

Brief statement by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan at the opening of the
photo exhibition on the political history of Mongolia in the XX century

2 November 2011

Vienna

Ms. Susanne Bluma, MP Vienna & local Councillor,
Mr. Christian Jahl, Head of Library Vienna,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you all for accepting our invitation to take part in the official opening of the photo exhibition on the political history of Mongolia in the XX century, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of regaining of Mongolian independence from Manchu domination and establishment of Mongolian diplomatic service.

Mongolia's political history was intimately linked to the political and other processes that occurred in our part of the world, especially in Russia and China. It was also, to some extent, a reflection of relations between our two giant neighbors as well as relations among the great powers at the dawn of the XX century. Land-locked Mongolia was a *terra incognita* for most of the world. It took Mongolians almost a century to get where we are today, to become an accepted, equal and active member of the family of nations.

The past century for Mongolians was a century of reassertion of its independence, of having that independence recognized first by its two neighbors, then by other great powers and the rest of the world. For over three last decades I had the honor to serve my country in this important area.

There are three distinct periods of Mongolian foreign policy in the past 100 years:

- Have our declared independence recognized by our immediate neighbors (which took almost half of the century);
- Have our independence and sovereignty recognized by other great powers and the rest of the world (from 1960's to 1990's); and
- Promote a foreign policy that reaches out beyond the two giant neighbors, the so-called 'third neighbor' policy and become an equal and full member of the international community of this XXI century and pursue a policy that is in its interests as well as that of the international family of nations (last 20 years).

The photo exhibition tries to show the political history Mongolia in close connection with the evolving international and regional situations, with which its destiny was tightly linked. Such factors as a large territory and a very small population, a land-locked location that hampers free access to other countries and markets beyond the two neighbors, the revolutionary and radical transformations in the neighboring countries and some other objective factors determined to a large extent our history of the past century.

The 39 photos of the exhibition are arranged chronologically. The Embassy tried to briefly comment on the period that the photo represented and on the photo itself. This is not a crash course in the political history of Mongolia, but just some attempt to show to the public in a general manner what happened to Mongolia in the past century.

Mongolia tries to develop relations with as all the countries based on the principles of mutual respect, understanding and mutual benefit. With the host country – Austria – my country enjoys friendly and mutually respectful relations. Austria was the second western country to have recognized and established diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1963 when the cold war was intensifying. Minister Willibald Pahr was the first western foreign minister to visit Mongolia, for which we are thankful.

In the era of globalization, our first priority with Austria is cooperation in the areas of culture and education, learning from the rich experience of Austria in the areas of our interest. It is with such a mission that a delegation of Selenge aimag (one of the 21 provinces of Mongolia that is considered as the country's bread-basket with a territory that is half the size of Austria) is visiting Austria and is present today at the opening of this exhibition. I would like to take this opportunity to wish the delegation a most fruitful and pleasant visit. Mayor of the city of Ulaanbaatar last year visited Vienna and we are working on the follow-ups of that successful visit.

This exhibition was not intended to show today's Mongolia, its splendor, uniqueness, its people and traditions. However, the organizers will provide a wide opportunity for the general public to learn more about today's Mongolia the day after tomorrow, when a whole day event "Discover Mongolia" will be organized here in this library. Those that are interested in Mongolia, its people, culture, religion and traditions will have an opportunity to be informed and have interactive discussion with experts in those areas. The event will be held between 11:30 and 16:40.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for coming to the opening of this exhibition and express the hope that you will get a glimpse of Mongolia's political history of the past century.

I would like to that this opportunity to thank the City of Vienna and Vienna library for their support and cooperation. Please enjoy the exhibition and the evening.