

**Brief remarks of Amb. Enkhsaikhan of Mongolia
made at session 3 on civil society development**

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Mr. Chairman,

This session is considering a very important issue that affects of the viability and stability of states. It really is a soft security that could affect national security in broader sense. Strengthening rule of law, freedom of the press and information, effectively fighting poverty and corruption need strong and vibrant civil society. Daily practice in my country underlines the importance of an active civil society for mobilizing and articulating the interests of ordinary people and holding the State more accountable and more responsive to the needs of the people.

In the past 19 years the Mongolian civil society has grown considerable in number and has diversified the areas of its activity. The latest statistics show that around 8.000 NGOs have been registered with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs. For a people of 2.6 mln. it s a high number. However, a closer look at the civil society shows that still much needs to be done to make civil society more vibrant, active and effective. In order to assess the past performance and impact of CSOs, their strengths and weaknesses, a group of Mongolian NGOs have undertaken, together with CIVICUS (World Alliance for citizen participation) a study on the state of civil society in Mongolia. In doing so it used CIVICUS' toolkit, action-research methodology and 73 indicators. The civil society itself has been able to assess its status in four dimensions: structure, environment, values and impact and make its own conclusions. The findings were also presented to the Government and publicized. The study showed that the civil society was still weak and needed a good supportive legislation and other enabling environment, capacity building, proper conditions for its in-depth development, financial and other forms of support to increase its effectiveness and practical impact to meet its goals. The government and local authorities were asked to take then necessary legal, administrative and other measures to support civil society, especially in the country-side.

The CIVICUS practical toolkit proved very useful for Mongolian civil society and the Government. I would strongly encourage that its methods be used to assist and support civil society organizations. My delegation would be more than happy to share this experience with the participating states or their civil society organizations.