



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Eighty-second session**

Summary record of the 1897th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 24 June 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Safarov (Vice-Chair)

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Mr. Safarov (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Tenth periodic report of Mongolia (continued) ([CEDAW/C/MNG/10](#);
[CEDAW/C/MNG/QPR/10](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mongolia joined the meeting via video link.*

2. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the Labour Code had been revised to protect the employment rights of women and reduce the high rate of female unemployment. Legislative provisions relating to breastfeeding, mothers with infant children and teleworking arrangements had been introduced. Women's rate of participation in the labour market was noticeably lower than that of men. It was particularly affected by the need for women to provide care for children and elderly relatives, which could be addressed by increasing opportunities for home-based work and improving the provision of childcare. Seven programmes to promote employment had been launched, and 57.5 per cent of their participants were women. A gender-sensitive methodology had been used to allocate the budgets for those programmes, which, when implemented, would provide a clear statistical picture of the new employment opportunities for women and the extent to which unemployment would be reduced. Gender-sensitive budgeting would continue in 2023.

3. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know whether the State party would develop a policy and national action plan to address issues adversely affecting women's social and economic empowerment in Mongolia, such as high rates of domestic and intimate partner violence, restrictive gender norms, exclusion from policymaking, the gender pay gap and precarious working conditions. She wondered what targets for improving the situation of women had been established.

4. The number of women who had become economically inactive because they had to provide unpaid care had increased to more than 118,000 in 2018, and there had been a sharp reduction in the provision of State-funded childcare. She would like to know how the State party would improve childcare and ensure access to kindergartens to enable women to take up employment opportunities. Social welfare programmes overwhelmingly benefited men as heads of households. She wondered what steps were being taken to address the challenges faced by single mothers and the problem of unpaid care work undertaken by most Mongolian women, and what social security benefits were available to women active in the informal economy, especially female herders, women with disabilities and women who had been severely affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Lastly, she wondered how effective the Government's partnership with civil society had been, particularly in the case of the Women's Economic Empowerment project, implemented by the Asia Foundation in 2020.

5. **A representative of Mongolia** said that there was a legislative provision that established a quota for the number of women in management positions at the central and local government levels. As at December 2021, 11 of 14 ministries had complied with the requirement for women to hold at least 30 per cent of decision-making positions, and women also occupied 40 per cent of such positions at the local level. Efforts were being made, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to increase the number of women in high-ranking government positions. Implementation of the National Gender Equality Programme had concluded, and an intersectoral gender equality plan for the period 2022–2031, which would focus in part on increasing quotas for the participation of women in decision-making processes, was being approved. Implementation of the Women's Economic Empowerment project had focused on women running small and medium-sized enterprises. The project had involved the establishment of business promotion centres for women in several areas, including in Ulaanbaatar, to provide capacity-building training. Work had also been carried out by female parliamentarians and relevant organizations to create a workable definition of a female entrepreneur. In addition, three commercial banks had launched financial products specifically benefiting women.

6. **Mr. Zulpkhar** (Mongolia) said that there were three social welfare programmes aimed at providing support to single mothers and that there were also programmes benefiting single fathers. Single mothers could receive social benefits of 420,000 tugriks, equivalent to the monthly minimum wage. In addition, the Government provided a monthly cash allowance to every child in the country to support educational and other activities. Vulnerable households received food coupons, and dedicated employment promotion programmes were implemented specifically for persons working in the informal sector, especially single mothers.

7. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was implementing a programme to promote economic activity by enabling herders who had lost their livestock as a result of natural disasters to purchase new livestock. Approximately \$600 was allocated to each herder household for that purpose, and, as at 2021, 898 individuals, 331 of whom were women, had received financial support to purchase livestock. A number of projects had been implemented to promote employment among herders, including a pilot project supported by the United Nations Population Fund that had enabled 14 herder households, 5 of which were female-headed, to purchase equipment needed for their work. Policies and programmes were being designed to ensure that household work and childcare were appropriately valued. Such efforts included legislative reforms that would provide monthly allowances for parents providing full-time childcare.

8. **A representative of Mongolia** said that women constituted 30 per cent of students at centres for lifelong learning, which provided literacy courses and instruction in information and communications technology (ICT), foreign languages and other subjects. The centres were of particular value to rural women. In total, 191,000 children were enrolled in kindergartens, accounting for 81 per cent of all children of their age group, including 72 per cent of children in Ulaanbaatar. Regrettably, many children remained unable to enrol in kindergartens, owing to a lack of capacity. A resolution had been issued to increase capacity and build new facilities to accommodate all children nationwide. The planned measures would provide 20,000 new kindergarten places. At the start of the most recent academic year, additional teachers had been hired to extend the working hours of kindergartens, which would allow mothers to engage in economic activities.

9. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know how the Government addressed the needs of female herders, many of whom lived in poverty. In addition, it would be useful to learn what the State party was doing to tackle the problem of water pollution resulting from contamination caused by mining activities; such pollution had a particular impact on the health and livelihoods of female herders and on food production.

10. **Mr. Zulpkhar** (Mongolia) said that the average national poverty rate was around 27.7 per cent, with a high percentage of persons living in poverty in rural areas. There were approximately 240,000 herder families in Mongolia; although herding and other traditional livelihoods were intended to ensure self-sufficiency, some herders were poor. The Government provided some ICT facilities for the use of herders, and herders living in poverty received food coupons and child support benefits. Certain projects were aimed at providing herders with increased opportunities to trade and market animal products and raw materials or supported small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to reduce gaps in regional development, the Government intended to introduce a targeted instrument to support herder families and to include provisions to that end in its next 10-year economic development plan.

11. **A representative of Mongolia** said that her country had very limited water resources, with access to quality drinking water for 82.5 per cent of the population and to hygiene facilities for 69 per cent; 30 per cent were connected to the centralized water supply. The document “‘Vision-2050’ Long-Term Development Policy of Mongolia” included a section on water management and the prevention of water pollution.

12. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the National Committee on Gender Equality and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry had jointly developed a number of proposals to support rural women financially, for example by encouraging the marketing and sale of their produce through their own cooperatives; by fostering their participation in income-generating environmental protection schemes; by training people in rural areas,

including women, as tour guides and tour operators; and by providing women herders with training in business and marketing skills.

13. **Ms. Manalo** said that she welcomed the information that women were helped by means of infrastructure development. It would be useful to the Committee to receive information about a specific example of such development, including when it had taken place. Noting that rural women had been adversely affected by the contamination of water resources owing to irresponsible mining activities, she would like to know what steps had been taken to improve and protect their health and livelihoods and what the State party was doing to hold the polluters accountable.

14. **A representative of Mongolia** said that one of the infrastructure programmes implemented by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry had been the provision of automated livestock-milking gear and of equipment for the production of dairy products with a view to improving the livelihoods of young herders and young rural women. Over 230 households had received equipment with a total value of some \$250,000.

15. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the current Government was continuing a programme started in 2014 of building pipelines for centralized heating and water supplies in district capitals. In 2021 and 2022, the programme had covered 59 districts in 19 provinces and the budgetary allocation for 2022 exceeded \$30 million. The result was that hospitals, day-care centres and other vital facilities in those cities were able to make improvements, such as installing modern sanitation systems.

16. **A representative of Mongolia** said that machinery previously dumped in Lake Khuvsgul had been identified as the source of the pollution and contamination of the water of the rivers flowing out of the lake. In order to solve the problem, the Government had decided to remove the machinery from the lake. With a view to tackling the water shortage in the southern part of the country, in particular the Gobi Desert region, the Government had launched a project to drill boreholes.

17. **A representative of Mongolia** said that, according to the standards of the World Health Organization (WHO), the amount of available water per capita in Mongolia was relatively low, so the Ministry of Health had conducted thorough studies on the health impact of water scarcity on herder women. As the population was widely dispersed, the Ministry had introduced a mobile health-care service across the country. By 2020, health service coverage had extended to 85 per cent of the country, in comparison with a regional average of 77 per cent coverage and a global average of 66 per cent.

18. **Mr. Zulpkhar** (Mongolia) said that the capitals of all 21 provinces were connected with paved roads and the capitals of around 100 of the some 330 districts were connected by paved roads to the respective provincial capitals and to other districts. That made it easier for the rural population, in particular women, to deliver animal and dairy products to market for sale. In addition, the Government was running a programme to extend the network of paved rural roads in order to provide reliable infrastructure for herders, improving their access to markets. Furthermore, all districts of all provinces had direct access to cell phone and ICT services.

19. In relation to the disaggregation of poverty statistics for rural and urban areas, he wished to emphasize that, while poverty was more prevalent in rural areas, the gap was closing. In the mid-2000s, the gap between urban and rural areas had been between 3 and 5 percentage points, a figure that had fallen to 2 percentage points by 2020. The fact that rural poverty was declining brought with it great potential for rural women to make progress.

