

Brief remarks by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan regarding promotion of
democratic governance indicators (DGIs) in Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

24 May 2011

Yesterday in his opening remarks Mr. Paul Fritch, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General made reference to the democratic governance indicators (DGIs) that Mongolia had developed when it was chairing the International Conference of New and Restored Democracies (ICNRD) in 2003-2006, qualifying it as a useful reference for others. Mr. Douglas Wake, First deputy director of ODHIR has also made brief reference to Mongolia's experience. Having been involved at that time in developing these indicators as part of Mongolian civil society, I would like to make the following brief remarks.

The DGIs were one of the three nationally produced democracy support, promotion and assessment tools, the other two being the Country Information Notes (CINs) and National Plan of Action (NPoA). Mongolian civil society organizations participated in every stage of development of these support and assessment tools as part of developing national civil society 'democracy watch' mechanism.

By 2003 there were already over 30 democracy or governance assessment methods and indicators in the world. However most of them have been developed by research institutes for the purpose of inter-country comparisons. Many governance indicators had been developed mostly by donor agencies to measure the effectiveness, outcomes and impact of their democracy assistance programs.

When developing its DGIs, Mongolian scholars and experts made use of the International IDEA methodology and tailored it to reflect the country's specifics, without which it would not be practically useful nor accepted by the society in general. The fundamental principles of democratic governance, it was agreed, were *popular control* and *political equality*. It was decided to have two sets of indicators: core (relevant in all democracies) and satellite (reflecting Mongolia's specifics). When developing the DGIs a special emphasis was made to make them simple, i.e. reader- and user-friendly. National and regional meetings were held to solicit comments and contributions from experts and interested people. DGIs' practical use was to inform the public and policy-makers alike on the state of democracy and where governance reform was needed the most.

117 core and 14 satellite indicators had been developed for that purpose. A deliberately open approach to developing the indicators had enabled ordinary people, politicians and even lawmakers to go beyond general reference to the need of promotion of democracy and move focus on concrete indicators and action and thus take concrete measures to promote democracy and assess the strength and weaknesses of democracy in the society. I was just told by Mrs. Oyun, Member of Parliament, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and member of

the National committee of ICNRD, that the third national report on the state of democracy in Mongolia has been produced based on the DGIs.

Briefly about the two other democracy promotion leverages mentioned above. The CINs were drawn up based on the outcome of DGI study and its indicators and formed the basis of a country report on the state of democracy that was drawn up not by government officials but by independent experts. The state of democracy was measured by evaluating it by scores from 1 to 5, the latter being the highest evaluation. The independent experts had evaluated in 2006 (i.e. five years ago) the country's state of democracy as being 3.02 (just above average), and pointed to the areas of challenge as well as to priority issues for democracy promotion and democratic governance. CINs at the time was considered as a peer review tool.

NPoA was drawn up based on the outcome of wide popular consultations and bearing in mind the outcome of the DGI study. It covered such areas as the strength and weakness of the country's democratic system, challenges to democracy, etc. It focused on such issues as free and fair elections, capacity building of election administrative organizations, monitoring election financing, development of political parties, promotion and protection of individual rights, open and accountable state, minimizing corruption, independent and fair court system, strengthening of the parliament, civil society development, local governance, civic education, etc.

The civil society has played and is still playing an important "democracy watch" functions. That is why when taking over the Chairmanship of the Community of Democracies, special emphasis would be laid on supporting and promoting civil society. We believe that NGOs can play an essential role in promoting human rights and democratic governance. As of 2010 Mongolia, with a population of 2.7 mln, had over 8.300 registered NGOs that are considered as an important democracy support and assessment tool.

Therefore, if the OSCE participating or partner states or ODHIR develops an interest, we could organize some round-table discussions to share our experience in developing and promoting the DGIs, and supporting and involving the civil society.