

Brief introductory statement made by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan at the opening of  
“Discover Mongolia” event at the Vienna City Library

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It gives me a great honor to open the “Discover Mongolia” full day event at the Vienna City Library. This event coincides with the marking in Mongolia of 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining of Mongolian independence from Manchu rule and the establishment of modern Mongolian diplomatic service. The participants of this event can also get some ideas about the political history of Mongolia in the past century downstairs in this building by reviewing the photo exhibition and brief comments to them. It tries to tell the history of a small, yet proud nation trying to reassert its sovereignty and independence at the height of colonial and imperial policies, when there was a constant fight (literally and indeed) over territories of smaller nations, for spheres of influence followed by policies of dividing the world into different ideological camps in line with the notion of divide and conquer. Many small nations became part of larger countries either by their own will or by brute or subtle force. Mongolia paid a huge price to retain its nominal independence, reassert sovereignty over its territory and promote normal friendly relations with other countries. It can be considered as one of the success stories of small nations that were able, despite difficulties and obstacles, reassert both their independence and sovereignty.

In this brief introductory statement I would like to briefly touch upon the following issues: 1. Concept of Mongolia’s foreign policy and its priorities; 2. Commitment to multilateralism; 3. European policy; and 4. Mongolian-Austrian relations.

**One. Concept of Mongolia’s foreign policy and its priorities.** After the end of two cold wars, the disintegration of the Soviet block and of the Soviet Union, a qualitatively new international environment was created. Mongolia was no longer tied ideologically or otherwise with its northern neighbor – the Soviet Union. I said two cold wars, since being located between the Soviet Union and China, Mongolia was also victim of Sino-Soviet cold war. This cold war started as an ideological dispute and soon turned into a full-blown inter-state dispute over territorial and other issues and even armed clashed in some border regions. So the new concept of foreign policy underlined the importance our relations with its neighbors and underlined that it should be a foreign policy priority. In dealing with the two neighbors it declared that it would not side with anyone of them and promote balanced relations, taking a neutral position in future possible conflicts between them. That was well understood and supported by our two neighbors.

The concept did not limit itself to the policy with regard to its two neighbors. Bearing in mind the lessons of the past and the emerging new, more open international relations, it proclaimed a policy of the “third neighbor”. This is meant to reach out to other countries or groupings of counties and develop friendly and mutually beneficial relations with them. That would counter-balance our excessive focus or dependence on relations with our immediate neighbors. Mongolia has been pursuing such a policy for the past 20 years and the results are positive and encouraging. Mongolia is overcoming the sense of geographical determinism. Now

it maintains working relationship with all 193 members of the United Nations, has formal diplomatic relations with 153 countries. It cooperates with many countries through the network of over 110 international and regional organizations as well as nearly 240 treaties and conventions. As an Asian country, it maintains close relations with many of them through bilateral relations and regional cooperative mechanisms.

**Two. Commitment to multilateralism.** As an integral part of the global family of nations, Mongolia tries to be an active member, contributing, where it can, to the global efforts to address the common challenges and achieve the common goals. It actively participates in the discussion on issues pertaining to strengthening international peace and security, protecting the environment, promoting economic development and social justice, strengthening human rights and basic freedoms, and supporting democratic reforms and changes throughout the world. In 1992 Mongolia proclaimed its territory a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone and is working to have that status internationally accepted so that its territory will never be used against security interests of other countries, including its neighbors. In terms of conventional security, Mongolia is one of the regular contributors of international peace-keeping troops and observers, As if today Mongolian peace-keepers are stationed in troubled spots far away from Mongolia, such as the Congo, Western Sahara, South Sudan, Eritrea, Georgia, Sierra Leone, Chad, Darfur and Kosovo.

With respect to economic development, it is one of the eloquent spokesmen of land-locked developing countries that are the most least developed countries. To highlight the plight of these countries, Mongolia has established in Ulaanbaatar an international think tank to address their pressing issues.

In the area of human rights and democracy promotion, it has in the past 20 years been able to achieve a lot not only at the national level, but also internationally. Nationally, Mongolia has been successfully holding local, parliamentary and presidential elections, that all have been recognized as free and fair. It has free mass media. It has a strong civil society. It is now working to strengthen the independence of its judiciary. Internationally, in 2003-2006 it chaired the Fifth International Conference of new and restored democracies. Since July 1 of this year it is chairing the Community of Democracies, focusing on democracy education and strengthening civil society in the world.

**Three. European policy.** As an Asian country it attaches great importance to developing its relations with Northeast and Central Asia. However, following its multipolar foreign policy, its history and shared values, Mongolia attaches special importance to its European policy as part of its “third neighbor” policy. This is also conforms to its policy of diversifying further its trade and economic relations and adopting European standards where needed and feasible. In 1989 it established formal relations with the European Union and has since been developing all-round relations with the EU and many of its members. In order to further strengthen the legal basis of the relations with the EU and its member states, Mongolia has negotiated and initialed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which is expected soon to be signed. At present it enjoys trade benefits in the form of GSP+ and has observer status at the European Committee on Standardization. EU’s technical bureau in Mongolia will soon be turned into a full-fledged diplomatic mission. Last week Mongolia has applied for membership of the OSCE. All the above demonstrate not only our interest in expanding our relations with the European countries

but also, to the extent possible, broaden and deepen them. This brings me to the fourth point that I want to make.

**Four. Mongolian-Austrian relations.** These are one of the oldest relations of Mongolia with a western country. During the cold war Austria was one of Mongolia's main non-socialist trade partners. After the cold war Mongolia was able to develop its trade relations with many other European countries and therefore mutual trade did not expand. Both sides are now working to expand further economic relations. The intergovernmental commission has identified a few areas of mutually advantageous cooperation. Also the two sides are looking into the possibility of jointly 'penetrating' into rapidly expanding markets of nearly 40 million consumers of Mongolian neighbor regions – Siberia and Northern China. Mongolia's priority in Austria is promotion of cultural and educational cooperation. The two countries regularly hold cultural programs and are now working on the terms of expanding cooperation in the area of education, including technical education.

Today's "Discover Mongolia" program, I hope, will give you a better understanding of my country, its history, people, culture and traditions.