

MONGOLIA (Country Case Study)

[Mongolia] Focal Point:		
A. Background		
1. Which UNCT members have collaborated on this case study? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... 		
2. Which national partners (governmental and non-governmental) were involved in developing this case study and how? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... 		
3. Does the case study illustrate one or several phases or levels?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapting SDG 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementing SDG 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring & Reporting on SDG 16
<input type="checkbox"/> National level	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional level	<input type="checkbox"/> Local level
B. Case Study		
OPTION 1 (pre-structured)		
4. Country context for the achievement of SDG 16		
<p>Mongolia ranks 92nd in the HDI, placing it in the high HD category at 0.741. After some years of stagnation, macro-economic performance registered 6.4% GDP growth in 2018, driven by an increase in commodity prices and higher exports in minerals. The high levels of dependency on commodity exports for growth leave the country vulnerable to external/internal shocks & global price fluctuations. The last years have witnessed growing social discontent amidst economic decline. The perceptions of Mongolians of their well-being are lower than global average with only 36% satisfied with the quality of health care and 27% with environmental protection. Less than 1/3 (28%) has confidence in the national government¹. The government's focus on economic development and political power struggles have taken attention away from social and environmental priorities.</p> <p>Currently, one of the most pressing development bottlenecks affecting the lives of many people is air pollution, and related public discontent on the lack of decisive government actions on the worsening air pollution that has reached toxic levels in the capital city and provincial centers. Air pollution caused primarily by the reliance on coal-based heating has become the most important environmental and health concern. The mortality rate attributed to indoor/outdoor air pollution is 155.9 deaths/100,000 people, placing Mongolia in the high-impacted countries². During winter air pollution levels as high as 3,320 µg/m³ are reported, exceeding the WHO safe limit by 133 times³. This life threatening level of air pollution interferes with the basic human rights to life and health as well as with the constitutional rights of every Mongolian citizen to live in a healthy and safe living environment (Article 6.2). The risk of newborn deaths is higher among poor, rural and disadvantaged groups who are less likely to have access to quality care. One leading cause of infant and child mortality is respiratory illness due to air pollution. Initial analysis showed that in the last 10 years, the</p>		

¹ Human Development indices and indicators: 2018 Statistical Update

² Human Development indices and indicators: 2018 Statistical Update

³ Mongolia's Air Pollution Crisis, Discussion paper, UNICEF, 2018

incidence of respiratory diseases in Mongolia increased alarmingly, including a 2.7-fold increase in respiratory infections per 10 000 population.⁴ Pneumonia is now the second leading cause of under-five child mortality in the country.³³ Children living in a highly polluted district of central Ulaanbaatar were found to have 40% lower lung function than children living in a rural area.⁵ Childhood exposure to air pollution can also lead to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease later in life. These indicators were included in measuring progress towards SDG 3.

To combat air pollution the Mayor of Ulaanbaatar issued a decree to prevent registration for those arriving in Ulaanbaatar between 2017 and 2020. This is due to the rapid and significant rural to urban migration by people who move to the capital in search of improved living conditions and employment.⁶ Urban migrants often reside in the ger district where access to sanitation, running water and electricity is sparse and reliance on coal to heat their homes is intensified adding to the urban poor and number of coal fires contributing to air pollution. The ban on registration, even if temporary, prevents urban migrants from being able to access public services such as health-care, education and social welfare.⁷

Since the 2010s, the government has intensified its fights against air pollution by adopting and amending the laws, introducing the policies, programs, emergency interventions and improving the availability and quality of the monitoring indicators and tools. In 2017, the Government's National Program for Reducing Air and Environmental Pollution (NPRAEP) The approved National program on Air Pollution with significant target of reducing air pollutants by 2025 (PM_{2.5} to 3.7 times the national standard, PM₁₀ to 2.8 times and SO₂ by 76%)⁸ compared with the base year of 2016. reducing pollution by 80% compared with the baseline year of 2016. To measure its progress multiple SDG related indicators will be applied, among them the SDG 16 related targets and indicators on corruption, accountability of institutions, participatory decision-making, information access (SDG 16.5, SDG 16.6, SDG 16.7, SDG 16.10). After slowdown in their implementation during economic crisis of 2015-2016, the implementation of air pollution reduction efforts has picked up again over the last two years.

