68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THIRD COMMITTEE
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STATEMENT BY MRS. ULZIIBAYAR VANGANSUREN,
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ON AGENDA ITEM 65 (a) – PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mr. Chairman,

The reports presented by the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives for the current session illustrate notable achievements by countries in promotion and protection of the rights of the child and promising progress across the world in the implementation of the MDGs related to the well-being of children. However, the same reports rightly emphasize that despite the successful measures and encouraging policies taken in the member states, there are serious challenges remaining for the world community in ensuring better conditions for the children.

Mr. Chairman,

A few days ago, Mongolia signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. It has become our first step to allow our children to submit complaints regarding violations of their rights to the international body. While anticipating the entry into force of the Protocol in the nearest future, my delegation would like to stress importance of bringing the Convention and its first two Optional Protocols to universal participation.

Our Government has been paying special attention to the implementation of its treaties and other international obligations on children’s rights as well as the recommendations given by the Committee on the Rights of the Child with respect to Mongolia’s first four reports. The Government coordinates its national plans with the Action Plan of the “World Fit for the Children” Declaration.

Efficient legal and institutional system favorable to children is a priority goal of our Government. An extensive list of laws, including the Law on Protection of the Rights of the Child, and national strategies and programs\(^1\) serves such purpose. The Government established a special fund to support implementation of specific programs and projects for children’s development and protection.

\(^1\) MDG’s based Comprehensive National Development Strategy, the State Policy on Population and Family and the Strategic Paper on Reduction of Poverty through Promotion of Economic Growth etc.
Units on family and children’s affairs are operating in the central and local government organizations. There are 34 projects implemented by 19 UN and other international organizations and 5 network national organizations and 98 NGOs carrying out activities in this area in Mongolia. More than half of the projects are designed to improve social welfare and protection of children.

In this regard, we want to emphasize our successful cooperation with UNICEF and other international children’s organizations. In 2012, for instance, UNICEF led the formation of a Child Rights Group comprising the heads of organisations working with children and the group acts as a high-level observer of child rights in the country, while advocating for the effective implementation of policies and budget allocations designed to equitably benefit children.

Mr. Chairman,

37 percent of our population is children. Thus, 7 out of the Mongolia’s 9 MDGs involve children’s rights. Yet, with the poverty rate of 29.8 percent, one of three children lives in poverty. Poverty, especially rural poverty, social disparity and unemployment exacerbated by continuing migration from rural to urban areas seriously affect the rights of children to decent living conditions resulting in malnutrition, poor health, mental disorders, school drop-outs, susceptibility to crimes and accidents, drugs and alcohol, hard domestic and other labour and the risk of being exploited. The impact could be even harsher for the children in disadvantaged situation, especially those with disabilities.

The Government of Mongolia has been taking measures to improve the rights of children to proper education and health services.

With the current level of 92.9 percent primary education, we believe that we can fully achieve the goal by 2015. Particular efforts have been made to increase the enrollment ratio in primary education. For example, one of incentives to attract children to schooling was the Government’s “School Lunch” program. As it has been revealed by a recent survey that more than half of children in temples and churches in Mongolia had limited access to education opportunities, UNICEF assisted 120 monastic boys get enrolled into non-formal education programmes, in addition to 600 out-of-school children who were already engaged in NFE this year. We are convinced that lifelong learning starts with primary schooling. In this connection, my delegation expresses appreciation to fellow member states for their continued support to the initiative by Mongolia on “Literacy for Life.”

As a result of the Government’s comprehensive program, including measures aimed at preventing common childhood disease, child mortality reduced to 26 deaths per 1000 live
births. Yet, more has to be done by 2015 to reach the goal of 21. Recognizing the human rights dimension in health services and the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, Mongolia co-sponsored the Resolution on "Preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern" at the 24th session of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Government is deeply concerned with the implementation of the international standards such as Minimum Age Convention and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. As underscored by the recent Third Global Conference on Child Labour, the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 may not be achieved; thus, states should take increased efforts to come to the universally acceptable definition of child labour. The grave practice of hard child labour may not be accepted and must be eliminated.

As a party to the relevant Palermo Protocol, our Government gives a high priority to the protection of women's and children's rights. More has to be done to improve the post-adoption supervision in inter-country adoptions, alternative care for orphans and children without family-care, education of girls on reproductive health, and to end domestic violence.

Media and civil society play a significant role in the advocacy and promotion of the rights of the child. While ensuring the children's right to express their own views, we should encourage their active participation in the decisions affecting them.

Mr. Chairman,

Children are symbols of our future, but their rights should not be symbolic. To address the unrealized goals, we must adopt comprehensive national policies, take coordinated actions and coherent measures, and make generous, yet wise investments in our children.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my Government's support to the proposals and the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and express our readiness to accept innovative tools and means to address the complex nature of the child rights issues and cooperate with UN in introducing new multidimensional approaches in our policy-making.

Our today's common achievement is our children's common future. For that reason, the post-2015 development agenda must be guided by their future.

I thank you.