

## MONGOLIA

On the threshold of new millennium, the deepening of global environmental problems and increased damages to diversity of nature, have resulted in deterioration of surrounding nature, reduction of natural resources, and a negative impact on national development progress. Critical environmental issues such as greenhouse gases, ozone depletion, global warming, drought, desertification, a loss of biological diversity, acid rain, and natural disasters have become worldwide threats. As the owner of the nature, the human race has rejected the development path of too-rapid leaping forward that cause natural resource depletion and damage to the nature. Instead, the sustainable development strategy that address the issues of living sustainable and compatible with the nature has been considered as the best option. Environmental pollution and degradation know no frontiers and environmental problems are becoming ever more international in scale.

Taking this opportunity we would like to introduce the present Mongolian environmental challenges and state policy in this field.

Mongolia is a land-locked country which occupies an ecological transition zone where Central Asia and Siberian Taiga meet and it has an extreme continental climate and its ecosystems are rather fragile and sensitive. The worthwhile traditions of the Mongolian people, who since ancient times have aimed at conserving the environment and proper use of natural resources, now are enriched by the new concept of sustainable development. However, increased population, industrialization and development in mid of this century have had considerable impacts on Mongolian traditional lifestyle and nomadic civilization.

During the last 20 years, the degree of exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources has grown rapidly, leading to adverse impacts on the environment. Mining products account for over two thirds of the nation's total exports. Also the cooperative movement involving husbandry and establishment of a new sector for cultivated land made significant changes in the traditional life style. Through the cooperative policy, a large number of livestock of the same kind was concentrated in on place exceeding carrying capacity, which caused decrease of soil productivity and water supply. The total forested area has decreased by 1.4 million hectares, and the total pastureland declined by 6.9 million hectares. Privatization of public enterprises and the emergence of thousands of private enterprises in recent years with little oversight of their activities by monitoring agencies have led to the irrational exploitation of natural resources in a chase for short term profits, inadequate and polluting waste management practices, and failure to rehabilitate natural resources damaged by the economic activity. The most urgent environmental and natural resource issues facing Mongolia are environmental challenges due to urbanization and socio-economic development, such as degradation and overexploitation of natural resources, air pollution, overexploitation and pollution of limited water resources, solid and hazardous waste disposal, land use conflicts between pasture and biodiversity conservation, non-sustainable utilization of land and forest resources, expansion of deserts by natural and human impacts, and recurrent natural disasters.

In the 1990's, when democratic and market oriented policies started, able conditions for environmental reform were created. During 1994-2000, the Parliament of

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Mongolia enacted a package of laws and programs regarding nature conservation and rational use of nature resources. Laws decentralize authority to local governments concerning protection, restoration and rational use of natural resources i.e. to increase the role of local governments and communities in this matter. Since 1995, numerous initiatives and programs have responded to Mongolia's environmental challenges. Among other achievements can be mentioned;

Significant progress has been made in drafting specific environmental legislation e.g. for natural resource management, air emissions, waste discharge, environmental taxes, and royalties from the exploitation of natural resources

An impressive number of strategies and action plans have been approved over the last 5 years, and it is now an important challenge to implement all these plans: State Policy on Ecology, Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan, National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), National Plan for Protected Areas, National Water Policy Program, Forestry Program, Program on Wastes: Program on Air Protection, National Program for Environmental Education and Public Investment Program (PIP) 1999-2002. Mongolian Action Program For 21 century (MAP-21) was elaborated in accordance with the Earth sustainable development methodology and principles. This program is a document that can serve as a national guideline which embraces and defines the whole complexity of the requirements, policy goals, working directions and methods for developing all the spheres of our country's life while maintaining environmental checks and balances.

NGO and public participation in environmental protection has increased

14 percent of territory has been included in the protected area network

EIA knowledge, procedures and implementation ability has been strengthening

National environmental monitoring system, including environmental Information system with ecological database has developed

Many projects have been focusing on environment and natural resource management and protection at local level.

In February 2000 the Mongolian Parliament approved the Law on "The ratio of the income from the natural resources use payments to be spent for environmental protection and natural resource restoration". It is very important law for mobilizing financial mechanisms and finding sources to develop enhanced environmental protection and natural resource management.

Since 1993, Mongolia has joined 9 Conventions that regulate the critical global environmental issues such as biodiversity conservation, climate change, combating desertification, reduction of ozone layer depletion, the trade in rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, transboundary transmission of hazardous wastes and its disposal, protection of wetlands, production, storage and disposal of chemical weapons, and protection of migratory animals. Besides, Mongolia is cooperating effectively with foreign countries and international organizations. As Mongolia joined international conventions, there opens a door for us to have an opportunity to make a contribution to the prevention of the world ecosystem from ecological threats and to increase its reputation on the international arena. To date, there are 7 intergovernmental agreements established between 1990-1999 out of 20 bilateral environmental agreement of great importance for the protection of the whole country's territory, particularly the nature

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around state border. It is worth to be noted that the agreement established with the Russian and Chinese governments in environmental field in 1994 forms a basis for the development of multilateral transboundary cooperation with the neighboring countries. In addition, according to the intergovernmental agreement established with the neighboring countries on protection and use of water around border areas, it has become possible for the participants to implement activities such as prevention of water from drying up and reduction of water contamination, to control water quality, carrying out investigation, and exchange of information during natural disasters. Several meetings were held by representatives of proper authorities.

The underlying and critical factors for the achievement of environmentally sustainable development in Mongolia are sound environmental legislation, a capable institutional framework, proper information and knowledge basis, public understanding and participation and targeted investment programs to mitigate environmental deterioration and to create work and development opportunities for the local societies. We have been confronted with a task, duty and a need to start implementation as well as to bring about legal environment, personnel, financial and technological resources and conditions in order to materialize all mentioned before policy and programs. There is shortage of financial sources for funding of nature protection and restoration at national and local level. In order to achieve successful implementation of these programs it will be important to ensure nationwide participation of key players including state institutions, NGOs, business sector.

We would like to emphasize the role that UNEP could play in addressing global and regional environment issues like global warming, combatting desertification, biodiversity conservation we believe that advanced countries of region will participate actively in the various field of cooperation, particularly in technology transfer and financial assistance for developing countries.