Success and continued financing, both private and public, of the newly adopted and amended policies and programs to reduce air pollution will hinge on the overall institutional stability, their continuity beyond one electoral cycle, systematic enforcement, independent monitoring and evaluation and transparent decision-making. Continued dialogue with citizens leading to a mutual compact and accountability for achieving realistically set air pollution reduction targets cannot be underestimated.

5. Efforts to achieve SDG 16

Since the transition to a market economy Mongolia started to introduce the principles of democratic society. During the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) era Mongolia was **a country, which has formulated and implemented an additional MDG 9** on enhancing human rights and democratic governance. The most notable achievement of this process was the approval of the Parliamentary Resolution no.25 dated April 2005, endorsing the national MDGs and adopting the Mongolia's Ninth MDG.

⁴ National Center for Health Development, Ulaanbaatar Mongolia. Initial analysis by UNICEF Country office [2017; unpublished. ³³ Ochir C.; Smith K.R.; Hill D.L.; Olkhanud P.B.; Damdinsuren Y.; Munkhtuul O.; Edwards R.D.; Turner J.R. Final Project Report: Air Pollution and Health In Ulaanbaatar, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 2014.

<http://ehsdiv.sph.berkeley.edu/krsmith/publications/2014/UB%20Final%20Report%20-%20July%2010.pdf>

⁵ Dashdendev B, Fukushima LK, Woo MS, Ganbaatar E, Warburton D. Carbon monoxide pollution and lung function in urban compared with rural Mongolian children. *Respirology*. 2011; 16:653-8 ³⁵ NSO, www.1212.mn, accessed 30 April 2018.

⁶ Mongolia Internal Migration Study, IOM, 2017 <<https://publications.iom.int/books/mongolia-internal-migration-study>>

⁷ Urban Migrant Vulnerability Assessment, IOM, 2017, <<https://publications.iom.int/books/mongolia-urban-migrant-vulnerability-assessment>>

⁸ Targets are specified in the NPRAEP, GOM, 2017

As the SDGs were adopted in 2015, the country is firmly committed to align its planning, budgeting and monitoring tools, processes and mechanism with the SDG acceleration processes. The Parliament of Mongolia approved the Sustainable Development Vision 2030 (SDV), a long-term development policy document, in February of 2016. SDV is a key policy document for implementing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and necessitates an integration of the long-term policy objectives into national and sub-national development policy planning and financing system, and it provides opportunities to focus on paving the foundations for more *inclusive societies*

- In December of 2018, the government adopted the methodology for assessing the policy coherence by the Cabinet Resolution No.294, which requires each ministry to conduct review of the policies and programs to align with long-term vision and prepare medium-term development plans to achieve SDV/SDGs by 2030. A series of consultations were carried out to ensure the sectoral policy coordination using the system thinking approach. The sector-wise consultations have **identified governance as a most critical issue in implementing the country's long-term vision;**
- **Building more effective, accountable and transparent institutions** is a core of the SDG-induced reforms in Mongolia. Institutionally, the country has set working mechanisms to accelerate the SDG achievement at the legislative and executive government level. The Parliamentary SDG sub-committee and SDG national committee under the Prime Minister are mandated to guide and oversee the SDG process. During the SDG national committee meeting in May of 2018, the findings of the UN-ADB joint MAPS mission were discussed. The mission has echoed the government's position to tackle the air pollution as a cross-cutting themes which requires coordinated and integrated national efforts. Among the approaches to reduce air pollution, **for the first-time, the** country has exercised provisions of the Law on Public Hearing. In accordance with Article 8 of the Law on Public Hearing, the Standing Committee on Environment, Food and Agriculture of the Parliament held the hearing on air pollution issues on January 30th, 2019. The main purpose of the public hearing - as an accountability mechanism - was to bring together the stakeholders and make available information to the public, particularly on use of public resources allocated to reduce air pollution.
- Based on the MDG lesson to diversify the financing options, the Ministry of Finance started to reform its budget process to be more **SDG-informed** and aligned with the country's long-term vision.
- SDG 16 related efforts are coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (MOJHA). Among other priorities the ministry started to create the **Monitoring and Evaluation system**, which will support the country to collect data, particularly reaching the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups and introduce innovative approaches in data collection and processing.

