

Brief of presentation on Women in Mongolia
to be delivered by G.Ganbold, Consul General
of the Mongolian Embassy at the International Conference
“Women of the Mountains

Mongolia is situated in the heart of Asia in between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China. It has long borders with its two immediate neighbors. Indeed in terms of land size Mongolia is three times of France, half of India and almost as big as Alaska and highly elevated, on average 1580 meters (4740 feet) on above the sea level which causes to have a continental climate of four seasons including severe cold winter and sub zero temperature in six months of the year. Mongolia has 228 mm rain fall that is good enough to pastureland not to land cultivation. However, one can afford to see over 250 bright sunny days in year in Mongolia even in freezing winter and notoriously windy in spring that promises an encouraging feature for renewable energy source.

As a nation Mongolia is one of the oldest one in Asia and its history starts of Hunnu Empire which used to exist 25 centuries ago on current Mongolian territory. Contrary to its vast territory and rich history Mongolia is a tiny and young country because of its only 2.65 million population in one of the sparsely populated area (2 persons in per square kilometer) and over 65 per cent of them are younger than 35 years old. They are divided into several ethnic groups but principally homogenous. We are proud of our impressively high rate of literacy and number of students and periodicals and colleges per capital. The country consists of 21 administrative provinces and capital city-Ulaanbaatar, which is one of high density area.

Since late 1980s Mongolia has embarked on a path of political democracy and transition toward market economy and adopted a new democratic constitution in 1992 and ever since then we had nearly dozen parliamentary and presidential elections on multi political parties basis in order to form up parliamentary democracy with the President as the head of the state, the Prime Minister who leads the executive power. After having underwent enormous socio- end economic challenges starting from drastic decline of production up to hyper inflation of 325 per cent in early 1990’s Mongolia accomplished numerous achievement in recent years such as robust annual economic growth of 8 to 11 per cent , halt of inflation within single digit, booming construction, mining and infrastructure sector, surplus budget, positive balance of payment and expanding foreign trade thanks to a tight monetary policy, assistance given by donors and cooperation with other nations including the USA.

However, not every thing is settled yet particularly, in social welfare in general and gender equity in particular about which I would like to mention hereon. In terms of life expectancy at birth and literacy rate as well school enrollment rate women are in better position than men. But in terms of per capita GDP and Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure or Gender Gaps criteria women are lagging far behind than men due to acute poverty, city bound migration, low wages, less participation in decision making, higher percentage of unemployment and distressing health indicators such as mortality and morbidity rate etc. Poverty among women is appallingly worse either in headcount or poverty gap or severity or income level despite women’s predominance in students, employees population(at least in certain sectors of economy).Disparity in health caused by gender gap is causing much concern which makes women more dependent on social safety. Therefore, as indicated in its Millennium Challenge Goal the Government of Mongolia is striving to reduce poverty by 18 percent and number of children with malnutrition by 6 percent by 2015 from the current 35 and 12 percent respectively. With active involvement of civil society including women NGO s National Policy on Gender Empowerment was adopted in 2002 and implementation of which is being overseeing by National Committee for Gender Equality, headed by Prime Minister. Apart from such priorities indicators to measure their accomplishment and proper planning also being worked out on participatory basis with some funding from state budget along with adoption of Gender

Friendly Policies through line ministries. All these efforts are aimed at incorporating gender specific activities into projects and policies to correct above mentioned disparities and reinforce women's participation in socio economic activities and increasing benefits for women in terms of employment, access to services, empowerment and capacity building. Women NGO is also assigned to chair donor coordination group on gender and gender specialist is working to ensure proper attention to gender concerns. So rather than pretending as if everything is glamorous we are focusing our efforts to upgrade welfare of women in Mongolia with assistance and cooperation of our friends and partners.