

Brief introductory statement by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan at OSCE  
open briefing regarding Mongolia's request for participant status

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Hofburg, Vienna

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for organizing this open briefing in connection with Mongolia's official request for OSCE participant status. I think that it is indeed a timely meeting that, I hope, will shed light on Mongolia's foreign policy, the reasons for the request as well as respond to questions related to the formal application, if any. I hope that this open briefing will be useful for the participating states in addressing this issue.

I shall make 5 points: reasons for Mongolia's request, European policy, the OSCE factor, how can Mongolia contribute to OSCE (some preliminary thoughts) and what has been done so far.

***Reasons for Mongolia's request***

Geographical location reflects to a certain extent and influences foreign policy needs and priorities. Mongolia is a land-locked country, situated between two great powers: the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Hence its priorities throughout history has been to try to manage its relations with each one of them and not to be caught in their disputes, if possible. Foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy and reflection of its interests. The foreign policy concept, which has been slightly renewed earlier this year to reflect the changes in the region and the world in general, is a pragmatic document that has reiterated that relations with the two neighbors will be our priority. In promoting these relations Mongolia is pursuing a policy of balanced relationship and refrain from taking anyone's side unless the dispute affected directly its vital interests.

One of the national priorities, and thus of the foreign policy, is to ensure sustainable economic growth, improved livelihood of the people and full enjoyment of their collective and individual rights.

At the same time our past experience and the process of globalization demonstrate the need for broadening our relations with the world way beyond our two neighbors. Thus since early 1990s Mongolia has been promoting the concept and policy of the "third neighbor", i.e. a policy of promoting cooperation with industrialized countries and international organizations based on principles of equality, mutual trust and cooperation.

***European policy***

Mongolia's relations with Europe dates back to III century B.C and XIII century A.D. Fast-forwarding to the second half of the XX century, even during the cold war it promoted political, economic, trade and even people-to-people relations with many countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The end of the cold war opened broad opportunity to expand these relations

to other parts of Europe: north, west and south. Mongolia is promoting its relations with the countries of Europe and Central Asia on the basis of equality, mutual respect and interest. Our overture and return to Europe is a conscious choice based on our interests; it goes beyond geopolitics and includes geo-economics, shared values and common interests.

Since 1989 it is promoting relations with the European Union (EU). It initiated a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU, which is expected to be signed very soon. Mongolia is working to adopt many of European principles, norms and standards, be it in education, health care, democracy promotion and human rights, economic development, environment protection or other areas. It already has an observer status with the European Committee for Standardization. It is promoting its relations with the European countries and the EU on the basis of mid- and long-term plans of cooperation.

### ***The OSCE factor***

Our interest in OSCE is in line with our “third neighbor” and European policies. It is based on OSCE’s agreed principles, shared commitments and responsibilities as well as on our experience gained as its active partners since 2004, including organizing in 2007 and 2011 of OSCE-Mongolia conferences. More important, it is connected with consolidating further the positive changes in the society and improving the quality of life of the people. The regional cooperation structure that the OSCE offers, which is not too rigid and is to be made more effective and efficient, is also a positive element for a small country as Mongolia. For us membership is not an end in itself, but rather a means to promote our national interests and that of the organization as a whole in accordance with the agreed goals, principles and values, and making use of the valuable accumulated experience. Like in the case of other countries, many of our national goals can be attained better through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the participating states of this organization.

### ***How can Mongolia contribute to OSCE***

I should like to point out first of all what Mongolia will not contribute. As underlined in the letter of our Minister, Mongolia ...”has no territorial dispute or border problem with its neighbors and is promoting strategic partnership relations with them.” I would also add that we have no ‘frozen’ or hidden conflicts, nor unresolved historical debt issue with anyone of them.

Mongolia in general pursues a policy of an active member of the international community be it at the regional or international levels. Our policy with regard to OSCE will be in line with that policy. Though it might be too early to speak of Mongolia’s added value, nevertheless my Government is determined to contribute to this institution and to actively participate in shaping our common Eurasian future. In today’s increasingly interdependent world contribution to the strengthening of common security depends on country’s comparative advantage that can no longer be measured in the numbers of weapons or the size of the GDP, however important they may be. Contribution by example and providing the needed expertise is one area to look into. Based on its experience, at the end of the cold war Mongolia declared its territory a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone so that its territory will not be used to harm others.

As a land-locked developing country it is working together with other such countries to raise the issue of free access to markets as a developmental issue. As a member of the community of nations, it contributes to peace-keeping in many parts of the world, including in Kosovo. In 2003-2006 it chaired the Conference of new and restored democracies and developed national democracy and good governance indicators and widely shared its experience. Since 1 July of this year it is chairing the Community of Democracies and is working to promote democracy education, supporting NGOs and civil society as well as strengthening of the community's regional cooperation and sharing of experience. I think that it could be yet another area where we could add value.

In the economic field, Mongolia's mineral resources are attracting enormous interest and attention; the majority of such interest comes from within Eurasia. From a more sustainable angle, its history and actual location provide an alternative direct land connection between Europe and East Asia. With Asia-Europe two way trade reaching almost 1 trillion dollars, a number of silk roads would be needed to service this huge and increasing demand in such services. In our case, the Trans-Siberian and Trans-Mongolian rails can contribute considerably in lowering of transit costs and shortening the delivery time. By doing so Mongolia would be contributing to bringing East and West closer.

### ***What has been done so far***

Based on OSCE experience and our close cooperation with the organization, the Mongolian Government for some time has been studying the utility and necessity of applying for a partner status. Based on its conclusions, in May of this year it expressed its interest to up-grade its status to that of a participating state. The informal consultations held since then have revealed a very positive response from the participating states, though, it should be pointed out, there was some concern that it might set a precedent. Mongolian Foreign Minister reiterated the country's interest when he addressed the Permanent Council on 9 June. Further informal consultations have lead the Government to take a decision to apply for participant status and send an official letter to the Chairmanship-in-Office in that regard. The possible content of the letter was discussed informally with the Chairmanship-in-Office, the Secretariat and many participating states so that there would be no 'surprises' and that the concerns raised during the consultations would be addressed to the extent possible.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the participating states to look at Mongolia's request on its own merits and not to link it with or make a hostage to other issues.