education is a contributing factor: according to the national survey on reproductive health, 65 per cent of women did not know much or had never heard of cervical cancer, 41 per cent of women were unaware of self-checks for the prevention of breast cancer, and 88 per cent of the cervical cancer cases were diagnosed at late stages or after stage II. The incidence of breast cancer has increased twofold between 1995 and 2005, reaching 5.6 incidences per 100,000 persons; and over 80 per cent of breast cancer cases are detected at late stages. Despite the high level of awareness of family planning, the abortion rate has remained high (1 abortion for every 6 live births in 2008); 39 per cent of all abortions are repeat abortions, and teen pregnancy and abortion rates have risen, particularly in rural areas.

2.4.4. *Lessons learned*

25. Mongolia's achievements in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates are substantial but not stable. It is imperative to strengthen the system of delivering timely and quality medical assistance to women in remote areas and to women from vulnerable social groups, especially women living in peri-urban areas; allocate and target funds for these services; continue to build the professional capacity of the medical personnel; and improve the supply of modern medical treatment and diagnostic equipment. To achieve sustainability, it is important to improve maternal health before pregnancy and step up health education and awareness-raising for the general population and, especially for adolescent girls, through mass media, formal and non-formal education systems and civil society. Special attention should be paid to information dissemination to remote rural areas and peri-urban areas.

3. Conclusion

26. The key lesson learned in Mongolia is that promoting gender equality and women's rights requires an integrated multisectoral approach, strong cooperation and broad consultations between all branches of government, civil society and international development partners and systematic policy and legal reform to harmonize national legislation with international standards. Therefore, the Government of Mongolia is committed to undertaking the following:

- Strengthening the national mechanism for promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights by further strengthening the multi-stakeholder National Committee, strengthening the capacity of the Government and civil society to undertake gender-sensitive policy analysis and development and gender-sensitive budgeting; strengthening coordination and cooperation within the Government and between the Government, civil society and other stakeholders.

- In realizing the importance of high-quality, gender-disaggregated data for gender-sensitive policy development as well as monitoring and undertaking impact assessments of Government interventions on promoting gender equality and empowering women, the Government shall continue to build the national capacity to collect, produce and analyse gender-related statistical and administrative data; introduce a gender-based review of Government policies; and strengthen evidence-based, gender-responsive decision-making processes.
 - The Government shall pursue the adoption and implementation of the Gender Equality Law, which is currently under consideration by the Parliament. The law is expected to have a material effect on women's political, social and economic empowerment by explicitly prohibiting gender-based discrimination and promoting gender equality in all spheres of women's lives.
 - Recognizing the importance of proactive actions to promote gender equality and women's active participation at decision-making levels, the Government shall continue its efforts to reflect affirmative action for women in the electoral reform agenda, in close cooperation with women's non-governmental organizations and development partners.
-