In order to institutionalize the goal's implementation monitoring the national authorities introduced the module on Governance to the regular Household Socio-Economic Survey in 2010. Since then, the governance and public service related data have been collected on the quarterly basis, and the national institutions started to generate experience on developing measurement tools for this goal. The survey includes the governance and public service-related indicators⁹ such as Public perception of political, economic, and financial independence of mass media; Public perception of activities of state organizations; and Public perception of corruption in public administration and public service were collected on the quarterly basis, and the national institutions have generated experience on developing measurement tools for this goal. For SDG 16 target on accountable institutions the above indicators can be applied and matched with the **Indicator 16.6.2:** Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services. However, due to completion of MDG era the survey module has discontinued. Now it is advisable, with SDG 16 measurement processes to re-introduce this survey module.

The SDG 16 is the most complex and challenging goal in terms of measuring and collecting relevant data. In 2016, the national counterparts **mapped out and assessed Mongolia's data ecosystem¹⁰ in terms of** the

⁹ NSO, "Democratic Governance survey results, 2009-2017", www.1212.mn

¹⁰ Mapping and Assessment of the data ecosystem in Mongolia: innovation and new technologies for SDG monitoring, ICG, 2017

legal, institutional and system environment in which data and information is created, analyzed and used. The review points not only to key data gaps, but also how various systems and data-holders share, process and analyze the data they collect. It provides recommendations on how data can be collected using non-traditional sources. It also examines solutions for overcoming data gaps and shortcomings for SDG 16. The recommendations on filling current data gaps for the monitoring of the SDG16 are being taken forward by MOJHA and NSO. Based on consultations with the MOJHA and other law enforcement institutions identified that as of end of 2018, out of 23 monitoring indicators for SDG 16, 8 of them are available, 10 indicators can be produced with little more efforts, and 5 of them are missing at all.

- Compilation of SDG related data revealed that joint efforts from different actors are needed, particularly to measure air pollution and its impact. Air pollution doesn't present only health risks but also impacts negatively on children's learning, overall labour productivity, and overall behavioral changes towards consumption and production. A multi-sectoral approach towards addressing this complex development challenges will require Mongolia to re-think also governance of data and how they are shared, accessed and collected. In this regard, for the first time in 2019 the NSO has published the report summarizing officially available air pollution data. At the same time, current technology and its accessibility allows for effective and real-time citizen air pollution monitoring and information sharing. It remains to be seen how these types of citizen-generated data are to interact and be factored into the government decision-making and policies.
- Another opportunity in addressing the air pollution that the national institutions are already exploring, lies in introducing system thinking approaches in **inclusive and participatory decision-making** (SDG 16.7 target¹¹) and identify SDG accelerators and tradeoffs in policy planning and budgeting.

6. Results so far and Way Forward

Based on experience with MDGs Mongolia has created foundations for measuring the SDG 16 progress which helps to build the inclusive society by enhancing access to information, improving effective, accountable & transparent institutions, and promote inclusive and participatory decision-making:

- Quality data collected from various sources helps to rebuild trust by bringing people together around the common goals;
- SDG dashboard at NSO has generated all available data to measure SDG/SDV progress, and it will provide comprehensive picture on SDG progress and specific areas needed further support, enabling better-informed responses and decision-making;
- SDG-specific data are used to set targets for the medium-to-long term, which will be used to define the SDG accelerator policies and investments;
- Multi-stakeholder approach towards SDG planning and monitoring enables to create partnerships towards SDGs.
- Mongolia's 2019 VNR report will be based on SDG dashboard, including SDG 16, which will be institutionalized within the national SDG M&E system

7. Lessons Learned

- SDG 16 related data should be disaggregated to define the groups and locations needed for SDG accelerations;
- Institutional stability and coordination among agencies need to be improved;
- Stronger leadership required to coordinate the development partners support in creating monitoring and evaluation system;

¹¹ The target has not been quantified, MOJHA is working on defining the indicators