20. The Government had for several years been operating a free hotline that provided rural people with information on the prices available for the goods they had to sell, and it ran a television and radio service providing rural populations with market information. It also operated a cell phone application that herders could use to receive all social protection payments from the State in a timely manner and to exchange any information necessary in that connection with public bodies.

Articles 10–14

21. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that while measures such as the provision of laptop computers to students were commendable, the Committee was concerned about the drop in public expenditure on education. She wished to know whether a sustained increase was planned. The Committee would appreciate clarification as to whether school textbooks addressed gender equality, non-discrimination and stereotypes, as provided for by the Law of Mongolia on the Promotion of Gender Equality. She would welcome details of any plans to improve data on education by incorporating a gender perspective, as well as information on dropouts among girls owing to pregnancy and the need to support their families financially, and how the problem of dropout was addressed. Lastly, she wished to know how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected education in rural areas, including whether an education gap had arisen between rural and urban areas and what measures had been adopted to close it.

22. **Ms. Al-Rammah** said that a significant proportion of abortions in the State party were reportedly performed on girls under the age of 20, and that rate was increasing. Despite the rising need for family planning for women of reproductive age, contraceptive services were lacking. She wished to know what steps had been taken to provide free or subsidized contraception to vulnerable groups, such as poor and rural women, women with disabilities, people living with HIV and sexually active adolescents. She would welcome clarification of whether abortion was legal, specifically in cases of rape, a threat to the mother's life, severe fetal abnormalities and incest; and of whether health support services were provided. Disaggregated data on the prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases would be useful, along with information on the sexual and reproductive health education offered in schools. She would like to know if the State party had any plans to integrate such education into school curricula in an age-appropriate manner.

23. The Committee had received information that Youth-Friendly Clinics or youth health centres could not be accessed without parental consent and that the quality of their services was not always adequate. She wished to know how the State party would improve the geographical distribution of those facilities, which were currently limited to urban areas, and enhance their performance. The rights of women living with HIV were apparently violated regularly. She would welcome information on the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the State party; the measures taken to eliminate the discrimination, violence, stigma and social marginalization suffered by women living with HIV; and efforts to guarantee their access to adequate health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

24. The Committee had learned that there was a significant unmet need for family planning services among women and girls with disabilities. Women deprived of legal capacity because of psychological or intellectual disability were often subject to involuntary contraceptive interventions, and women with hearing impairments were particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases, owing to a lack of awareness of prevention measures. She would like to know what measures had been adopted to address those needs and to ensure that women and girls with disabilities had access to adequate health services, including sexual and reproductive health services. The Committee would like to find out how women with disabilities were empowered to exercise their legal capacity and their right to give free and informed consent to all medical interventions. Despite the country's high rate of mortality owing to cervical cancer, women and girls did not always receive vaccination against human papillomavirus (HPV). She would therefore welcome information on steps taken to implement an HPV immunization programme that would reach all women and girls and any other awareness-raising efforts to halt the spread of the virus.

25. **A representative of Mongolia** said that public expenditure on education had indeed declined in recent years, although it remained on a par with other countries with similar human development indices. In the current academic year, 51 per cent of the 1.1 million persons enrolled in educational institutions were women and girls. They represented 49 per cent of children in preschools, 50 per cent of pupils in secondary schools, 40 per cent of students at technical and vocational institutions and 61 per cent of students in higher education. Those proportions were increasing thanks to the value placed on girls' education in Mongolian culture. Nevertheless, gender stereotypes affected the selection of occupations, with sectors such as construction and energy dominated by men, while women predominated

in the education, health, food and service sectors. Children whose mothers had high levels of schooling tended to spend more time in education. Although women accounted for 80 per cent of workers in the education sector, 60 per cent of the decision-making positions in that sector were held by men. Women occupied around 76 per cent of public sector posts, including 63 per cent of administrative positions.

26. Statistics showed that there had been 900 school dropouts in the 2021/22 academic year, but specific data were not collected on the number of dropouts owing to pregnancy. However, gender-sensitive statistical indicators had been developed that identified pregnancy as a reason for dropout among girls. Girls who became pregnant had the right to re-enrol in educational institutions, including technical and vocational institutions. Gender-sensitive budgeting had been adopted in the Ministry of Education and Science.

