

# Civil Society development in Mongolia

Ariuntungalag Munkhtuvshin

Director of Independent Research Institute of Mongolia

# Outline

- **Brief overview : Mongolian political and economical context**
- **Civil society development:**
  - *Number of effective citizens group*
  - *Core activity areas and main tools and techniques that being used by NGOs in a field*
  - *Engagement level with the government: Good initiatives and success*
  - *Constraints, difficulties facing NGOs building partnership with the government*
- **Conclusion**

# General information about Mongolia

**Formulated year:** 1206 (Mongol empire)

**Population:** 2.8 million (140<sup>th</sup> )

**Religion:** Belief for Buddhism 90% of population , 3% of population have belief for Muslim, 4% of population have belief for Christianity and 3% other religions including shamanism

**Area:** Bordered by Russian Siberia and China, Mongolia covers an area of 1.566.500 sq.km, which is roughly the size of Western Europe. (19<sup>th</sup> in the world by its space for per person)

**Government:** Semi- presidential, parliamentary democracy with a 4-year election cycle

**Economical condition:** Mineral rich country (copper, goad, coal) transiting from low to middle income

# Civil society development

- 1992 declared and guaranteed the freedom stated in the international covenant on civil and political rights and laid the foundation for civil society and the further legal environment for the CS.
- In 2002, the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs had registered **3,200** NGOs, of which **2,586** served for society, while **614** served for members. There are about **7,300** NGOs officially registered at the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs of which over 80% served society, working in the areas of environment, mining, budget transparency, human rights and protection of the interests of some groups.

# Core activity areas

- Environment, nature protection
- Democracy and civic education
- Women and gender equality
- Citizen's empowerment and capacity building
- Health, social welfare and reproductive health

Activity areas	Number	Percentage
Environment, nature protection and reclamation	25	15.5
Education/democracy and civil education	28	17.4
Training, research and evaluation	9	5.6
Advocacy and participation	2	1.2
Family and children	5	3.1
Women and gender equality	19	11.8
Citizen empowerment, capacity building, protection of interests	20	12.4
Serving society/ society centered	21	13
Health/reproductive health	14	8.7
Media, information dissemination	4	2.5
Working for people with disabilities	3	1.9
Legal consultation	3	1.9
Human rights	7	4.3
Ultra poor citizens	6	3.7
Agriculture and animal husbandry	5	3.1
Interests of residents	1	0.62
Social welfare	14	8.7
Business development	4	2.5
Extractive industry transparency	1	0.62
Trade unions	2	1.2
Fighting corruption	1	0.62
Unanswered	3	1.9

# Main tools and mechanisms by used in SA work in Mongolia

## **1. Monitoring and evaluation over the government performance- both national and local areas**

- Budget monitoring(Planning and expenditure process)
- Public service delivery process: quality of service delivery process in health sector, lunch project for the children in high schools, social welfare sector's service delivery process etc...

## **2. Building partnership with the government**

## **3. Networking**

## **4. Organizing advocacy works based on evidences and results of policy researches, researches and M&E**

# Policy researches that supported by OSF

- Funding election campaigns
- Media and press freedom and IT opportunities
- To Increase Civil Participation in Decision-making: Legal and Institutional Environment
- To Reform Public Administration and Public Units and Public and Social Service Quality and Access
- Budget and finance centralization and independence
- Micro-economic policies to share mining sector profits



## Engagement level with the government: Good initiatives and success

Topic	Initiative	Reached success
Budget transparency	- Budget monitoring which covering areas of national and local government special foundations (Development foundation, Governors' reserve foundations, Social insurance foundation, aimag's development foundation etc...)	- Building capacity of NGOs - Coming up to the efforts to find more specific ways to advocate government by using results of the monitoring
	- Glass wallet campaign: Providing citizen's effective participation by building partnership with the local government	- Its' main idea spreading out in several provinces including some districts in UB - Good example of Engagement between CS and government
	- Delivering recommendations to the government regarding to the issues of budget policy and budget law development process	Government attention to pay CS perspective getting increased
Environment and mining	- Civil council of the environment was founded in 2009 which embodied about 600 NGOs	- Good partnership between civil society and government has been established

## Constraints, difficulties facing NGOs which working in an area of SA

External threats	Internal threats
Weak of law regulations that can ensure CS participation in decision making process	Financial dependence on donor organizations and other funds
Few number of capable citizens groups are working in the field	Few number of capable citizens groups are working in the field: pocket organizations that established by someone who is in the power
Public support is not strong enough	Lack of experience to advocate to and negotiate with the government
Legitimate representatives are weak: Unclear who representing what and whom	Lack of human recourse capacity and organizational management

# Access to information

- Accessing to information regarding to the activities of public organizations is limited;
- Though the formal websites are the main tools for government to disseminate information to citizens and other stakeholders, but the content, availability of information and effectiveness is still very weak no meeting the demand for information;
- To conclude the entire process of disseminating/receiving information from the government organization, it is been found to be **time consuming, with many steps, weak linkage in-between the government officers and organizations and the legal; provisions regulating this procedure is not enforced well.**

# In conclusion

- For the NGOs, funding is the key obstacle for sustainable operation for their further operations;
- As a result of the efforts and advocacy of CSOs, government organizations have started to take action to enable social accountability. Such positive outcomes and actions should be improved and established in practically all sectors;
- It can be concluded that Civil society development in Mongolia is in a middle stage of its maturity processes.