

**2019 SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Voluntary National Review of Mongolia
Presentation by the Head of Mongolian Delegation,
Minister of Finance Mr. Khurelbaatar Chimed**

**Date: 16 July 2019
Location: Conference Room 4, UNHQ
Time: 3:30-6:30 PM
SPEAKING DURATION: 10 minutes or less**

FULL SPEECH TEXT

Your Excellency, Inga Rhonda King, President of Economic and Social Council,
Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon everyone,

It is my distinct honor to be here today at the United Nations to present Mongolia's first
Voluntary National Review.

I am pleased to be joined by a Mongolian delegation made up of representatives from
Mongolian government, civil society, and youth.

Mongolia's Voluntary National Review provides an excellent platform to deepen the
awareness of the SDGs among stakeholders, describe how SDGs will be achieved
through coherent development policy planning processes, and strengthen consensus
around the importance of coherent and coordinated actions across sectors.

Slide 1:

- As a reflection of this, six months following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Parliament of Mongolia approved its long-term development strategy—Mongolia’s Sustainable Development Vision-2030 in line with global goals. This makes Mongolia one of the early adopters of the SDGs.
- Since the adoption of the Mongolia’s Sustainable Development Vision-2030, there has been significant progress in Mongolia's development.
- Mongolia’s past economic growth places it amongst the medium ranking countries while it has been ranked in the high human development category on the Human Development Index since 2015.
- Poverty rate has dropped from 29.6 percent in 2016 to 28.4 percent in 2018.
- This sets a sound foundation for ensuring future sustainable development.

Slide 2:

- Despite an early adoption of the Agenda 2030, many challenges remain.
- Mongolia’s primary, extractive-sector dominant economy is not resilient to external shocks from global commodity price fluctuations.
- Mongolia is vulnerable to climate change and desertification.
- Also, Mongolia is vulnerable to global development uncertainties. These vulnerabilities have had social and environmental consequences, presenting challenges to sustainable development.
- Unequal growth has contributed to disparities in various forms such as gaps in social services across regions, limited decent work opportunities, inequalities resulting in poor quality of life for some groups.
- Inequality and poverty remain challenges undermining the durability of hard-won development gains; rural-urban gaps in living standards are specifically glaring.
- Although, Mongolia has successfully initiated the process of SDG localization, critical reforms need to be undertaken to ensure coherent and coordinated policy and institutional frameworks. A weak regulatory framework and processes in relation to the SDGs contributes to inconsistency between long, medium, sectoral, and local development policies.

Slide 3:

- In light of this, Mongolia acknowledges the criticality of a “whole of government” plus a “whole of society” approach.
- In support of this, a nationwide effort is underway to identify National SDGs targets and indicators.
- In parallel to this, the Government has initiated a review of existing 200 plus policy documents for their alignment with the SDGs, country’s sustainable development agenda as well as the coherence between each other.
- Concrete tools have been developed which are being institutionalized by the Government.

Slide 4:

- Institution-wise, a Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development Goals and a National Council for Sustainable Development comprised of multi-stakeholders and led by the Prime Minister are in place. The National Development Agency provides technical support on localizing the sustainable development agenda and ensuring policy integration, while the National Statistical Office strengthens the evidence base.
- These initiatives have been instrumental in establishing a foundation for effective implementation of the Agenda 2030.

Slide 5:

- Mongolia’s first Voluntary National Review highlights the risks of disparities preventing, or even reversing development gains. The Report applies the lens of “leaving no one behind” identifying key population groups who are at-risk of being left behind.
- Most importantly, because of the interconnectedness of the issues we face, and the responses we need, Mongolia’s review analyzed the implementation of the SDGs using integrated and coordinated policy approaches.
- The report preparation process involved multi-stakeholders at all levels, demonstrating why coordinated responses, across all sectors and stakeholders.

Slide 6:

- The Report features the issue of “Air pollution” as an example of a complex, multifaceted development challenge that would benefit from a comprehensive analysis using a systems approach to develop effective solutions.
- In Mongolia, during the long winter periods, on some days, temperatures drop as low as -40° celcius, necessitating indoor heating of homes and other buildings for almost eight months a year, resulting in an increased demand for energy.
- Air pollution is a multi-sectoral development issue, relevant for several SDGs—any intervention limited to one sector or area cannot address it.

Slide 7:

- That’s why, issues related to air pollution need to be investigated within the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- Using the systems approach, we have analysed the underlying contributors, the drivers and causes of air pollution; its adverse human impacts; identified specific bottlenecks.
- Direct drivers of air pollution include coal burning by ger areas and vehicular emissions, triggered indirectly by economic, environmental and social factors.
- Similar to this, direct consequences of air pollution are felt on people’s health and education levels. Adverse impacts are also observed on state revenues, expenditures, consumption behavior and the environment.
- The systems approach developed in the process of the VNR report preparation has identified (i) weak policy coherence and coordination; (ii) poor policy implementation; (iii) insufficient capacities; and (iv) lack of effective participation and knowledge among stakeholders as key bottlenecks.
- This analysis was not only helpful in building consensus among the stakeholders but it also provides a model that can be applied to other SDG challenges.

Slide 8:

- Going forward, there is significant potential in Mongolia to create change towards sustainable development.

- Ensuring more equal opportunities for all people to reap from future growth benefits is critical, along with greater environmental responsibility.
- Thus, future actions will need to better incorporate social and environmental dimensions, while leaving no one behind.
- In doing so, the Government will continue to work towards ensuring comprehensive and coherent policy mechanisms by aligning medium and short-term policies with the SDGs, establish a monitoring and evaluations framework, develop a financing strategy aligned with policy priorities, and strengthen the existing institutional framework.
- In this process, change in the country's development path will not be possible without the consensus from and involvement of all stakeholders.

In conclusion, sustainable development means providing for the needs for the present without compromising the interests of the future generations. As goes a Mongolian Proverb:

“If speak, we have one voice

If pull, we have one power ” (“Дуугарвал дуу нэг, Дугтарвал хүч нэг”)

Together, let's work towards achieving sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.