Development Dialogue 8
SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN MONGOLIA
(16 June 2014, Ulaanbaatar)

Opening remark

Mr. Ts. Bayarsaikhan, Minister of Construction and Urban Development

His excellency Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Regional director for Asia and the Pacific in the UNDP

Her Excellency Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu, UNDP Resident Representative,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon to all of you attending today’s Development Dialogue on sustainable urban development in Mongolia.

Today’s Dialogue is one of the Development Dialogue series organized by the UNDP in cooperation with the Government organizations of Mongolia.

The objective of this dialogue is to exchange views and opinions about urban development in our country, social challenges accompanying the urbanization, and its impacts and to share international experiences. The dialogue brings together national and local governments, relevant officials, civil society, the private sector, and representatives of international organizations.

Urban development in Mongolia with its ancient history, extreme continental climate, vast territory, and traditional nomadic culture, and customs has seen distinct history and has undergone on its own with some special characteristics.

Since the mid 20th century the country has undertaken rapid urbanization and established urban centers. With transition to a market economy in 1990s as the Mongolian constitution stipulates “Legal basis for cities and villages in administrative and territorial units shall be established by law” (Provision 2, Article 57, Constitution of Mongolia), Law on Cities and Villages was adopted in 1993 to establish legal basis for economic, social development and management of urban centers.

Today Mongolia’s population stands at 2.9 million and urbanization level reached 67 percent due to migration into urban centers from rural areas. 76 percent of population lives in urban areas such the capital city, regional centers, aimag centers, and soums centers. Capital Ulaanbaatar city houses 44 percent of population, 70 percent of economic entities and companies and produces over 60 percent of Gross Domestic Product.
As a result the population settlement structure has changed and in some respect has caused adverse impact on rapid social development. Inequality in urban and rural development could sometimes serve as a factor for rapid urbanization.

The Government of Mongolia has given considerable attention to address policy challenges such as ensuring the long term sustainable development, and constructing urban centers with access to health, security services and comfortable lifestyles by creating interlinked system of urban and rural settlements, establishing balanced development throughout the country and reforming urban development planning. Hence a National Committee led by the Prime Minister has been established to manage and supervise development of “Master Plan of urban development in Mongolia”. I am pleased to note that UNHABITAT is to cooperate and assist us on the Master Plan development.

A document “supplements to the UB city development master plan for 2020 and its development trend for 2030” is being developed to be adopted by the Parliament for the first time in history.

The Government Action Plan for 2012-2016 constitutes to pursue a policy “redevelopment of all aimag centers and settlements with more than 15000 population into cities” to develop urban centers and their infrastructure, and to reduce overcrowding in urban areas in order to achieve the economic development and the sustainable growth. Major reconstruction work such as revisions to aimag centers development plans, construction of 1000 apartment complexes and “Soum center development” program have been undertaken by the Ministry of Construction and Urban Development with state budget fund to discourage migration to urban areas from rural areas, to improve sustainable, healthy, safe living conditions in rural areas and to increase housing supply. The Ministry has also presented proposal “upgrading of some city status to national status” to the Parliament for approval.

I trust that you all participate actively in today’s dialogue by freely exchanging your views and opinions in order to provide your valuable inputs into development of a State Policy and Planning on improvement of Mongolia’s urban development and legal system to international standards, addressing the challenges and problems facing the urbanization in Mongolia and identifying the current and future demand and trends.

I wish you all a success in the Development dialogue.

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