

Address by H. E. Dr. Enkhsaikhan, Ambassador of Mongolia  
at commemoration of the World Cancer Day

Vienna

4 February 2010

Mr. Director General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This day - the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, World Cancer Day - is celebrated throughout the world to raise cancer awareness and convey the message that cancer can be prevented, and that jointly all of us can prevent it to a large extent.

However, we should ask ourselves: what is the reality ? The answer is that cancer targets the richest as well as the poorest parts of the world, and indiscriminately takes the lives of men, women, and children of all ages. Cancer continues to take the life of colleagues, friends, family and all those who are close to our hearts. That is why for many of us this day is of special significance.

As we all know, cancer is the world's second leading cause of death after the cardiovascular disease. Those who are affected the most live in the poorest countries. In developing countries today cancer takes the life of **10 people each minute**. In my own country, Mongolia, cancer is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death, with liver cancer as the dominant among both men and women. More and more people continue to be diagnosed with cancer, many of them at a late even terminal stage.

The Government of Mongolia fully recognizes that cancer is a grave health problem for its people, and is committed to investing in the prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer, as well as in the provision of palliative care to those who can no longer be cured. Following IAEA Director General's visit to Mongolia in April last year, the country requested the assistance of the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). PACT offers *imPACT* review missions to countries to assess the cancer situation and the national response capacity, and helps them identify the needs and priorities based on the resources available. Then based on mission's findings, recommendations are made to the government concerned. PACT conducted a "preliminary" mission and later in the year a "full" mission together with international experts. Both missions have been extremely valuable to Mongolia and reinforced the hope that cancer can be prevented and cured, and that it is never too late to act.

More than 40% of cancer deaths can be prevented if available knowledge and technologies are applied. For my country, and others as well, that means that the lives of hundreds of men, women and children can be saved every year if we act together to fight cancer. For this reason, I would like to mark the World Cancer Day with a message of hope: together we can plan and act more effectively for cancer control and mobilize greater resources to deliver effective strategies for prevention, treatment and palliative care. With the progress in science and technology, I am sure that it will be possible to unlock, should I say the “genesis” of cancer and find better, more humane cures to this epidemic. I would like to thank the IAEA once again for its assistance and invite all of you gathered here today to join the fight against cancer in you countries. Together, we can make a difference in fighting this terrible epidemic.

Thank you for your attention.