27. During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 70 per cent of classes had been conducted online. In response to the difficulties encountered by some students in rural areas in accessing the devices necessary to participate in those classes, schools had delivered hard copies of teaching materials to their homes. Nevertheless, a study had shown that rates of participation in online classes had been higher in rural areas than in the capital. Gender equality had been incorporated into the curricula at schools and universities, and reproductive health was part of the curriculum at secondary schools. There was draft legislation containing provisions on the incorporation of teaching on gender stereotypes and gender equality into the curricula of all schools in the country.

28. **A representative of Mongolia** said that gender focal points had been appointed in educational institutions, and training for trainers had begun in 2021 on a programme to improve teachers' knowledge of the elimination of gender stereotypes in schools.

29. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the rate of births to young mothers had declined since 2021, and abortion rates were also falling. The Government had set a target of fewer than 200 abortions per 1,000 live births, and the target was being met. State spending on contraception had reached \$500,000 in 2019, a significant increase over the corresponding figure from a decade ago, and total public spending on contraception in the previous five years amounted to \$1.8 million. That funding was expected to reach 1.2 billion tugriks per year. Contraception was partly covered by State-funded health insurance.

30. Persons living with HIV/AIDS accounted for less than 0.1 per cent of the population. A total of 311 cases had been registered in 2020. The persons in question were not subjected to any form of discrimination or marginalization and were fully entitled to all health-care services. Medical treatment was provided with the assistance and cooperation of NGOs. Special training courses were provided for medical personnel, and a training module had been developed on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

31. The National Action Plan on cervical cancer had been implemented from 2018 to 2021 and the National Strategic Plan on Prevention and Control of Cervical Cancer was being implemented with WHO support from 2020 to 2024. Medical personnel were provided with comprehensive guidelines and training on how to handle cases of cervical cancer, and priority was given to early detection of the disease. According to the available data, the incidence of cervical cancer had declined in recent years. A working group had been established to investigate the need for vaccines against HPV. A bill amending the legislation governing vaccination would be considered by the parliament.

32. The subject of reproductive health had been included in the secondary school curriculum in 2018, and textbooks had been reviewed and upgraded in 2019 to meet health requirements. Regular check-ups of students were organized with the assistance of physicians who specialized in maternal and reproductive health.

33. Additional funds had been allocated in recent years for the provision of medical and hospital services, including reproductive health-care services, for persons with disabilities. Appropriate reproductive equipment had been provided to all local and district hospitals. In 2021 and 2022, maternity beds had been brought into line with international standards. Twenty-eight maternity homes had special sections and facilities for mothers with disabilities. A budget of \$16.2 million had been allocated to support the second programme of the National Centre for Maternal and Child Health.

34. **A representative of Mongolia** said that 35 youth development centres provided a range of services, such as support for youth investment and education on gender equality, for more than 400 young people each year. They also ran a hotline that provided young people with legal and psychological counselling.

35. A budget of 1 billion tugriks had been allocated with the aim of providing family planning coverage for 45 per cent of the country's youth. The Government ran a family planning agency with branches in every district and in the 21 provinces. There were also 31 family counselling centres. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection had developed and adopted a family training and education module with a view to providing young people with counselling and information on family health issues. Budgetary funds were allocated each year to almost 40 per cent of households to promote youth counselling and training.

36. A favourable environment for young persons with disabilities had been created in the youth development centres. Amended and updated curricula and training courses on family planning, reproductive health and gender equality had been introduced for teenagers, including young people with disabilities, in the youth development centres and in detention centres.

37. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the number of contagious diseases registered in 2020 throughout the country had declined by 7.9 per cent compared with the previous decade. The number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases had declined by 9.6 per cent.

38. **Ms. Manalo** noted that although the proportion of women in tertiary education had increased, highly qualified women still lacked the opportunity to participate actively in the labour market. The majority of women, especially in rural areas, worked in the informal sector or performed unpaid household chores. She was therefore interested to hear about any plans to promote the participation of women with high-level qualifications in the labour market. She wished to know whether any data were available on violations of the rights of women and girls in the education sector.

39. **A representative of Mongolia** said that the delegation would provide a written response to the question regarding violations of women's and girls' rights in the education sector.

40. **Mr. Zulpkhar** (Mongolia) said that the interactive dialogue with the Committee had been highly productive. The delegation had done its utmost to provide detailed and disaggregated responses to the questions raised. The Government would take due note of all the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations. It was fully committed to the full implementation of the Convention. It would also greatly appreciate any support and assistance provided by the Committee and other United Nations bodies.

41. **The Chair** encouraged the State party to implement the Committee's recommendations with a view to promoting the implementation of the Convention throughout its territory for the benefit of all women and girls.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.